THE WORKS
OF THE
REV. P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.

VOLUME VI.

THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR,
CONTAINING THE FORMER PART OF
THE HISTORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,
AS RECORDED BY
THE FOUR EVANGELISTS,
DISPOSED IN THE
ORDER OF AN HARMONY.

LEEDS:
PRINTED BY EDWARD BAINES,
FOR THE EDITORS; CONDER, BUCKLERSBURY; BUTTON, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
WILLIAMS, STATIONERS'-COURT; BAYNES, PATERNOSTER-ROW; OGLE,
GREAT-TURN-STILE; NUNN, QUEEN-STREET; AND JONES, PATERNOSTER-ROW,
LONDON; AND FOR BAINES, AND BINNS,
LEEDS; COLBERT, DUBLIN; WILSON AND SPENCE,
YORK; OGLE AND AKMAN, EDINBURGH; M.
OGLE, GLASGOW; CROOKES, ROTHERHAM;
AND ABEL, NORTHAMPTON.

1804.
Most thankfully acknowledge the condescension of your Royal Highness in allowing me the honour of laying this work at your feet, and committing it to so august a protection; and humbly beg your favourable acceptance of it, as a most sincere, though inconsiderable, expression of the profoundest duty, and most cordial esteem.

Could I lay open to your Royal Highness all the secret sentiments of my heart, you would read there the most affectionate sense of that gracious Providence which conducted you hither, to instruct and adorn Great Britain by so amiable an example, as well as to bless it with a race of princes descended from the illustrious houses of Brunswick and Saxe-Gotha in so happy an union! Joyfully have I, long since, taken my part with thousands, in congratulating my country and your Royal Highness on this occasion, and acknowledging that wise and paternal care his Majesty hath therein expressed for the happiness of succeeding generations: but permit me, Madam, freely to add, that with regard to yourself, I rejoice not so much in this accession to your grandeur, as in the persuasion I have, that you are possessed of a mind so superior to it, as to render it in all its remotest consequences, what greatness is not always to its possessors, safe, honourable, and advantageous. Universal report leaves me no room to doubt, that even in this blooming age you are tenderly sensible of the shining dangers inseparable from
so high a rank; and that it appears to your princely wisdom chiefly desirable, on account of those distinguished advantages which it may give, of approving yourself the faithful servant of God, and the generous friend of the public.

Among the principal of these advantages, your Royal Highness will undoubtedly number the opportunity which this exalted station of life affords you of forming to early sentiments of religion and virtue the opening minds of your royal offspring; those dear pledges of the liberty and happiness of ages yet to come, on whose temper and character, so much of public glory to our nation, so much of private felicity to yet unformed families, will depend. We adore the great Disposer of all events, who hath lodged this important trust in so wise and so pious a hand; and it must argue a very irreligious, or a very careless temper, if any neglect earnestly to pray, that He who hath so graciously assigned it to you, may direct and prosper you in it. While you, Madam, during the tender years which most naturally fall under the care of a mother, are endeavouring to bless these lovely infants with an education like that which you received from the excellent princes your parents, may your Royal Highness, in a success like theirs, receive the joys you have given! May they arise and shine on the whole Protestant world, in the lustre of every royal virtue and every Christian grace, which can render them dear to God and to their country, and, to say all in a word, worthy their relation to the Prince and Princess of Wales, and to all the glorious line of remoter ancestors from which they spring!

I should esteem it one of the greatest blessings of my life, and should be able to relish the thought in the nearest views of death itself, if this humble present which I here offer to your Royal Highness might give you any assistance in these pious cares. If the kings of Israel were required, not only to read the law of Moses all the days of their lives, but to write out a copy of it with
with their own hand; it may reasonably be expected, that Christian princes should make the far more glorious gospel of the Son of God their daily study, that it may be their constant guide. And I persuade myself, Madam, that none of the fashionable amusements of the age will seem to you in any degree comparable to that rational and elevated pleasure, which you will find in pointing out to your happy charge, as they grow capable of such instructions, the resplendent example of Jesus, the Prince of heaven, and the King of glory; in tracing the marvellous and edifying circumstances of his life, as here described; and in urging their humble and dutiful regards to that Divine, yet condescending Redeemer; to whom your Royal Highness, with all those amiable virtues which render you the delight and boast of our nation, will thankfully ascribe your own hopes of being finally accepted by God, and sharing the joys of his eternal presence.

These hopes, Madam, are the grand supports of the human mind in those views, from which royalty and empire cannot shelter it. An awful Providence, which we must all long lament, did early write these admonitions to your Royal Highness in the dust of one of the best of Queens. The attention with which her late Majesty studied the sacred oracles, and the evidences of our holy religion, for which, even in her departing moments, she expressed so firm a regard, will, I hope, never be forgotten by any allied to her, or descended from her. Nor am I able, in all the overflowings of the most affectionate gratitude and duty which I now feel, to form a more important wish for that condescending Patroness to whom I am addressing, than (to borrow the words of the Hebrew Monarch) that the testimonies of God may be her delight and her counsellors! And I trust, Madam, that they are so; I trust that, conscious of a heart devoted to God, and supported by a well-grounded confidence in his favour, you are fixing your eyes on a celestial diadem, which shall sparkle with immortal glories, when the kingdoms of this earth shall
shall be known no more, and all its pageantry shall be passed away like a dream. May you at length, in a very distant moment, have a happy accession to that never-fading crown; and, after having long adorned the highest stations here with that amiable Prince, whose constant and endearing friendship is so much more to your Royal Highness than all the grandeur which can result from your relation to him, may you be both exalted to the superior glories of the heavenly kingdom!

I hope your Royal Highness will please to pardon me, that I have expressed myself with so much warmth and freedom, in a presence I so highly revere: but I should be most unworthy of the name and honour of a Christian Minister, if I were ever ashamed of sentiments like these; and the assiduity with which I have lately been sitting at the feet of my Divine Master, while commenting on these authentic memoirs of his life and history, hath inspired me with a veneration and ardour which it is not easy to repress. I am sensible, Madam, these are unfashionable strains on such an occasion; and it would have been easy to have filled many more pages than these with panegyric, on what I have read of your illustrious ancestors, and what I have heard from multitudes, of the charms of your Royal Highness's person and character; but I imagined that such hints as these were more suitable to that plainness and simplicity which at all times become a servant of Christ; and I flatter myself, that, to a person of your Royal Highness's penetration, they will not seem less expressive of that undissembled esteem and affectionate zeal, with which I am,

Madam,
Your Royal Highness's
Most faithful, most dutiful,
And most obedient, humble Servant,
PHILIP DODDRIDGE.
I have long been convinced, that if any thing can stop that progress of infidelity and vice, which every wise man beholds with sorrow and fear; that if any thing can allay those animosities, which (unnatural as they are) have so long inflamed us, and pained the heart of every generous Christian; in a word, that if any thing can establish the purity and order, the peace and glory of the church, or spread the triumphs of personal and domestic religion among us, it must be an attentive study of the word of God, and especially of the New Testament; that best of books, which, if read with impartiality and seriousness, under the influences of that blessed Spirit by whom it was inspired, would have the noblest tendency to enlighten and adorn the mind, and not only to touch, but to animate and transform the heart.

The station of life in which Divine Providence has placed me, rendered it peculiarly necessary for me to make these sacred oracles my principal study; and having, to my unspeakable delight and advantage, felt much of their energy, I long since determined that it should be the main business of my life as an author to illustrate them, and to lead my fellow-christians into a due regard for them, by endeavouring, in as plain and popular a manner as I could, to display their beauty, their spirit, and their use; and I thankfully acknowledge the goodness of God to me, in giving me health and spirits to finish so considerable a part of my design, though I have so much other business on my hands, and have been obliged to execute this in a much more laborious manner than I at first apprehended would have been requisite.

The title I have given to the work sufficiently explains its original design, which was chiefly to promote family religion, and to render the reading of the New Testament more pleasant and improving to those that wanted the benefit of a learned education, and had not opportunity or inclination to consult a variety of commentators. And I thought it proper still to retain the title of The Family Expositor, even when I had made some alteration in the plan; because that is still the leading view of the greater part of the work. In pursuit of this, I have given a large paraphrase on the sacred text, well knowing that this is the most agreeable and useful manner of explaining it to common readers, who hardly know how to manage annotations, especially when they are to be read to others. The chief objection against this way is, that when a whole verse, and much more when several verses are taken together (as they frequently are,) it requires a great attention, and in some places some considerable penetration, to trace the exact correspondence between the respective clauses of the text and the paraphrase. There are some performances of this kind in our own language, as well as in others, in which such liberties are taken, that I freely confess that, were it not for the initial references, or opposite column, I should not be able to guess from the paraphrase itself, what the scripture was which it pretended to explain. This must undoubtedly give the greatest advantage for disguise and misrepresentation; and where those glosses are read by themselves without the scriptures
scriptures (which I know has been the case in some families,) it is really exchanging the prophets and apostles for modern divines. To prevent this intolerable evil, I have formed my paraphrase so, that it is impossible to read it without the text, having every where interwoven the words of scripture with it, and carefully distinguished them from the rest by the Italic character: so that every one may immediately see, not only the particular clause to which any explication answers, but also what are the words of the sacred original, and what merely the sense of a fallible man, who is liable, though in the integrity of his heart, to mislead his readers, and dares not attribute to himself the singular glory of having put off every prejudice, even while he would deliberately and knowingly allow none.

I thought it might be some additional improvement of this work, and some entertainment to the more accurate reader, to give the text in a new version; which I have accordingly done from the original with all the care I could. There are so few places in which the general sense will appear different from our received translation, that some will perhaps think this an unnecessary trouble: but I can by no means repent it, as it has given me an opportunity of searching more accurately into several beauties of expression which had before escaped me; and of making some alterations, which, though they may not be very material to the edification of men's souls, may yet in some degree do a farther honour to scripture; raising some of those ornaments which were before depressed; and sufficiently proving that several objections urged against it were entirely of an English growth: ends, which might yet more abundantly be answered by a new version of the Old Testament, which has suffered much more in our translation, as it is natural to suppose it must.

I thought it might also conduce to the usefulness of this exposition to digest the history of the four evangelists into one continued series, or, in other words, to throw it into the order of an harmony. By this means each story and discourse is exhibited with all its concurrent circumstances, as recorded by the sacred penmen; frequent repetitions are prevented; and a multitude of seeming oppositions are so evidently reconciled, as to supersede many objections, and render the very mention of them unnecessary. My reader will hardly imagine the pains that this part of the work has cost me, both in examining the order of the several texts, and collating the different accounts in each, in such a manner, that no one clause in any of the evangelists might be omitted, and yet the several passages to be inserted might make one connected sense, and, without any large addition, stand in a due grammatical order. I was the more sensible of this labour, as I laid it down for a maxim to myself, when I entered on this work, that I would study as much as possible to make it an original in all its parts. Accordingly, the first copy of it was drawn up with hardly any other assistance than that of the Greek Testament, which I endeavoured to harmonize, to translate, to paraphrase and to improve, just as if none had ever attempted any thing of that nature before me. Afterwards I was obliged to compare it with what others had done; and, as may easily be supposed, I found in many instances an agreement, and in many others a difference betwixt them and myself. Where we differed, I endeavoured impartially to examine the reasons on both sides; and where I have perceived myself indebted to any, for leading me into a more just and beautiful version, explication or disposition, than I had before chosen, I have generally, and, so far as I can recollect, universally, acknowledgewed it; unless where the hint came from some living friend, where such acknowledgment would not have been agreable. There are, no doubt, many other instances in which the thoughts that seemed originally my own might be suggested by memory, though I knew not from whence they came; and a thousand more are so obvious, that one would suppose they must occur to every attentive reader, who has any genius and furniture for criticism. To have multiplied
plied references and quotations in such a case, would have been, I think, a very useless and burthensome piece of pedantry, and might (as I fear has been the case with Pfeiffer and Wolfius) have discouraged the reader from consulting any, in so great a crowd. I could not well brook the drudgery of transcribing the works of others, and should scorn the meanness of dressing myself up in borrowed planes; but if any imagine me a mere compiler, I shall not be greatly concerned at their mistake, but say, with the modest and excellent Mons. Rollin, "If the things themselves are good, it signifies very little whose they are.

The notes are, at the desire of many friends, entirely added to my first scheme; and when I saw so many persons of learning and rank were pleased to encourage my undertaking, I thought it would be no unacceptable expression of my gratitude to them to insert several which I should otherwise have omitted. Some of them seemed absolutely necessary to justify the version and paraphrase, in what might seem most peculiar in it: several more refer to the order, and give my reasons for leaving the general track, where I have left it; and for not leaving it much oftener, where some very learned and ingenious authors have taken a great deal of pains (though, I persuade myself, with a very good intent) to lead us out of the way: and as several of these are modern writers, the remarks are such as do not commonly occur. The rest of the notes consist, either of some observations on the beauty and force of various passages, which I do not remember to have seen elsewhere; or of references to, and observations upon, considerable writers, whether they be or be not professed expositors of scripture, who seem in the most masterly manner to examine or to illustrate and confirm the sense I have given. These are generally but very short; because it would have been quite foreign to my purpose, and utterly inconsistent with my scheme, to have formed them into large critical essays: but I hope they may be some guide to young students, who, if they have libraries at hand, are in great danger of being lost in a wood, where, I am sorry to say it, they will find a multitude of prickly and knotty shrubs, and in comparison but few pleasant and fruitful trees. It has appeared to me an office of real and important friendship to gentlemen in this station of life, to endeavour to select for them the most valuable passages which occur in reading, and to remit them thither, not only for the illustration of scripture, but also for their direction in studying the evidences and contents both of natural and revealed religion. This I have done with great care and labour in a pretty large work, which perhaps may be published after my death, if surviving friends should judge it proper. To that I have generally referred those citations which relate to polemical divinity; and at present only add that, with regard to these notes, I have endeavoured to render them easy and entertaining, even to an English reader; and for that purpose have cautiously excluded quotations from the learned languages, even where they might have served to illustrate customs referred to, or words to be explained. That deficiency may be abundantly made up by the perusal of Elsner, Albert, Bos, Wolfius, Raphelius, Fortuitia Sacra, &c.; books which I cannot but

* Que m'importe d'ou il soit, pourvu qu'il se trouve utile.—Roll. Mon. d'enseign, vol. i. p. 75.

† As some of the books mentioned above are not very common among us, it may not be improper to insert their titles, viz.


Lamberti Bos Exercitat. Philolog. Franck. 1700

——— Animadvers. Franck. 1715.

——— Observation. Miscell. Leodard. 1731.

Raphelii Annotation. Philol. in Nov. Test. ex Xenophon, Polybio, & Herodoto collector, 3 tom. Laven. 1731.


recommend
recommend to my young friends, as proper not only to ascertain the sense of a variety of words and phrases, which occur in the apostolic writings; but also to form them to the most useful method of studying the Greek classics, those great masters of solid sense, elegant expression, just lively painting, and masculine eloquence, to the neglect of which I cannot but ascribe that enervate, dissolve, and puerile manner of writing, which is growing so much on the present age, and will probably consign so many of its productions to speedy oblivion.

The improvement of each section is entirely of a practical nature, and generally consists of a pressing exhortations, and devout meditations, grounded on the general design, or on some particular passages, of the section to which they are annexed. They are all in an evangelical strain, and they could not with any propriety have been otherwise. I am well aware that this manner is not much in the present taste, and I think it at once a sad instance and cause of our degeneracy that it is not. If it be necessary that I should offer any apology, it must in short be this: I have with all possible attention and impartiality considered first the general evidences of the truth of Christianity, and then those of the inspiration of the New Testament, which seems to me inseparably connected with the former; and, on the whole, am in my conscience persuaded of both, and have been confirmed in that conviction by the most laboured attempts to overthrow them. It seems a necessary consequence of this conviction (and I am astonished it should not be more generally attended to), that we are with the humblest submission of mind to form our religious notions on this plan, and to give up the most darling maxims which will not bear the test of it.

I should think an impartial reader must immediately see, and every judicious critic be daily more confirmed in it, that the New Testament teaches us to conceive of Christ, not as a generous Benefactor only, who, having performed some actions of heroic virtue and benevolence, is now retired from all intercourse with our world, so that we have no more to do with him than to preserve a grateful remembrance of his character and favours; but that he is to be considered as an ever-living and ever-present friend, with whom we are to maintain a daily commerce by faith and prayer, and from whom we are to derive those supplies of divine grace, whereby we may be strengthened for the duties of life, and ripened for a state of perfect holiness and felicity. This is evident not only from particular passages of scripture, in which he is described as always with his church (Mat. xxviii. 20.) as present wherever two or three are assembled in his name (Mat. xviii. 20), as upholding all things by the word of his power (Heb. i. 3), and as Head over all to his church (Eph. i. 22), but indeed from the whole scope and tenor of the New Testament. These views are therefore continually to be kept up; and for any to pretend that this is a round-about method (as some have presumed to call it,) and that men may be led to virtue, the great end of all, by a much plainer and more direct way, seems to me only a vain and arrogant attempt to be wiser than God himself; which therefore must in the end appear to be folly, with whatever subtlety of argument it may be defended, or with whatever pomp of rhetoric it be adorned.

The New Testament is a book written with the most consummate knowledge of human nature; and though there are a thousand latent beauties in it, which it is the business and glory of true criticism to place in a true point of light, the general sense and design of it is plain to every honest reader even at the very first perusal. It is evidently intended to bring us to God through Christ, in an humble dependence on the communications of his sanctifying and quickening Spirit; and to engage us to a course of faithful and universal obedience, chiefly from a grateful sense of the riches of divine grace
PRÉFACE

grace manifested to us in the gospel. And though this scheme is indeed liable to abuse, as every thing else is, it appears to me plain in fact, that it has been and still is the grand instrument of reforming a very degenerate world; and according to the best observations I have been able to make on what has passed about me, or within my own breast, I have found, that, in proportion to the degree in which this evangelical scheme is received and relished, the interest of true virtue and holiness flourishes, and the mind is formed to many devotion, diffusive benevolence, steady fortitude, and, in short, made ready to every good word and work. To this therefore I am determined, at all adventures, to adhere; nor am I at all ashamed or afraid of any scorn which I may encounter in such a cause; and I would earnestly exhort, and entreat, all my brethren in the Christian ministry to join with me, as well knowing to whom we have committed our souls; and cheerfully hoping, that He, by whom we have hitherto, if faithful in our calling, been supported and animated, will at length confess us before the presence of his Father and the holy angels in that day, when it will be found no dishonour to the greatest and wisest of the children of men to have listed themselves under the banner of the cross, and constantly and affectionately to have kept their divine Leader in view.

I cannot flatter myself so far, as to imagine that I have fallen into no mistakes, in a work of so great compass and difficulty; but my own conscience acquits me of having designedly misrepresented any single passage of scripture, or of having written one line with a purpose of inflaming the hearts of Christians against each other. I should esteem it one of the most aggravated crimes to make the life of the gentle and benevolent Jesus a vehicle to convey such a poison. Would to God that all the party-names, and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the Christian world, were forgot; and that we might agree to sit down together, as humble loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear his word, to imbibe his Spirit, and to transcribe his life in our own!

I hope it is some token of such growing candour on one side, as I am sure it should be an engagement to cultivate it on the other, that so many of the reverend clergy of the establishment, as well as other persons of distinction in it, have favoured this undertaking with their encouragement. To them, and, all my other friends, I return my most hearty thanks; and shall remember that the regard they have been pleased to express to it, obliges me to pursue the remainder of the work with the utmost care and application; and earnestly entreat the farther assistance of their prayers, that it may be conducted in a manner subservient to the honour of the gospel and the edification of the church.

In these volumes I have been desirous to express my gratitude to the subscribers, by sparing nothing in my power which might render the work acceptable to them; both with respect to its contents and its form. The consequence of this is, that it hath swelled to a number of sheets, which by more than a third part exceeds what I promised in the proposals; which, though at a great expence, I chose to permit, rather than I would either sink the paper and character beneath the spécimen, or omit some remarks in the notes which appeared to me of moment, and rose in my mind while I was transcribing them. But I hope this large addition to what was at first expected will excuse my not complying with the importunity of some of my friends, who have requested that I would introduce this work with a dissertation on such points of Jewish antiquity as might be serviceable for the fuller understanding the New Testament, or with a discourse on its genuineness, credibility, inspiration and use.

As to the first of these (a compendious view of such articles of Jewish antiquity as may be a proper introduction to the critical study of scripture,)
I do with great pleasure refer the generality of readers and young students to the general preface to the Prussian Testament, published by Mess. L'Enfant and Beausobre; which preface was some years since translated into English, and suits the purpose better than any thing I have seen within so small a compass. As to the latter, I purpose, if God permit, when I have finished the second volume, to publish with another edition of my Three Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity, two or three discourses more on the inspiration of the New Testament, and on its usefulness, especially that of the Evangelical History; to which I may perhaps add some farther directions for the most profitable manner of reading it. At present I shall only add, that daily experience convinces me more and more, that as a thousand charms discover themselves in the works of nature, when attentively viewed with glasses, which had escaped the naked eye; so our admiration of the holy scriptures will rise in proportion to the accuracy with which they are studied.

As for these histories and discourses of Christ, I may say of them, with far greater justice, what Simplicius doth of Epictetus, in the passage of which my motto is a part, and which I shall conclude my preface: "The words themselves are generally plain and intelligible: but I have endeavoured thus to unfold them, that my own heart might be more deeply impressed with the spirit and certainty of them; and that others, who have not themselves equal advantage for entering into it, might be guided into their true interpretation. But if, on the whole, any reader continue entirely unaffected with them, there is little prospect that any thing will reclaim him till he come to the tribunal of the invisible world."* 

* Кап исти мени та логи сачии, и чири ди ипом, кола та динага диакапсиии апоси. Ο ти гаета варро, суплопартити ти айа та апоси гипотели, και της ακολουθης απον καλοηνκιλης και των φιλαμικην της λογες καινην, επες εξειν πητα χεραγγικικικις της εμες εφαμες ειπων.-

Ει δι της κα τοις μεν παρακεν των λογων, υπε μοναν των ει ου διακωμην πυταθυθην.

Northampton, Nov. 27, 1738.

Simplic. in Epictet. Proem.

**Directions for reading the Family Expositor.**

AS to the manner of reading this book in families, I would advise as follows:—First, Let the passage of Scripture be read from the common translation in the inner column, unless the family have their Bibles before them: then read the new version by itself, which is interwoven with the paraphrase, but distinguished by the italic character; and then the paraphrase and improvement.

As for the notes, I should advise the person who officiates to select such as are of the most general concern, and read them after the paragraph to which they belong; for it is not so agreeable to interrupt the sense by introducing them before it is completed. Other notes may perhaps be more fully made matter of conversation afterwards; but this is referred to the prudence of particular persons, who will judge with a regard to the state and character of the families in question.

In reading the compound text it may be observed, that the words of the several evangelists are distinguished by crotchets, thus [ ]; and the clauses included within them are always marked with the name of the evangelist from whom they are taken, unless a single text only be added at the end of the verse to which they must of course belong; or, where more texts than one are added, the crotchets which have nothing to distinguish them belong to the first.

I am pleased to think with how much case any attentive reader will distinguish the text itself from the paraphrase in consequence of the extraordinary care which hath been taken to keep the work in that particular remarkably correct; for which I am obliged to pay my public and most thankful acknowledgments to my worthy brother and friend, the Reverend Mr. Godwin, who generously undertook the great trouble, not only of revising each sheet as it came from the press, but also of inspecting the manuscript before it went thither, and of making several important alterations in it very much for the better; of which I should have been ready to have given a more particular account if his modesty and goodness would have permitted it.
### A Table

of

The Chapters in This Harmony,

Directing

To the Sections Where They Are Placed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>9,</td>
<td>15,</td>
<td>I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>16.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>12,</td>
<td>18,</td>
<td>II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.</td>
<td>19.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>15,</td>
<td>15.</td>
<td>III.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>19,</td>
<td>17.</td>
<td>IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31,</td>
<td>18.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>37,</td>
<td>50,</td>
<td>V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.</td>
<td>51.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>40,</td>
<td>61,</td>
<td>VI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.</td>
<td>64.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42,</td>
<td>65.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.</td>
<td>66.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>44,</td>
<td>68,</td>
<td>VII.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55,</td>
<td>69.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35,</td>
<td>70.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>70,</td>
<td>73,</td>
<td>VIII.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45,</td>
<td>74,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71,</td>
<td>76,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>73.</td>
<td>77,</td>
<td>IX.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>83,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>74,</td>
<td>85.</td>
<td>X.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>88.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>89.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>76,</td>
<td></td>
<td>VIII.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td>49,</td>
<td></td>
<td>IX.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII.</td>
<td>65,</td>
<td></td>
<td>IX.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table of the Chapters in this Harmony, &c.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATTHEW.</th>
<th>MARK.</th>
<th>LUKE.</th>
<th>JOHN.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XIV.</td>
<td>77, 28, 8</td>
<td>146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151.</td>
<td>X.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI.</td>
<td>87, 88, 89.</td>
<td>159.</td>
<td>XII.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII.</td>
<td>93, 94, 95.</td>
<td>176, 145, 167, 168, 170, 172, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX.</td>
<td>135, 136, 137.</td>
<td>186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX.</td>
<td>138, 142, 143.</td>
<td>194, 195, 196, 198, 202, 203.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI.</td>
<td>146, 147, 148, 149, 151, 152.</td>
<td>194, 195, 196, 198, 202, 203.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII.</td>
<td>153, 154, 155, 156.</td>
<td>194, 195, 196, 198, 202, 203.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII.</td>
<td>157, 158.</td>
<td>194, 195, 196, 198, 202, 203.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV.</td>
<td>164, 165, 166.</td>
<td>194, 195, 196, 198, 202, 203.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Acts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acts</th>
<th>Chap.</th>
<th>Sect.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. ver.</td>
<td>143, 144, 146, 147.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX.</td>
<td>151, 152, 154, 155, 156, 157.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI.</td>
<td>159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII.</td>
<td>186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV.</td>
<td>194, 195, 197, 198, 202, 203.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A TABLE
OF
THE SECTIONS IN THEIR ORDER,
SHOWING
THE DISPOSITION OF THE HARMONY.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sect.</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>i. 1-4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>i. 5-25.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>i. 26-38.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>i. 39-56.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>i. 57-66.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>i. 67, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>i. 18, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>i. 1-17.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td>ii. 1-12.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td>ii. 13, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII.</td>
<td>iii. 1-6.</td>
<td></td>
<td>ii. 40, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV.</td>
<td>i. 1-6.</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii. 1-6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV.</td>
<td>iii. 7-12.</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii. 7-18.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI.</td>
<td>i. 7, 8.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII.</td>
<td>iii. 13, ad fin.</td>
<td>i. 9-11.</td>
<td>iii. 21-23.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVIII.</td>
<td>xiv. 3-5.</td>
<td>vi. 17-20.</td>
<td>iii. 19, 20.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iv. 14, 15.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iv. 14-30.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iv. 31, 32.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 1-11.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iv. 33-39.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>iv. 40, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 1-16.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 17-26.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 27, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vi. 1-18.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vi. 19, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vii. 1-20.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vii. 21, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vii. 21, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vii. 21, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX.</td>
<td>ix. 2-9.</td>
<td></td>
<td>i. 40, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>i. 1-14.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 12-16.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 17-28.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 1-16.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 17-30.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 31, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sect.</td>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI.</td>
<td>xii. 1—8.</td>
<td>ii. 23, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td>vi. 1—5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX.</td>
<td>xii. 9—15.</td>
<td>iii. 1—7.</td>
<td>vi. 6—11.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV.</td>
<td>xii. 15—21.</td>
<td>iii. 7—12.</td>
<td>vi. 12—19.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLI.</td>
<td>xii. 13—19.</td>
<td></td>
<td>vi. 20—36.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vi. 37, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vii. 1—10.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vii. 11—17.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vii. 18—23.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vii. 24—35.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LVII.</td>
<td>viii. 5—12.</td>
<td>iii. 19—21.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIX.</td>
<td>xi. 2—6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LX.</td>
<td>x. 7—19.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXI.</td>
<td>x. 20, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXII.</td>
<td>xii. 22—32.</td>
<td>iii. 22—30.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXIII.</td>
<td>xii. 33—37.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXIV.</td>
<td>xii. 38—45.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXV.</td>
<td>xii. 46, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td>iii. 31, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXVI.</td>
<td>xiii. 1—17.</td>
<td>iv. 1—12.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXVII.</td>
<td>xiii. 18—23.</td>
<td>iv. 13—25.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXVIII.</td>
<td>xiii. 24—30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXIX.</td>
<td>xiii. 36—43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LX.</td>
<td>xiii. 31—35</td>
<td>iv. 26—34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXX.</td>
<td>xiii. 44—53</td>
<td>iv. 35, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td>v. 1—21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXI.</td>
<td>xiv. 1—17.</td>
<td>ix. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXII.</td>
<td>xiv. 18—34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXIV.</td>
<td>x. 1—15.</td>
<td>vi. 1—6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXV.</td>
<td>x. 16—28</td>
<td>vi. 7—11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXVI.</td>
<td>x. 29, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td>vi. 12, 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXVII.</td>
<td>x. 30, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td>vi. 7—11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXVIII.</td>
<td>x. 54, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td>vi. 7—11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXIX.</td>
<td>x. 1—15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXX.</td>
<td>x. 16—28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXI.</td>
<td>x. 29, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXII.</td>
<td>x. 30, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXIII.</td>
<td>x. 54, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXIV.</td>
<td>x. 1—15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXV.</td>
<td>x. 16—28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXVI.</td>
<td>x. 29, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXVII.</td>
<td>x. 30, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXVIII.</td>
<td>x. 54, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCL.</td>
<td>xvi. 1—9.</td>
<td>vii. 1—13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCI.</td>
<td>xvi. 10—20</td>
<td>vii. 14—23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCV.</td>
<td>xvi. 21—29</td>
<td>vii. 24, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCVI.</td>
<td>xvi. 30, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td>vii. 1—10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCVII.</td>
<td>xvi. 1—12</td>
<td>vii. 11—21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCVIII.</td>
<td>xvi. 13—20</td>
<td>vii. 22—30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCVII.</td>
<td>xvi. 21, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td>vii. 31, <em>ad fin.</em></td>
<td>ix. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCVIII.</td>
<td>xvi. 32—41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXIX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXIX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXL.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XCVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXIX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXIX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXL.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXLV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLVI.</td>
<td>xxii. 34, ad fin.</td>
<td>xii. 28—37, ad fin.</td>
<td>xx. 41—14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLVII.</td>
<td>xiii. 1—22, ad fin.</td>
<td>xii. 38—40, ad fin.</td>
<td>xx. 45, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLVIII.</td>
<td>xiii. 23, ad fin.</td>
<td>xii. 41, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIX.</td>
<td>xxiv. 1—14</td>
<td>xiii. 1—13</td>
<td>xii. 1—6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLX.</td>
<td>xxv. 15—28</td>
<td>xiii. 14—23</td>
<td>xii. 7—18</td>
<td>xiii. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXI.</td>
<td>xxiv. 29—36</td>
<td>xiii. 24—32</td>
<td>xii. 24—27</td>
<td>xii. 2—3—17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXII.</td>
<td>xxv. 37, ad fin.</td>
<td>xiii. 33, ad fin.</td>
<td>xii. 2—3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXIII.</td>
<td>xxv. 1—13</td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 21—23</td>
<td>xii. 2—3, ad fin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXIV.</td>
<td>xxv. 14—30</td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 23—30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXV.</td>
<td>xxv. 31, ad fin.</td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 31—34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXVI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 35—38</td>
<td>xii. 31, ad fin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXVII.</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiv. 12—17</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXVIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 15—17</td>
<td>xii. 1—11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXIX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 12, ad fin</td>
<td>xii. 1—5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXX.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 16, ad fin</td>
<td>xii. 1—15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXXI.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 17</td>
<td>xii. 1—12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXXII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 13, ad fin</td>
<td>xii. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXXIII.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 2—12</td>
<td>xii. 13—18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXXIV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii. 24—27</td>
<td>xii. 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXXV.</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiv. 55—65</td>
<td>xii. 30—44</td>
<td>xii. 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXXVI.</td>
<td>xiv. 2—14</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXXVII.</td>
<td>xiv. 15—20</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXXVIII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLXXIX.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXX.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXI.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXIII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXIV.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXV.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXVI.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXVII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXVIII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXXXIX.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXL.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXI.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXIII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXIV.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXV.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXVI.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXVII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXVIII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXIX.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCI.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCI.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCC.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCCII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCCIII.</td>
<td>xiv. 24—25</td>
<td>xii. 1—4</td>
<td>xii. 28—38</td>
<td>xii. 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Acts i. 2, 3; + Acts i. 4—12.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

THE FORMER PART OF THE HISTORY OF CHRIST, AS RECORDED
BY THE EVANGELISTS.

SECT. I.

St. Luke's preface to his history, dedicated to Theophilus, a Christian friend, for whose comfort and establishment he was particularly concerned. Luke I. ver. 1—4.

LUKE I. VERSE 1.

WHEREAS many have undertaken* to compose the history of those important facts which have been confirmed among us Christians with the fullest and most satisfactory evidence, as the great foundation of our common faith; and since some of these historians have written, not on their own personal knowledge, but as they (whether apostles or others) have transmitted them.

2 Even as they delivered

a Whereas many have undertaken.] This must refer to some histories of the life of Christ which are now lost; for Matthew and Mark, the only evangelists which can be supposed to have written before Luke, could not with any propriety be called many; and of these two, Matthew at least wrote from personal knowledge, not the testimony of others. One must readily conclude the books referred to are lost, as none of the apocryphal gospels now extant, published particularly by Fabricius, (in his Codex. Apoc. Nov. Test.) or Mr. Jones, (in his history of the Canon) can with any shadow of reason pretend to equal antiquity with this of St. Luke. But I cannot, with Ambrose and Epiphanius, suppose that the evangelist here intends the gospels of Basilides, Cerinthus, and some other early heretics; since he seems to allow these histories, whatever they were, to have been at least honestly written, according to information received from the most capable judges. And it is strange that Eusebius should imagine the words are intended as a severe censure on the now unknown composers of these histories, whoever they were. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 24.

b To compose the history.] To set forth in order a declaration is so antiquated a phrase, that it would hardly be understood any where but here; at least I am sure none could, by reading it, so much as guess at the elegance and propriety of St. Luke's words, ἀναξιότερον διαφθορά, which may more literally, and, I think, far more justly be rendered, to compose a history: and I doubt not, but our English word compose may express as much regularity in the order of facts as the evangelist meant to intimate.

c Confirmed among us with the fullest evidence.] I think πιστεύοντες is rather to be understood as referring to the fulness of that evidence with which the facts were attended, than to the confidence with which they were believed. This seems most honourable to the gospel; but as I know the word is ambiguous, and often used in the latter sense, I have chose to express that also in the paraphrase. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 5—17. Gr.

Vol. VI. A 0f
them to us, who were themselves from the beginning of Christ's ministry eye-witnesses of what passed, and in proof of the sincerity of their testimony courageously became ministers of the word, that is, of the gospel, amidst the greatest opposition; I also having accurately traced all these things from their first rise, even from the very conception of John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of our Lord, have thought it proper to write an orderly account of them: and I choose to inscribe it to thee, O most noble Theophilus; because, though thou art already, in the general, acquainted with them, yet I cannot but be concerned that thou mayest more fully and circumstantially know the exact and certain truth of those things in which thou hast formerly been instructed by those who were the happy instruments of initiating thee into the Christian faith; and I am persuaded thou wilt be greatly confirmed in it by the attentive perusal of that history with which I here present thee.

IMPROVE-

d Of the word.] Some have conjectured that καρπός, the word, here signifies Christ, as in the beginning of St. John's gospel: perhaps it may; but I did not think it so evident as to venture fixing it to that sense.

e Having accurately traced all these things.] The original, παρευρεθέντος παντι αποκρίθων, plainly signifies that accuracy of investigation on which the perfect understanding of his subject was built.

f From their first rise.] Some very pious and learned writers have pleaded this text as an argument for the inspiration of St. Luke's gospel, and consequently of the rest, because the word παρευρέθη sometimes signifies from above, or from heaven; as it plainly doth, John iii. 31. Jam. i. 17. iii. 15. 17. But Luke so evidently uses it in the sense here given, Acts xxvi. 5. and that sense is so common elsewhere, and seems so absolutely necessary in this connection with παρευρεθέντος, that I cannot think this text at all to the purpose. The argument I mention is one of those which, like pieces of superfluous armour, encumber rather than defend; and the more I am concerned about the conclusion here or elsewhere, the more cautions shall I always be, that I may not draw it from such premises.

g To write an orderly account of them, κατὰ τὴν σωφρονίσθαι.] It is chiefly on the authority of this clause that M. Le Clerc, and many other modern harmonizers have thought (as Beza also did) that all the other gospels are to be reduced to the order of Luke, wherever they differ from it: a conclusion which I apprehend, for reasons that shall afterwards be given at large, to be an occasion of many errors, and particularly injurious to the character of St. Matthew. I would only here observe that the foundation of it is very precarious; since it is evident this evangelist might, with great propriety, be said to have given an orderly account of the history of Christ, as the leading facts are in their due series, though some particulars are transposed.

h O most noble Theophilus.] That Theophilus is the name of a particular person eminent in the church in those early days, and not (as Salvin thought it) a general title applicable to every Christian as a lover of God, Dr. Whitby, after many others, hath abundantly proved. What his rank in life was, we do not indeed certainly know; but it seems that it was pretty considerable; for ἑξευτελεσθήναι was then, as Excellence among us is, a title of honour and respect usual in addressing noble personages (see Acts xxii. 26. xxiv. 3. xxvi. 25.) and it might with some peculiar propriety be applied here, as Theophilus was so worthy the name he bore, which signifies a true lover of God.

i Hast been instructed, εἰκόνισθαι.] The word doth with great accuracy express the instructions given to those who were training up for an admission to the Christian church, whose name of catechumenus was, as it is well known, derived from hence, and applied without any particular regard to the age of the persons concerned. Compare Acts xviii. 25. Rom. ii. 18. I endeavour to express this in the paraphrase; but it would be very improper to use the English word which most literally answers to the Greek, because that is now almost wholly appropriated to children.
IMPROVEMENT.

Let us humbly adore the Divine Goodness, that facts of so great importance as these now to be laid before us were not left to the uncertainty of oral tradition, but delivered to the church in writing, by persons who had so many opportunities of learning the truth, and have given such full proof of their integrity in relating it.—Let us be thankful that we have not only one such history, but that several undertook this excellent and necessary work, by whose united testimony the whole is confirmed; while it is also illustrated by the variety of their narrations, each inserting some considerable circumstance which the rest have omitted. Let us rejoice in that providential care which hath preserved this invaluable treasure through so many succeeding ages, and some of them periods of the grossest darkness and the hottest persecution.

While we study this orderly series of sacred story, let us be concerned that our faith may be established by it, and our other graces proportionably advanced; maintaining a continual dependence on that blessed Spirit, by whose instruction it was written to lead us into wise and pious reflections upon it.

To conclude; from the care which this holy evangelist expressed for the edification and comfort of his friend Theophilus, let us learn to regard it as one of the most important offices of friendship to labour for the spiritual advantage of each other; by endeavouring not only to awaken and instruct those that are entirely unacquainted or unaffected with divine things, but also, as we have opportunity, to confirm the faith and quicken the zeal of the most established Christians with whom we converse. Happy the men whose tongues and whose pens are employed in so good a work: may they never, in the remotest ages, fail of some excellent Theophilus to welcome and encourage their pious attempts!

SECT. II.

St. John begins his gospel with a very sublime and emphatical account of the deity and incarnation of Christ; and of those glorious and important purposes for which he condescended to appear among us in the human nature. John I. 1—14.

JOHN I. 1.  
In the beginning was the word, and the word was God.

JOHN I. 1.  
In the beginning; before the foundation of the world, or the first production of any created being, a glorious person existed, who (on account of the perfections of his nature and his being in time the medium of divine manifestations to us) may properly be called the word of God. And the

a The word of God.] The Greek logos is that I doubt not but most of my readers now become so familiar to an English ear, would have understood had I retained it in
St. John asserts the Deity of Christ.

The word was originally with God the Father of all; so that to him the words of Solomon might justly be applied, Prov. viii. 30. "He was by him as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight." Nay, by a generation which none can declare, and an union which none can fully conceive, the word was himself God, that is, possessed of a nature truly and properly divine. I repeat it again, that the condescension of his incarnation may be more attentively considered; this divine word was in the very beginning with God, and, by virtue of his most intimate union with him, was possessed of infinite glory and felicity. And when it pleased God to begin his work of creation, all things in the world was with God, and the word was God.

2. The same was in the beginning with God.

3. All things were made by him; and without

in my translation; which, on account of the singularity of the idea here signified by it, I should have done had I not feared it might have been unintelligible to a few at least, and so have impaired the pleasure they might find in so excellent a passage. I know that some of the fathers render logos, reason, as M. Le Clerc doth; though I apprehend they mean it in a very different sense from him, who seems to understand it only as a strong eastern phrase, to signify the consummation wisdom of the gospel scheme. See his Harmony, p. 44. But this will entirely enervate and destroy the sense of ver. 13, as well as of those texts which speak of Christ's coming out from God, enjoying glory with him before the world was, &c.

b The word was God.] I know how eagerly many have contended that the word God is used here in an inferior sense; the necessary consequence of which is (as indeed some have expressly avowed it) that this clause should be rendered The word was a god, that is, a kind of inferior deity, as governors are called gods. See John x. 34, and 1 Cor. viii. 5. But it is impossible he should here be so called merely as a governor, because he is spoken of as existing before the production of any creatures whom he could govern: and it is to me most incredible that, when the Jews were so exceedingly averse to idolatry, and the Gentiles so unhappily prone to it, such a plume writer as this apostle should lay so dangerous a stumbling-block on the very threshold of his work, and represent it as the Christian doctrine, that in the beginning of all things there were two gods, one supreme and the other subordinate: a difficulty which, if possible, would be yet farther increased by recollecting what so many ancient writers assert, that this gospel was written with a particular view of opposing the Corinthians and Ebionites (see Iren. 1. i. c. 26; l. iii. c. 11; Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. vi. c. 14), on which account a greater accuracy of expression must have been necessary. There are so many instances in the writings of this apostle, and even in this chapter (see ver. 6, 13, 15, 18,) where θεός, without the artile, is used to signify God in the highest sense of the word, that it is something surprising such a stress should be laid on the want of that article, as a proof that it is used only in a subordinate sense.—On the other hand, to conceive of Christ as a distinct and co-ordinate God, would be equally inconsistent with the most express declarations of scripture, and far more irreconcilable with reason. Nothing I have said above can, by any means, be justly interpreted in such a sense: and I here solemnly disclaim the least intention of insinuating one thought of that kind, by any thing I have ever written, here or elsewhere.—The order of the words in the original (τὸν θεόν οὐκ ἐγείρας), is such, that some have thought the clause might more exactly be translated, God was the word. But there are almost every where so many instances of such a construction as our version supposes, that I chose rather to follow it than to vary from it, unnecessarily, in this important passage. I am deeply sensible of the sublime and mysterious nature of the doctrine of Christ's deity, as here declared; but it would be quite foreign to my purpose to enter into a large discussion of that great foundation of our faith; it has often been done by much abler hands. It was, however, matter of conscience with me, on the one hand, thus strongly to declare my belief of it; and, on the other, to leave it as far as I could in the simplicity of scripture expressions. I shall only add in the words, or at least in the sense of Bishop Bunnet, "That had not St. John and the other
the whole compass of nature were made by him, even by his almighty word; and without him was not any thing made, so much as one single being, whether among the noblest or the meanest of God's various works. That fulness of power, wisdom, and benignity, which was in him, was the fountain of life to the whole creation: and it is in particular our concern to remember

other apostles thought it a doctrine of great importance in the gospel scheme, they would rather have waved than asserted and insisted upon, considering the critical circumstances in which they wrote.' See Burnet on the Articles, page 40.

c All things were made by him.] It would be the work of a treatise rather than a note to represent the Jewish doctrine of the creation of all things by the divine Logos; to which (rather than the platonistic) there may be some reference here. They who have no opportunity of examining the original authors, may see what those learned men have said, to whom Dr. A. Taylor refers in his Treatise on the Trinity, p. 233; to which add Dr. Pearson on the Creed, p. 118; Dr. Scott's Christian Life, Vol. III. p. 565; sec. fol. and Dr. Watts's Dissertation on the Trinity, No. IV. § 5.—There is, however, a remarkable passage I shall mention to this purpose as a specimen of the rest; and the rather because it is omitted in most of the collections I have seen on this head, and not fully cited and explained in what I take to be its exact sense in any. Philo Judeus (de Proph. p. 463.) speaking of the cherubims on the mercy seat as symbolical representations of what he calls the creating and governing powers, makes this additional reflection: "The divine Word Logos is above these, of whom we can have no idea by the sight or any other sense; he being himself the image of God, the eldest of all intelligent beings, sitting nearest to Him who is truly THE HOLY ONE, there being no distance between them:" (alldng, I suppose, to the form of those ancient chariots where, as in the chairs we use upon the road, the driver sat close to the person driven; which was not the case in all: compare Acts viii. 58.) "And therefore he (that is, God) says, I will speak unto thee from the mercy seat between the two cherubims; thereby representing the Logos as the charioteer by whom the motion of these powers is directed; and himself who speaks to him as the rider (or person carried) who commands the charioteer how he is to manage the reins," ὃ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς κεραίασιν (scil. ἑξισμοῖς τοῖς ἱππεῖσιν, καὶ βασιλεύσεις) ἈΓΟΥΣ ΘΕΙΟΣ, ης ἡμᾶς ὑπὲρθεν τενών, αὐτῷ

without him was not any thing made that was made.

4. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
John came to testify of him as the true light.

sect. 11. Remember that the life which was in him was the light of men, as all the light of reason and revelation was the effect of his energy on the mind. And the light long shone in the heathen world, and under the dispensation of Moses; and it still shineth in darkness, even on the minds of the most ignorant and prejudiced part of mankind; and yet the darkness was so gross that it opposed its passage; and such was the prevailing degeneracy of their hearts, that they did not apprehend it, or regard its dictates in such a manner as to secure the blessings to which it would have led them.

6 As this was the case for many ages, the Divine Wisdom was pleased to interpose in these latter days by a clearer and fuller discovery: and for this purpose, a man, whose name was John, afterwards called the Baptist, was sent as a messenger from God; of whose miraculous conception and important ministry a more particular account is elsewhere given: But here it may be sufficient to observe in general that though he was himself, in an inferior sense, "a burning and shining light," (compare John v. 35.) yet he came only under the character of a servant, and for a witness that he might testify concerning Christ the true light, that all who heard his discourses might by his means be engaged to believe and follow that divine illumination. And accordingly he most readily confessed that he himself was not that light, but only [came] to bear witness concerning it. The true light of which he spake was Christ, even that Sun of righteousness and Source of truth which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man, dispersing his beams, as it

4 Did not apprehend it, ἦν ἐκτιλίπαν. It might not seem so strange that the world did not fully comprehend the spiritual, since it certainly doth not fully comprehend the material light, nor indeed any of the most familiar objects it discovers: but the word is capable of other senses, and is sometimes used for apprehending or laying hold of a thing: 1 Cor. ix. 24, Phil. iii. 13, 15, and sometimes for perceiving it, Acts iv. 12. x. 34. Compare Acts xiv. 17, xvii. 25. Rom. i. 20, which all illustrate the evangelist's assertion.

6 The true light was Christ. The original yet more clearly expresses the antithesis between this and the former verse: I have endeavoured to follow it in my version without supposing υἱὸς understood here to answer to ἵνα there. I cannot but think the conjecture of the learned Hein-sius very elegant, that the word at the beginning of this verse might belong to the end of the former: the exact construction then would be, ἦν, viz. John was not that light, but he was (that is, he existed and came) that he might bear witness to that light: the true light, &c. was in the world, &c. See Hein-sius loc.

b Which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man.] So I choose to render it, though I acknowledge that our version may be consistent with the truth, and that it most exactly suits the order of the words in the original; but the other is also very grammatical, for ἔρχομεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, and suggests an idea more distinct from ver. 4 Not
it were from one end of the heavens to the other, to the Gentile world, which was in midnight darkness, as well as to the Jews, who enjoyed but a kind of twilight. *He was in the world* in a human form; and though the world was made by him, yet the world knew and acknowledged him not. Yea, he came into his own [territories], even to the Jewish nation, which was under such distinguished obligations to him, and to whom he had been so expressly promised as their great Messiah; *yet his own [people] did not receive him* as they ought; but, on the contrary, treated him in the most contemptuous and ungrateful manner. Nevertheless the detriment was theirs, and it was indeed unspeakably great to them; for to as many as received him, and by a firm and lively faith believed on his name, [even] to all of them, without any exception of even the poorest or the vilest, he granted the glorious privilege of becoming the sons of God; that is, he adopted them into God's family, so that they became entitled to the present immunities and the future eternal inheritance of his children. And they *who thus* believed on him were possessed of these privileges, not in consequence of their being *born of blood*, of their being descended from the loins of the holy patriarchs, or sharing in circumcision and

Not to urge that the phrase of *coming into the world* is with peculiar emphasis used of Christ, and especially under the notion of a light. Compare John xii. 46. *I am come a light into the world.* John iii. 19. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world.*

*The world was made by him.* Some have supposed this particularly levelled against the Gnostics, who maintained that the world was made by an evil genius; and that the God of the Old Testament and the New were different and contrary persons. It is certain that Irenæus, and several others of the fathers, with great propriety have urged this text against that mad notion. Eusebius exposes these wretches in a very just and lively manner, and makes use of words which, if he had been our contemporary, might have seemed directly levelled at a late unhappy writer, who strangely took it into his head to call himself, *The moral philosopher.* But, alas! every succeeding age has had its moral philosophers, who have attempted to remove that burthensome stone the Bible, and have found it returning upon them, so as to grind them, and their schemes and their confidence to powder. The words in my view are these: (Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* lib. v. cap. 23. in fin.) ἀλλὰς αρνηθείσας τοῦ τι νόμον και τοὺς προφήτας, αναρέων καὶ άκουον ἀδιάπαινοι, προφανεῖς Χριστός, αἱ νομισματικοὶ απολλοίς σοφοὶ κοινωνικοὶ εἶσαν. "Some" (who yet, it seems, pretended to be Christians) "absolutely rejecting the law and the prophets by a licentious and atheistical doctrine, which they introduced under a pretence of magnifying the divine goodness, or the gospel," (for χριστός, grace, may signify either) "have plunged themselves into the lowest gulf of perdition." k *He came into his own [territories], yet his own [people] did not receive him.* It is so difficult to express the difference between εἰς τὴν ζωήν, and ἐν τῷ ζωῳ, that few versions have attempted it; yet, as Grotius hath well observed, the energy of the text cannot be understood without attending to it. That the Jewish nation was, in some peculiar sense, under the care and guardianship of Christ before his incarnation, this passage seems strongly to intimate; and many learned men have shewn it in what appears to me a convincing light.

1 *Who*
and the blood of the sacrifices; nor could they ascribe it merely to the will of the flesh, or to their own superior wisdom and goodness, as if, by the power of corrupted nature alone, they had made themselves to differ; nor to the will of man, or to the wisest advice and most powerful exhortations which their fellow-creatures might address to them; but most humbly acknowledge that they were born of God, and indebted to the efficacious influences of his regenerating grace for all their privileges and for all their hopes. Compare John iii. 1—8. Tit. iii. 3—7. and Jam. 1. 18.

14 And in order to raise us sinful creatures to such illustrious dignity and happiness, the divine and eternal word, that glorious person whom we mentioned above, by a most amazing condescension was made flesh, that is, united himself to our inferior and miserable nature with all its innocent infirmities; and he not only made us a transient visit for an hour or a day, but for a considerable time pitched his tabernacle among us on earth; and we who are now recording these things contemplated his glory (compare 1 John i. 1.) with so strict an attention that, from our own personal knowledge, we can bear our testimony to it, that it was in every respect such a glory as became the Only-begotten of the Father; for it shone forth, not merely in that radiant appearance which invested him on the mount

1 [Who were 'not born of blood, &c. but of God.] I am sensible this verse is liable to great difficulty and ambiguity. It is an amazing liberty, the author of the New Translation, published 1727, has taken with it, in explaining it of a birth which they had not from circumcision, nor from the constitution of the body, nor from the institution of man, but from God. I readily allow that εξ αιτων, of bloods, may include circumcision, but cannot confine it to that; patriarchal descent and the blood of sacrifices were so much depended upon by the Jews, that one would suppose them included. Dr. Whitby, with many others, takes the will of the flesh to signify carnal descent; and the will of man adoption; which I should prefer to the opinion of Messrs. L’Enfant and Beausobre, who, without any reason assigned, understand by those born of the will of man, proselytes, as opposed to native Jews; a sense in which I never could find the phrase used. The paraphrase I have given, keeps the ideas distinct; answers the frequent signification of flesh elsewhere; (compare John iii. 6. Rom. vii. 25. viii. 3, 8. and Gal. v. 17.) and conveys an important and edifying sense, very agreeable to the tenor of scripture. But I submit it to the reader, without pretending that it is the only interpretation the words will bear. I hope he will always carefully distinguish between the text and the paraphrase, and remember how very different a regard is owing to the one and the other.


n [Pitched his tabernacle among us.] There is so visible a reference in the word σεραπισμός, to the dwelling of the Shechinah in the tabernacle of Moses, that it was very proper to render it by the word I have used.

o Full
mount of transfiguration; and in the splendor of his continued miracles, but in all his temper, ministration and conduct, through the whole series of his life, in which he appeared \textit{full of grace and truth}; that is, as he was in himself most benevolent and upright, so he made the amplest discoveries of pardon to sinners, which the Mosaic dispensation could not possibly do, and exhibited the most important and substantial blessings, whereas that was at best but "a shadow of good things to come." Compare Heb. x. 1.

\textbf{IMPROVEMENT.}

Justly hath our Redeemer said, \textit{Blessed is the man that is not offended in me:} and we may peculiarly apply the words to that great and glorious doctrine of the \textit{deity of Christ}, which is here before us. A thousand high and curious thoughts will naturally arise in our corrupt hearts on this view of it; but may Divine Grace subdue them all to the obedience of an humble faith; so that, with Thomas, we may each of us fall down at his feet, and cry out with sincere and unreserved devotion, \textit{My Lord and my God!}

Let us adore him as the Creator and Preserver of all, the overflowing Fountain of light and life. Let us with unutterable pleasure hail this \textit{Sun of Righteousness}, whose rays, by the tender mercies of the Father, have visited our benighted world to guide our feet into the way of peace: and while we lament that the darkness hath not apprehended and received him, let us earnestly pray that he may ere long penetrate every cloud of ignorance and mist of error, and may diffuse among all the nations knowledge and grace, purity and joy. Let us especially pray that he may penetrate our beclouded souls; and that they may, in holy correspondence to the purposes of his appearing, be \textit{turned as clay to the seal}.—Job xxxviii. 14.—\textit{The world knew him not}; but may we know him, and give him that honourable and grateful reception which so great a favour may justly demand!—Yet what returns can be pro-

\footnote{\textit{Fall of grace and truth.} It is plain that those words, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, are to be considered as a parenthesis; and these are to be joined with the preceding, thus, \textit{He dwelt among us—full of grace and truth}. But the length of the paraphrase made it inconvenient to transpose them.

\textit{The most substantial blessings.} That \textit{truth} is sometimes used, not so much in opposition to falsehood, as to hieroglyphicks, shadows and types, an attentive reader must often have observed. See Heb. viii. 2, ix. 24, and Dan. vii. 16. Compare Col. ii. 17.

\footnote{\textit{Turned as clay to the seal.} This beautiful metaphor of the inspired writer seems, by a very expressive contrast, to illustrate the meaning of \textit{προσφέρω} in the fifth verse. It was for want of this the darkness did not apprehend or receive the light; did not form itself into a due correspondence to it so as to put on its habit, and clothe itself with the lustre of its reflected beams. How glorious and happy is that soul on which the knowledge of Christ hath that genuine influence!}
proportionable to his condescension in becoming flesh for us, and
pitching his tabernacle among miserable and sinful mortals?—
Happy apostles that beheld his glory! And surely there are in his
word such reflections of it as we may also behold, and as will
oblige us to acknowledge it to be a glory that became the Only-
begotten of the Father.
Let us cordially receive him as full of grace and truth, that we
also may stand entitled to the privileges of God's children. And if
we are already of that happy number, let us not arrogate the glory
of it to ourselves, or ascribe it entirely to those who have been the
instruments of this important change; but remember that of his
own will God hath begotten us by the word of his power, and that of
him we are in Christ Jesus: to him then let us refer the ultimate
praise, if that divine and almighty Saviour be made unto us wisdom
and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 1 Cor. i. 30.

SECT. III.

An angel appears to Zacharias to give him notice of the birth of
John the Baptist; and his mother on her conception retires.

In the days of Herod the Great, whom the
Romans had made king of Judea, there was
a priest named Zacharias, who belonged to that
course of priests in the temple which was called
the course of Abiah: as Abiah was the head of
one of the twenty-four courses into which David
distributed the priests (compare 1 Chron. xxiii.
6, and xxiv. 10.) whose memory was still kept
up, though none of his line returned from the
captivity: And his wife (that is, the wife of Za-
charias) was one of the daughters of the honour-
able family of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

And they were both of them persons of a very fair
character among men; and not only so, but
sincerely and eminently righteous in the sight of
God, walking before him in the simplicity of their
hearts, in a faithful observance of all the moral
commands, as well as ceremonial ordinances and
institutions of the Lord, in a very blameless and
exemplary manner. And they had no child, be-
cause Elizabeth was barren; and so pious a man

a Moral commands, as well as ceremonial
institutions.] Some have thought this
distinction too nice: but it is certain the
word ἐνδομανθία is sometimes used to sig-
nify ceremonial institutions (see Heb. ix.
1, 10), though it is often taken in a much
more extensive sense. It is, however,
evident that all expressed in the paraphrase
must be intended in the text, since under
the Jewish dispensation they could not have
approved themselves upright before God
without an obedient regard to the cere-
monial law.

b Taking
Elizabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that when he was at Jerusalem, performing the priest's office before God, in the order of his course, or of the class to which he belonged, According to the custom of assigning the respective offices of the priesthood to particular persons then in waiting, which was done by lot, it so happened, that his lot was then to perform the most honourable service of daily ministration, that is, to burn incense on the golden altar which was before the Lord, contiguous to the holy of holies. (Exod. xxx. 7. xl. 5—26.) This he accordingly did, when he went into the temple of the Lord, either at the time of morning or evening sacrifice. And the whole multitude 10 of pious Jews assembled for divine worship (according to the usual custom of the people at that time), were praying without in the courts of the temple at the time of incense', to declare their concurrence with the priest in that intercession which he was making to God on their account. Compare Rev. viii. 3, 4.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

b Taking another wife while she lived.] Polygamy as well as divorce were, for the hardness of their hearts, tolerated among the Jews; but they seem both to have been, in this age at least, disapproved by persons of the best character. Compare Mal. ii. 14—16. and 1 Tim. iii. 2.

c 'Were praying without at the time of incense.] This was the foundation of that elegant figure by which prayer is so often compared to incense: (see Psal. cxlii. 2. Mal. i. 11. Rev. viii. 3, 4.) and perhaps one reason of ordaining incense might be to intimate the acceptableness of those pious prayers which were to accompany it. And indeed burning fragrant perfumes was, and in the eastern nations still is, so important a part of the entertainment of illustrious families, that one might well expect it in the house of God. It is so plain that this was only an office of daily ministration, and that Zacharias was one of the ordinary priests, that one cannot but be surprised that any should ever conclude from this circumstance of the story that Zacharias was sagan, or assistant to the high-priest, and was now performing his grand office on the day of atonement, and so on this foundation should calculate the birth of John the Baptist and of Christ, and all the other feasts which depend upon them: yet this is done in the calendars both of the Roman and Greek church.
But the angel immediately scattered his fears, and said unto him, with great gentleness of aspect and voice, Fear not, Zacharias; for I come unto thee with no message of terror, but, on the contrary, I am sent to assure thee that thy frequently repeated prayer for the redemption of Israel, as well as that which thou hast formerly offered for a blessing on thine own family, is at length heard: and in proof of it, I add, that Elizabeth thy wife shall ere long bear thee a son to comfort thee in this thy declining age; and, in token of the gracious regard of God to him, thou shalt call his name John, that is, the grace and favour of God, to intimate that the Divine Grace shall, in a very eminent manner, be upon him. And this intimation shall be abundantly answered: for he shall be a person of so distinguished a character, that thou shalt have joy and transport in him; and many others shall also have reason to rejoice with thee on occasion of his birth. For he shall be great, not in circumstances of outward dignity and splendor, but what is infinitely more important, in the sight of the Lord, even Jehovah his God, whose approbation is the highest glory: and, in token of his being in a peculiar manner separated to his service, like the ancient Nazarites, Numb. vi. 3. he shall drink neither wine nor any other sort of intoxicating liquor; and he shall be so early remarkable for wisdom and piety, that he shall appear to be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And, thus trained up and animated for service, he shall, when he appears under a public character, turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God; whose ways they have

d Thy prayer is heard.] No doubt he had often prayed for children; but, as he seems now to have given up all expectations of that kind, it is reasonable to conclude that these words chiefly relate to his prayers for the deliverance of Israel by the Messiah, whose appearance was then expected by pious persons conversant in the sacred writings (Luke ii. 25, 28. xix. 11. xxiii. 51.) and the more earnestly desired just at this time, as they suffered so many grievous things by the oppression of the Romans and the tyranny of Herod, which toward the close of his reign grew more and more insupportable.

e Thou shalt call his name John.] It was the office of the father to name the child. Compare verse 62. It is well known that this name, in Hebrew JOHANAN, (which occurs near thirty times in the Old Testament, though the English reader is not aware that it is the same,) is derived from JEHOVAN and CHEN, and properly signifies the grace and favour of the Lord. Elhanan, and many of the other proper names among the Hebrews, had such a kind of signification, and probably were given in token of their good wishes to the infant that received them.

f Joy and transport.] Αγονησις (properly answers to the word exultation, or leaping for joy, and is far more expressive than gladness. Compare 1 Pet. i. 8. iv. 13. and Mat. v. 12. in which last places we render it by being exceeding glad.
have so generally forsaken, even while they are professing themselves to be his peculiar people and boasting in such an extraordinary relation to him. And, to prepare them to receive the Lord their God appearing in the person of the Messiah, he shall go before him, as an illustrious harbinger, in the spirit and power of Elijah; that is, animated by the same sanctity, courage and zeal for reformation, which appeared so remarkable in that celebrated prophet; and, according to that prediction of Malachi, (with which the sacred canon concludes, Mal. iv. 6.) he shall meet with such glorious success in his ministry, as to convert the hearts of the fathers with those of the children; that is, he shall bring many both of the rising and the declining age, to that real piety towards God, which will be the surest band of their mutual duty towards each other: and many of those who have hitherto been disobedient to the wisdom of the just; that is, insensible of the obligations to real religion, which is the greatest wisdom, shall he make ready, as a people prepared for the Lord, raising in their minds an expectation of the Messiah, and a disposition to welcome him when he shall appear.

And Zacharias then said to the angel, By what sign shall I know that this desirable and wonderful event shall be accomplished? for, in the course of nature, it seems most improbable; since I am an old man, and my wife is also considerably advanced in years.

And the angel, answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and near the throne of his Majesty, as one of the chief officers in his celestial court; of whose appearance to Daniel thou hast so frequently read, (Dan. 8. 17.)

To convert the hearts of the fathers with those of the children; ובם לא וליירש את א">

Here is a plain allusion to Mal. iv. 6, where it is said (as we render it) that Elijah shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers: "LEB ABOOTH AL XENIM," which the seventy render, קהיה ימי זכירה בני קדmom in which words it is quoted, Ecclus. xlvi. 10, but St. Luke's version seems as agreeable to the Hebrew. I thought Sir Norton Knatchbull's reason sufficient to justify my rendering it as I have done; which is just as our translators have rendered the like phrase, Judith ix. 10. דבשמה ערה, ופי ערה יז: Septuag., the servant with the prince, and the prince with the servant. But, as Mr. L'Enfant and others, not without some probability render it, to reconcile fathers and children, supposing it may relate to domestic dissensions, inseparable from the variety of religious sects then amongst the Jews, I was willing to comprehend that sense in my paraphrase,—Sir Norton Knatchbull's manner of pointing the last clause of the verse appeared to me so elegant, that I could not but follow it. Elsner would render it nearly in the same sense, By the wisdom of the just, to prepare the disobedient as a people furnished for the Lord, or formed for him. (Compare Isa. xlii. 7. Septuag.) See Elsner Observ. Vol. I. p. 170—173.
20 bars. And, since thou dost not acquiesce in this, God will give thee a sign; which, while it confirms thy faith, shall also intimate his displeasure against this sinful mixture of unbelief: for, behold, thou shalt, from this moment, be silent, and unable to speak any more, till the day in which these things shall be accomplished, even till the day in which the child shall be born; because thou hast not immediately believed my words, which yet, through the divine indulgence and favour to thee, shall be assuredly fulfilled in their season, that is, as soon as thou canst reasonably expect after thy return home.

21 And the people, who stood without, were waiting for Zacharias, that he might dismiss them with his blessing, (Numb. vi. 23—27. and Lev. ix. 22, 23.) and they wondered that he continued so long in the temple, beyond the usual time: for he stayed a while after the angel disappeared, to present before God such humiliations and thanksgivings as this extraordinary circumstance required. But when he came out he was not able to speak to them; and, by the consternation in which he appeared, they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he himself, by signs, intimated [1] to them; and he continued deaf and dumb during the remainder of his stay.

\[a\] From parents who had long been barren.] Zacharias, being so pious a priest, could not but often have read the account which the scripture gives of the birth of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, &c. who were all descended from mothers that had been long barren. The resemblance in circumstances might well have produced a peculiar regard to them; and one would have imagined he must immediately have recollected the story of the angel's appearance to Manoah in particular, when the same scene was acted over before his own eyes, and some of the same expressions used by the celestial messenger. Compare Judg. xiii. 2—14.

\[b\] So long in the temple.] All that is here recorded might have passed in a few minutes: it seems probable, therefore, that, since the people took notice of his continuing so much longer than ordinary in the holy place, he spent some time in secret devotion, where, in a mixture of holy affections, rising on so great and extraordinary an occasion, he might easily forget how fast the moments passed away.

\[c\] Deaf and dumb.] As άνεφήρη, signifies deaf, (Mat. xi. 5, Mark vii. 32, 37. ix. 25, and Luke vii. 22.) as well as dumb, (Mat. ix. 33. xii. 22. xv. 31. and Luke xi. 14.) So it is plain, from verse 62, that Zacharias lost his hearing with his speech, during this interval.
at Jerusalem; a circumstance wisely ordered by Providence to awaken a greater and more general expectation as to the event of so strange an occurrence.

And, after this appearance of the angel to him, it came to pass that, when the remaining days of his ministration were fulfilled, he departed to his own house.

And quickly after these days were ended, Elizabeth his wife conceived, according to the prediction of the angel; and, apprehending her condition, she concealed herself five months in an obscure retirement, not only that her conception might more certainly appear, but chiefly that she might enjoy opportunity for those extraordinary devotions which this wonderful favour of Providence demanded: nor could she, under such a circumstance, refrain from saying,

The most solemn acknowledgments well become me, because the Lord himself hath thus miraculously interposed, and done this great work for me, in his own good time, even in the days in which he hath graciously looked down upon me, to take away my reproach of barrenness among men. For barrenness was accounted a peculiar reproach among the Jews, who looked upon it as a singular happiness to be instrumental in multiplying the holy seed, according to the promises which God had made them relating to it.

IMPROVEMENT.

How amiable is the character of this pious pair, who were found walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless! May our behaviour be thus unblameable, and our obedience thus sincere and universal! And let those, whose office leads them nearer

1 My reproach among men.] That barrenness was so amongst the Jews, appears from Gen. xxx. 23. 1 Sam. i. 11. Isa. iv. 1, liv. 1, 4, and many other passages. That a branch of the family of Aaron should fail, would also be looked upon as a particular calamity, and might, by ignorant and uncharitable people, be interpreted as a judgment: and so much the rather, considering the many promises God had made to increase the families of his obedient people, Exod. xxxii. 13. Lev. xxvi. 9. Deut. vii. 13. and Psal. cxvii. 3, 4, 5.—I will here digress so far as to observe, that, considering how the whole Jewish policy was interwoven with those acts of religion which were to be performed by the priests alone, it might seem wonderful that no provision at all should be made for entailing the priesthood on any other family, if that of Aaron should happen to be extinct. Leaving this contingency unprovided for, was in effect putting the whole credit of the Jewish religion upon the perpetual continuance of the male branches of that family: an issue on which no man of Moses' prudence, nor indeed of common sense, would have rested his legislation, if he had not been truly conscious of its divine original; especially after two of Aaron's four sons had been cut off in one day for a rash act in the execution of their office, as soon as they were initiated into it, and died without any children. Numb. iii. 4.

2 Nazareth.]
nearer to God than others, remember their peculiar obligation to imitate such an example.

Let us observe, with pleasure, that the prayers which such worshippers offer come up with acceptance before God; to whom no costly perfume is so sweet as the fragrancy of a character like this. —An answer of peace was here returned when the case seemed to be most helpless. Let us learn to wait patiently for the Lord, and leave it to his own infinite wisdom to chuse the time and manner in which he shall appear for us.

Zacharias, accustomed as he was to converse with the God of heaven, was nevertheless, as we see, thrown into great consternation at the appearance of his angelic messenger. And may we not regard it, therefore, as an instance of the goodness as well as wisdom of God, that he determines that the services which these heavenly spirits render us should be generally invisible? —It is delightful to observe that amiable condescension with which Gabriel, the courtier of heaven, behaved on this occasion. Let it teach us with pleasure to pursue the humblest offices of duty and love which God may assign us towards any of our fellow-servants, even in the lowest stations.

Happy was the holy Baptist in being employed in this blessed work of preparing men's hearts to receive a Saviour, and reducing the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. May we be inspired with some degree of zeal like his, in our proper sphere, to pursue so noble a design!

We see, in the instance of Zacharias, that some remainders of unbelief may be found even in a faithful heart: let us guard against them, as remembering they will be displeasing to God, and hurtful to ourselves. —And, to conclude, when Providence favours us with any peculiarly gracious interpositions, let us attentively remark the hand of God in them; and let religious retirement leave room for serious recollection and devout acknowledgments.

SECT. IV.

The angel Gabriel is sent to the virgin Mary, to inform her of the conception of Christ by her, in which she humbly acquiesces.


Luke I. 26. AND in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.

SECT. iv.

I N the sixth month after Elizabeth had conceived, the same angel Gabriel, who had been the messenger of such good news to Zacharias, was sent from God to a small and inconsiderable city of Galilee, which was called Nazareth; being charged with an important commission to a virgin,

a Nazareth.] A city in the tribe of Zebulun, which was reduced to so low and contemptible a condition, that no good thing was expected from thence. John i. 46.
virgin, who was contracted, according to the Jewish method of espousals, to a man whose name was Joseph; a descendant of the royal house of David; which illustrious family was now reduced to so low a condition, that Joseph followed the employment of a carpenter: and the virgin's name was Mary, of the same lineage. And the angel entered in to the room, in which she was alone; and, standing before her, surrounded her with an extraordinary lustre, he addressed himself unto her, and said, Hail, O thou distinguished favourite of heaven! I congratulate thy happiness; for the Lord is with thee, and is about to manifest his condescending regard in a manner which shall oblige all around thee to acknowledge that thou art blessed among women, the greatest and happiest of thy sex.

Now the pious and modest virgin, when she saw this appearance of [the angel,] and heard his message, as she plainly perceived it to be something of a very extraordinary nature, was much disturbed at his discourse; and, not imagining herself at all worthy of such applause and congratulation, she reasoned with herself, for a while, what kind of salutation this could be, and from what original it could proceed.

And the angel, immediately perceiving it, to disperse the doubt she was in, said unto her again, Fear not, Mary; for I am a messenger sent from heaven to tell thee that thou hast found favour with God. And behold and observe it with due regard, for I assure thee, in his name, that from this very time thou shalt be with child, and at the proper season shalt be delivered of a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

Heshall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

She was disturbed at his discourse.] Some would render έις το θεὸν αὐτοῦ, on account of him; and Heinsius hath abundantly shown how common this manner of speaking is in the sacred writings.

What kind of salutation.] She seems to have suspected it might possibly proceed from the artifice of some evil spirit, to inspire her with sentiments of vanity and pride.

Her
And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 And Mary replied to the angel, O thou heavenly messenger, permit me to ask, How can this possibly be from this time, as thou hast intimated to me, since I am as yet a virgin?

35 And the angel, answering, said unto her, There is nothing in that objection, great as it may seem, for this whole affair is to be a scene of miracle: the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High God shall thus overshadow thee by an amazing energy, to produce an effect hitherto, from the foundation of the earth, unknown: and therefore that holy Offspring of thine shall, with regard to this miraculous conception, as well as another and yet greater consideration, be called the Son of God. And behold, to confirm thy faith in a declaration which might seem so incredible, I farther assure thee that thy cousin Elizabeth also hath, by the miraculous power of God, conceived a son, though she be now in her old age; and this is the sixth month of pregnancy with her who hath long been called barren, and spoken of as one who could have no hope of being a mother. And scruple not to believe what I have told thee with regard to thyself as

[How can this be,—since I am as yet a virgin?] Some would render this, What shall this be if I have no intercourse with a man? as if she would be resolved whether this birth were to be produced in a common or a miraculous manner. But I think it is more natural to suppose that she understood the former words as an intimation that the effect was immediately to take place, to which her present circumstance seemed, humanly speaking, an invincible objection. Our English version, I know not a man, is more literal than what is here given; but I do not apprehend that the strictest fidelity requires to render the Hebraism so exactly; the sense is evidently the same.

[Who hath been called barren.] I cannot think (with some learned and judicious persons) that to be called and to be, signify entirely the same thing, so as that the former should be thought a mere pleonasm, and rendered just as the latter. The phrase seems to signify, in the language of scripture, not only that the thing shall really be what it is called, but also that it shall be taken notice of in that view: which I think will appear from an attentive consideration of the chief texts which have been produced to establish the opposite opinion. Compare Isa. i. 26. ix. 6. xxxv. 8. xlvii. 1. 5. livi. 7. lxi. 3. 6. Mat. v. 9. 19. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. 1 John iii. 1.
For with God nothing shall be impossible.

And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

And, strange as the message was, Mary firmly believed it, and said, with the most amiable humility and piety, Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, and would approve myself faithful and obedient; may it be unto me according to thy word! I thankfully accept the honour, of which I confess I am unworthy; and humbly resign my reputation, and even my life, to the divine care and providence, while I wait the accomplishment of thy prediction.

Then the angel, having executed his commission, departed from her, and returned to his abode in the heavenly regions.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what holy wonder and pleasure should we trace this Ver. notice of an incarnate Redeemer? and how thankfully should we adore his condescending goodness, that for us men, and for our salvation, he did not despise the womb of so obscure a virgin?

We too are ready in our thoughts, with Gabriel, to congratulate late her on so distinguished an honour, and to say, as one did to Christ, in the days of his flesh, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, O Lord, and the breasts which thou hast sucked! (Luke xi. 27.) But let us remember there is yet a nobler blessedness than this attending those, in whose hearts he is so formed by divine grace, that they hear his word and do it.

Let us hear it, with joy, that he is Jesus the Saviour; but let us also consider that he is Christ the anointed Sovereign, who is to rule over God’s people for ever. Remember, O my soul, that of his kingdom there shall be no end; and esteem it thine unspeakable honour and happiness to be enrolled amongst his faithful subjects.

Mary firmly believed it.] It is worthy of our remark, that Mary, though a young virgin, should so readily believe an event, in itself so much more wonderful than that which Zacharias, though an aged priest, had found it so difficult to credit. And it may be observed, that the sacred writers are particularly careful to record instances of this kind in which God doth, as it were, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings perfect his praise.

Resign my reputation, and even my life.] For both these, humanly speaking, might have been in danger, considering the severity of the Mosaic law against those who had violated the faith of their espousals. (Compare Deut. xxii. 23, 24.) And though so impious a prince as Herod, who was then on the Jewish throne, undoubtedly controlled many of the laws of God, yet the natural severity and extravagant jealousy of his temper, would probably engage him to execute this in its full terror.
The glories promised to such in the future state are so far beyond experience, or even imagination, that they might, to sense, appear as incredible as the message which Mary received: but let us re-
member the eternal truth of what Gabriel suggested to her, that nothing is impossible to God. He can therefore ripen our imperfect souls to all the improvement and pleasures of the heavenly state, as easily as he produces the meanest vegetable on the earth.

Let the temper of the blessed virgin, on this great occasion, be therefore the beautiful model of ours: so, when the purposes of the Divine Love are declared to us, may we resign ourselves unto the Lord; and with such calm tranquillity, firm faith and joyful acquiescence, may we wait the accomplishment of his gracious promise, and say, Behold the servants of the Lord! be it unto us according to his word! So do thou, O Lord, animate and support us! and the weakest of thy children shall not stumble at the greatest of thy promises through unbelief; but, being strong in faith, shall give glory to God.

SECT. V.

Mary visits Elizabeth; her faith is confirmed by it, and she breaks out into a song of praise. Luke I. 39—56.

IN those days, or soon after the time that she received the extraordinary message mentioned above, Mary arose from Nazareth, where she then was, and went, with all the expedition she conveniently could, to what was called the hill-country, which lay towards the south of Canaan; and came into a city of Judah, where Zacharias dwelt, with a comfortable expectation that this visit might tend both to confirm her faith and vindicate her character. And accordingly she entered into the house of her kinsman Zacharias, and, to the pleasing surprise of her friend, saluted Elizabeth.

And it came to pass that, as soon as Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant in her womb did, with a most unusual emotion, leap for joy, as sensible of the approach of Him whose fore-

a Mary arose and went, &c.] This was a very wise determination; as it was very probable that, by communicating the vision she had seen, and perhaps also describing the form in which the angel appeared, she might convince Zacharias and Elizabeth that there was something singular in her case, and so might bring in the reputation of such worthy and eminent persons to establish her own, in a circumstance which might otherwise expose her to great suspicion and censure. I shall only add, that it is not improbable the city here spoken of might be Hebron; a city belonging to the priests in the tribe of Judah and the hill-country. Josh. xxvi. 11.

b Happy
forerunner he was appointed to be. And Elizabeth was directed to consider it in this view; for she was immediately filled with an extraordinary degree of divine inspiration, by the influences of the Holy Spirit. And, far from envying the superior honour of her young cousin, she, in very exalted language, congratulated her on the occasion; and, crying out with a loud voice, as in a sacred kind of transport, she said, in the very words which Gabriel had before used to the virgin:

Most blessed art thou, O Mary, among all the women in the whole world; and most blessed is the sacred and miraculous fruit of thy womb.

And indeed, when I consider the matter attentively, I cannot but cry out, in amazement, Whence is this honour done to me, that she, who is so highly honoured as to be the mother of that wonderful and divine child, whom I would with all humility own as my Lord, should come unto me as a guest under my roof; to whom I should rather have hastened to pay my homage? And that he, of whom thou art now pregnant, is indeed my Lord the Messiah, I certainly know by what I have now felt: for, behold, as soon as the first voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, as thou wast entering into the house, the very infant within me leaped in my womb for joy, with a vigour and sprightliness unknown before; which I am taught to interpret as a homage done to Him before whose face he is to go to prepare his way. And, when I consider the whole affair in all its variety of circumstances, I have reason to say, Happy is she that so readily believed what to sense appeared so utterly incredible, without so much as requiring any miraculous sign of it; for surely there shall be a very faithful and an exact accomplishment of all those things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.

Then Mary also was filled with a transport of holy joy; and, under the direction of the same Spirit, as well as in many of those words which she

---

b Happy is she that believeth, &c.] I doubt not but here is an oblique reference to the unhappiness of Zacharias, who had not immediately believed the promise of God to him, and thereby had incurred so sensible a mark of the divine displeasure. I have gently touched upon it in the paraphrase; but I was cautious of being too express, lest I should violate that great decorum, which the Spirit of God, as well as the rules of modesty and piety, taught her to observe, when the faults of a husband were in question. It may be added, that these words shewed her knowledge of Mary's immediate belief of the promise made to her; a knowledge which she could only gain by divine revelation, and which, therefore, would be a mutual confirmation of the faith of both.

a Mary
she had learnt from the sacred oracles, she, in the
warth of her devotion, said, "My very soul
doth most affectionately magnify and extol the
Lord. And my spirit, with all its most exalted
powers, rejoiceth in God as my Saviour; who,
I trust, is granting me my own share in that
gospel which, by the appearance of this his
dear Son, he is sending to so many others:

47 And my spirit
hath rejoiced in God
my Saviour.

48 For he that is
mighty hath done to
me great things, and
holy is his name:

49 For he who is powerful
beyond all our conceptions, even the Almighty
God, to whom this strange event is not only
possible, but easy, hath done these great and
unheard of things for me; and his name and
nature [is] so holy, that I cannot suspect the
accomplishment of any thing that he hath
promised. His mercy also hath in every age
been the hope and confidence of his people;
and I well know that it [is] from generation
to generation on them that fear him. He hath
often wrought the most glorious displays of
strength by his irresistible arm: he hath often
dispersed the haughty sinners that exult them-
selves against him, and confounded them in
those schemes which were the most laboured
imagination of their own hearts." He hath
often

50 And his mercy
is on them that fear
him, from generation
to generation.

51 He hath shewed
strength with his arm;
he hath scattered the
proud in the imagina-
tion of their hearts.

52 He hath put down
the

\( ^c \) Mary also said.] It is observable that
most of these phrases are borrowed from
the Old Testament, with which the pious
virgin seems to have been very conversant;
especially from the Song of Hannah;
in which there were so many passages re-
markably suitable to her own case. Com-
Psalm civ. 17. xcvi. 1. lxxxix. 10, civ,
and Mic. vii. 20.\( ^d \) Shall call me happy, μακαρίων.] I
think there are several other texts where
μακαρίων should rather be rendered happy
than blessed, which is the proper signification
of εὐλογία; (see 1 Tim. i. 11. vi.
15. and Rev. xx. 6.) yet I cannot say that
the distinction is always material, nor
do I always observe it in the following ver-
sion.

\( ^e \) He hath dispersed the haughty, &c.
δισταχοποιεῖν υπερηντον διωκόμενον ἀπόκρισιν ἁρπάζων αὐτον.] I
know this may be rendered, He hath
scattered those that prided themselves in
the imagination, or thought, of their hearts:
but I apprehend the words would well
bear the yet more emphatical sense I have
here given them. And thus they are pecu-
liarily applicable to the gospel; in
which God doth not only cast down ima-
ginations and every high thing, &c. (2 Cor.
x. 5.) by the humbling scheme of his
recovering grace, but hath remarkably
confounded his most insolent enemies in
their own most elaborate projects, and
Mary's song of praise.

often brought down mighty potentates from their thrones of dignity and power, and, by some singular interposition of his providence, hath exalted the lowly from their obscurest state, as he is now doing with respect to me. 

He hath often filled the hungry with a variety of good things, and hath sent away the rich and luxurious sinner empty; having stripped him of all his plenty, and turned him out of all those possessions in which he was once so confident. And, as a glorious instance of his condescension and his power, though our condition be so low in comparison of what it once was, he hath now succoured Israel, and taken him as his child into paternal protection: and all this he hath graciously done in remembrance of his everlasting mercy. Even as he long ago spoke to our fathers, and promised it to Abraham and to his seed, throughout all generations: and we, the heirs of those promises, shall now behold them happily fulfilled in all the fulness of their extent and glory.

Then Mary abode with her cousin Elizabeth about three months, till very near the time of her delivery; and then returned to her own house and lived privately there; concealing, but not forgetting these extraordinary things, which had so powerful a tendency to establish and animate her mind.

established his sacred cause by the violent attempts they have made to suppress it. (Compare Psal. ii. 1—3.) A triumph of divine wisdom, of which succeeding ages furnish out memorable and frequent instances at home and abroad. [Sent away the rich empty.] ἑτεσάρχης strictly signifies, hath sent, or turned them out of doors; and very beautifully represents God as the great proprietor of all, and the greatest of men as his tenants at will, whom he can strip and turn out, whenever he pleases.

He hath succoured Israel.] That the word ἄρρητος properly signifies to interpose in favour of a person in great necessity, or extreme danger, Elymer hath abundantly proved, Observ. Vol. I. page 175.

In remembrance of his everlasting mercy.] The beginning of the 55th verse should, I think, be included in a paren-

thesis. It makes an easier and stronger sense to suppose that this remembrance of his mercy for ever refers to his everlasting mercies promised to the patriarchs. Compare Gen. xvii. 19. Isa. lv. 3. Rom. xi. 29. Yet I acknowledge those blessings might be said to be promised to them, and their seed for ever, which were entailed on their remotest generations. (Compare Gen. xii. 15. xviii. 8. &c.) Care is therefore taken to express both in the paraphrase.

Animate her mind.] Many of the things which had passed in this journey, and especially that rapturous inspiration which she had herself experienced, and which till now was probably unknown to her, must elevate her thoughts to a very sublime pitch, and enkindle in her attentive reflecting mind high expectations and glorious hopes. See Luke ii. 19, 51.
How natural is it for those, who have themselves received mercy of the Lord, to communicate their joy to others, and to seek the society of their fellow saints, whom he hath honoured with the signal manifestations of his favour?—Happy are they, whose friendship is confirmed and heightened by such endearing ties! And thrice happy the humble and generous souls who can thus, like Elizabeth, lose the thoughts of private honour and interest in a cordial concern for the glory of God and the good of men; rejoicing to see others, perhaps in some respects their inferiors, raised to stations of service more distinguished than their own!

If this pious matron thought herself so highly honoured in receiving a visit from the mother of our infant Saviour, how much more doth it become us to admire the condescension of our glorious Lord, that he will represent himself as graciously knocking at the door of our hearts, and ready not only to make us a transient visit, but to take up his stated abode with us?

May our faith, like that of the blessed virgin, delightfully rest on all the promises he makes, as firmly believing that there shall be an accomplishment of these things which are spoken! And, while that accomplishment is delayed, may the pleasing expectation of it tune our voice to a song of praise like hers!—Let our souls also magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in that God whom we hope, through grace, to be our Saviour; whose condescension hath regarded us in such low circumstances; and whose almighty power and everlasting love have done such great things for us.—He hath provided heavenly food, to satisfy our hungry souls; and hath raised us to enjoy the mercies which, in more obscure intimations only, he promised to the pious patriarchs.—His mercy is on all that fear him, through succeeding generations.—May such distinguished favours animate our hearts with those sentiments of devotion and zeal which they are so well qualified to excite! Otherwise the joy of the Old Testament saints, in the distant and imperfect prospect of these blessings, will testify against our insensibility in the superior advantages with which we are favoured.

SECT. VI.

The birth and circumcision of John the Baptist.


And, when the full time for Elizabeth's delivery was come, she brought forth a son, exactly according to the prediction of the angel to Zacharias. And her neighbours, and her relations,
59 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called;

63 And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed: and he spake, and praised God.

Tions, were acquainted with it; and, having heard that the Lord, in so illustrious and remarkable a manner, had magnified and displayed his mercy to her, they ran to testify their joy, and sincerely congratulated her on the happy occasion.

And, in particular, it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came together in some considerable numbers, to circumcise the child according to the law (Gen. xvii. 12, Lev. xi. 3.) and, as it was then customary to give it a name, they that were present would have called him Zacharias, after the name of his father: But his mother, who had been more particularly informed by her husband of what had passed between him and the angel in the temple, answered and said, Nay, my friends, it must not be so; but he shall be called John. And when they objected to this, and said 61 unto her, None of thy kindred, either by birth or marriage, is called by this name: In order to determine the question, and to be fully satisfied, they made signs to his father, to know what he would have him called. And he, by signs, asked 63 for a writing tablet; and, when he had received it, he wrote, saying, His name is John; thereby declaring it a settled point, that would admit of no farther debate. And they were all amazed at the determination. But greater still was their astonishment, to find his tongue at liberty and his speech restored; for his mouth was immediately opened, and his tongue [loosed]; and he spake audibly and distinctly; beginning, as it was most reasonable, with praising God in that sublime hymn which we shall presently record.

And

---

2 As it was then customary to give it a name.] The giving the child its name was no more a part of the original intent of circumcision than of baptism; it was an incidental circumstance which custom had added. And I cannot forbear saying that, in administering the Christian ordinance, I think care should be taken to order the voice so that it may plainly appear we only then speak to the child by the name which hath been already given it.—That the father among the ancients used to name the children, and that it was customary often to give them the name of their immediate ancestors, Elsner has shewn on this text.

b A writing tablet, εναγματιστ. We have so few diminutives in our language, that I was not willing to lose this, which much more exactly answers the original than table.

c And his tongue [loosed]; and he spake, praising God.] I entirely agree with the learned Raphelius, (Annot. et Herod. pages 219, 220.) that Elsner's criticism (Obser. Vol. I. page 178, 179.) is not to be admitted, which would render it, And his tongue also spake, praising God. It would then have been ευλογησεν, instead of ευλογησεν; and Raphelius has given unanswerable instances, in the most approved writers, of a verb joined with των χριστοι, when in strict propriety it can only belong to one of them. Compare 1 Cor. iii. 2, where the original is, ΤΩΝ ιοσε βαφων, και ου βοιωμα. I have given you milk to drink, and not meat.
And a religious awful kind of dread fell, not only on those that were present, but on all that dwelt near them: and all these things, in a very particular detail of circumstances, were published, and became the great topic of conversation over the whole hill-country of Judea. And all wise and pious persons that heard [them] laid them up carefully in their hearts, as matters highly worthy their future consideration, saying, What kind of a child will this be, who is ushered into the world in so extraordinary a way? And their expectations were farther raised by observing that, as he grew up, the hand of the Lord was signalu with him; and, through the divine blessing, he appeared not only a healthful and thriving, but likewise, on other and higher accounts, a very hopeful child.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Ver. So sure are the promises of God, and so certainly will the full accomplishment of them another day shame our suspicious unbelieving hearts, and awaken the tongues of his servants to songs of praise! Happy the souls who, by a lively faith in them, are anticipating that blessed day, and whose minds, kept in tune by these pleasing views, are opening themselves to the most tender sympathy with others, and, like the kindred of this pious pair, are making the religious joys of others their own; so sharing, rather than envying the superior favours bestowed upon them!

Let us learn, with them, wisely to observe what God is doing around us and to lay up remarkable occurrences in our hearts: that, by comparing one step of divine conduct with another, we may the better understand the loving kindness of the Lord, and be engaged to act with more regular obedience in a holy subserviency to his gracious purposes.

When, like good Zacharias and Elizabeth, we have the pleasure to see our infant offspring growing up in safety and cheerfulness, with healthy constitutions of body and towardly dispositions of mind too, let us ascribe it to the hand of the Lord, which is upon them for good. Let us remember that we are at best but the instruments of the divine care and favour to them; and that our families would soon become scenes of desolation, did not God watch over them in a thousand circumstances of danger and distress, which no prudence of ours could have foreseen, and which no care of ours could have been able to provide against.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea. 66 And all they that had heard them, laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.

65, 66 Let us learn, with them, wisely to observe what God is doing around us and to lay up remarkable occurrences in our hearts: that, by comparing one step of divine conduct with another, we may the better understand the loving kindness of the Lord, and be engaged to act with more regular obedience in a holy subserviency to his gracious purposes.

When, like good Zacharias and Elizabeth, we have the pleasure to see our infant offspring growing up in safety and cheerfulness, with healthy constitutions of body and towardly dispositions of mind too, let us ascribe it to the hand of the Lord, which is upon them for good. Let us remember that we are at best but the instruments of the divine care and favour to them; and that our families would soon become scenes of desolation, did not God watch over them in a thousand circumstances of danger and distress, which no prudence of ours could have foreseen, and which no care of ours could have been able to provide against.

**SECT.**
SECT. VII.

Zacharias, on the birth of his son, breaks out into a sublime anthem of praise. Luke I. 67, to the end.


AND his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began;

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us:

72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers

a A horn of salvation.] As a horn is often used, for the most obvious reasons, to express strength and dignity, it being the ornament and defence of the creature that wears it; so it is sometimes used in the Old Testament with a peculiar reference to the Messiah. Compare Psalm cxxxii. 17. lxvi. 24. 1 Sam. ii. 10. and 2 Sam. xxii. 3.

b From the beginning of time.] It cannot certainly be inferred from hence, as some have argued, that there was from the beginning of the world a series of prophets, or that every individual prophet spoke of the Messiah; which can never be proved without doing great violence to the remaining writings of some amongst them. The words of Zacharias only amount to this, that the generality of prophecies, in all ages, refer to this great event. Compare Acts x. 43.

c Be rescued by his redeeming grace from the hand of all that hate us.] This seems to have been the mind of the Spirit, as appears by the whole tenor of scripture; but it is impossible to say whether Zacharias fully understood his own words, which, it is certain, the older prophets, in some cases, did not. See 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

a Perform
which he [promised] to our fathers, d the bless-
ed effects of which extend also to them; and
by him shall God appear to be mindful of his
holy covenant, which hath passed through so ma-
ny various dispensations, yet still in the main
continues the same: It being indeed no
other than the oath which he so solemnly sware
unto Abraham e our father, [Gen. xxii. 16,
47-17.] According to the tenor of which he
will now grant us the favour of an oppor-
tunity and a heart to serve him without fear,
being delivered out of the hands of our enemies,
[And to walk] before him, under a religious
sense of his presence, all the days of our life, in
the paths of the strictest holiness and righte-
ousness.

Then, turning to his new-born son, he added,

And thou, my dear child, shalt have the honour
to be justly called The prophet of the Most High
God: an illustrious Prophet indeed! for thou
art he, who, according to the prediction of
Isaiah, (Isa. xl. 3.) shall go before the face of the
Lord, even of our Divine Messiah, to give no-
tice of his approach, and to prepare his ways.
It shall be thine honourable and delightful
office, not merely to bring the tidings of some
temporal deliverance, but to give the know-
ledge of eternal salvation to his people in di-
recting them how they are to obtain the for-
giveness of their sins; Which, how great so-
ever they have been, may now be obtained
through the tender compassions of our God,
whose bowels of mercy have yearned over his
backsliding children; by virtue of which com-
passions the dawning of the celestial day h hath
visited

73 The oath which
he sware to our fa-
ther Abraham;

74 That he would
grant unto us, that
we being delivered out
of the hands of our
enemies, might serve
him without fear,

75 In holiness and
righteousness before
him, all the days of
our life.

76 And thou, child,
shall be called the
Prophet of the High-
est; for thou shalt go
before the face of the
Lord, to prepare his
ways;

77 To give knowl-
dge of salvation un-
to his people, by the
remission of their sins,

78 Through the ten-
der mercies of our
God; whereby the
day - spring from on
high hath visited us,

79 To give light to
them

a Perform the mercy promised towards our
fathers.] ἔργα τῶν πατέρων μου
most literally signifies to exercise mercy
towards our fathers; and might perhaps
intimate that the mercy extended to the
pious patriarchs was owing to Christ, who
was afterwards to appear. Compare Rom.
iii. 25. I cannot recollect any other place
where ἔργα τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ is to perform a promise.
b The oath which he sware unto Abra-
am.] In vindication of our version from
any objection which might arise to a
learned reader from the construction of
that original μαρτυρία ἐματύρησεν—σωτέρ αὐ-
τοῦ τοῖς ἐν τ. ἔργα σου: see Boa. exercit. p. 33. and
Blow in loc.
c And to walk in holiness and righteous-
ness.] This, as well as deliverance from
enemies, being spoken of as the merciful
grant of God, I cannot but conclude it
refers to those passages in which God pro-
mised to pour out extraordinary degrees
of a pious spirit on his people under the
reign of the Messiah. Compare Is. lxiv.
1—5. Jer. xxxi. 31—34. and Ezek. xxxvi.
25—27.
d Tender compassions of our God.] ἑπαξ
αὐτοῦ, his bowels of mercy: A strong
Hebraism; which, though I have not literal-
ly retained it in my version, I have ex-
pressed in the paraphrase; and it is a
method I shall often take in like cases.
Compare Jer. xxxi. 18—20.
h The dawning of the day.] It is true that
ἀναίω may signify, as some here render it,
the rising sun; and I doubt not but here
is a reference to such texts as Mal. iv. 2.
and Is. lx. 1—3. and, possibly, consider-

fathers, and to remem-
ber his holy covenant:
them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

visited us from on high: And the Sun of Righteousness is shortly arising, to spread sacred knowledge and joy over the regions of ignorance and misery, to enlighten those that sit in darkness, and, as it were, in the very shadow of death itself, or in the most gloomy and dangerous condition, and to direct our wandering feet into the way of peace and felicity.”

Thus was John the Baptist ushered into the world, and thus were his infant days graced with wonders. And the child grew up and became strong in spirit, giving early tokens both of an heroic genius and a pious disposition, through the work of God’s Spirit upon him. Compare Judg. xiii. 24, 25. And, his pious parents dying while he was young, or being peculiarly directed by a divine revelation in this affair, he did not appear in the service of the temple, even when he came to the age in which the priests began their ministrations; but, by divine dispensation and direction, was led to retire into desert places, and to continue there till the day of his being publicly manifested to Israel, and, as it were, inaugurated among them under his prophetic character; for which the austerity and devotion of this solitude was a happy preparation.

SECTION VII.

Luke 1. 79.

And the child grew; and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel.
Ver. With what sacred joy should we join in this hymn of praise! 67 The blessings celebrated in it were not peculiar to the family of Zacharias or to the house of Israel; but we, through the Divine Goodness, have our share in them: the Lord God of Israel hath visited and redeemed us. He hath remembered his covenant with the pious patriarchs in favour of millions who are their seed 72, 73 only as heirs of the faith of Abraham.—To us hath he accomplished 70, 78 the words he had spoken by his holy prophets, and through his tender mercies hath caused the Sun of Righteousness to arise upon 79 us; upon us who were once indeed sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; and whose ancestors, for many succeeding generations, were lost in ignorance, idolatry and wickedness. Let us bless the Lord, who hath given us light; and make it our daily prayer that it may be the happy means of guiding our feet into the way of peace.—Let us, with pleasure and thankfulness, receive 77 the knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins, without which we shall never see it but at an unapproachable distance.

Let us repose our cheerful confidence in this Almighty Saviour, 69 this Horn of Salvation, which God's own right-hand hath raised up for us: through him let us seek the pardon of our sins and 74 deliverance from all the enemies of our souls. And let a grateful sense of his redeeming love engage us resolutely to walk in the strictest holiness and righteousness, as in the presence of God, and carefully to maintain before him a conscience void of offence all the days of our lives.

80 May we carry this temper along with us into solitude and retirement: may it animate us in the busiest scenes of life; and, in every particular instance, may it determine us in our choice of either and regulate our conduct in both!

SECT. VIII.

Joseph's suspicions concerning Mary removed by the appearance of an angel to him. Mat. I. 18, to the end.

AND now, having given an account of the birth of John, afterwards surnamed the Baptist, we proceed to that of JESUS CHRIST, the great subject of our history, which was attended with the most surprising circumstances, and was thus introduced. His mother Mary being contracted to Joseph, according to the method of the Jewish espousals, before they came to cohabit together as man and wife, she was found to be

Mat. I. 18.

NOW the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.
be with child; and this pregnancy was (as we have been informed above) by the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit. Now Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, perceiving there was something very extraordinary in the case, and being by no means willing to expose her to public infamy by any severe prosecution, nevertheless was so confounded with the concurrence of the strange circumstances that attended this affair, as that, in order to secure the honour of his own character and to behave with all the tenderness that might be to a person that he loved, he purposed to himself to have divorced her as privately as the law of Moses would have allowed, that is, only in the presence of two witnesses and without assigning any particular cause.

And as he was revolving these things in his mind during the night-season, full of the thoughts of what he was to do, he fell asleep; and, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, and said unto him, Joseph, thou son of David, (as being lineally descended from him) fear not to take home Mary thy wife, according to the espousals that have passed between you, though there may seem some danger of bringing a reflection on thyself and family; for that which is begotten and formed in her, is of no human original, but was produced by the miraculous and unexampled operation of the Holy Spirit himself. And, in consequence of it, when her time is fulfilled,
Joseph commanded to name the child, Jesus.

sect. viii.

Mat. 1. 21.

she shall bring forth a Son; and thou, under whose protection and care he shall be placed during his infancy, shalt call his name Jesus, that is, God the Saviour; for he shall prove that glorious and divine person intended by God to save his people, even all that truly believe in him, both from the punishment and the dominion of their sins, by procuring an ample pardon for them, and raising them, after a life of holiness on earth, to a state of complete perfection and happiness.

22 Now all this was done (that is, this miraculous conception, together with all the circumstances proper to attend it, was effected) that this celebrated prophecy might be accomplished: which the Lord had so long before spoken by the prophet Isaiah, (Is. vii. 14.) who said to the house of David in the reign of Ahaz, when it seemed in the utmost danger of being destroyed,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.

22 (Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us.)

Call his name Jesus.] Bishop Pearson seems to have set the etymology of this name in the clearest light, in his large discourse on its (Pearson on the Creed, p. 69—71.) in which he endeavours to prove that Jah, one of the names of God, enters into the composition of the Hebrew name Jehovah, to which Jesus answers. (Compare Heb. iv. 8. where, by the way, I think it should have been rendered if Joshua had given them rest.) This derivation most plainly shows how Christ's being called Jesus was in effect an accomplishment of the prophecy that he should be called Emmanuel.

e That this prophecy might be accomplished.] Few are strangers to the objections which have been made against applying this prophecy to Christ, which drove Grotsin and many others unhappily to suppose that it immediately related to the birth of a child of Isaiah's in a natural way, and only in a secondary sense referred to Christ. The controversy is too large for this place. I content myself with observing that a son's being born of one then a virgin, when she was married, was no such miraculous event as to answer such a pompous introduction; and that it seems most reasonable to interpret Isa. vii. 16. as referring to Shearjashub, whom Isaiah was ordered to take in his hand (ver. 3.) for no other imaginable reason but that something remarkable was to be said of him. So that the general sense, in short, is this: 'You have affronted God by refusing a sign now; yet his transcendent mercy will make your present forfeited deliverance (by the death of these confederate kings, which shall happen before [Hanahar] this child in my hand is grown up to the exercise of reason) a sign of a much nobler deliverance by the Messiah, who shall be born of an immaculate virgin, and condescend to pass through the tender scenes of infancy as other children do.' Compare Isa. vii. 10—16. And see Bishop Chandler's excellent remarks on this text, in his Defence of Christianity, page 395—331. Mr. Green's 4th Letter to Mr. Collins; and Usher's Annals, A. M. 3969.
God dwelling in our nature, on the most gracious and important design; a name in signification nearly equivalent to that of Jesus.

_Then Joseph, arising from his sleep, with entire satisfaction and humble acknowledgment, did as the angel of the Lord had appointed him; and without any farther delay, took home Mary his wife._ Nevertheless, in expectation of this wonderful event, and out of reverence to this sacred birth, _he knew her not as a wife_, though she dwelt under his roof; but she continued a pure virgin even _till she had brought forth her divinely begotten Son_, who on account of his distinguished glories, with peculiar propriety might be called _the first-born_: And, according to the direction of the angel, _he called his name Jesus_. But several other circumstances, relating to this important event, will afterwards be recounted.

**Improvement.**

We see here, in Joseph, an excellent pattern of gentleness and prudence. In an affair which appeared dubious, he chose, as we 19 should always do, rather to err on the favourable, than on the severe extreme. He was careful to avoid any precipitate steps; and, in the moments of deliberation, God interposes to guide and determine his resolves.

With what wonder and pleasure did he receive these glad tidings! With what pleasure should we also receive them! For we too are informed of _Jesus who came to save his people from their sins_. An important and glorious salvation indeed! _Hosannah to him that cometh in the name of the Lord!_ Blessed Jesus! answer thy character in delivering us not only from sin’s condemning, but from its reigning power!

---

1. Till she had brought forth her Son, the first-born. | There seems to be some peculiar emphasis in the expression, τον πρωτον γεννησαντι, which justifies the turn I have given to the words. Compare Luke ii. 7. (where the very same words are used with a remarkable exactness.) Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 15. and Heb. i. 6.

2. Though I confess the force of the learned and candid Dr. Daniel Scott’s remarks on this note to be such as to convince me that this expression might have been used with regard to the first-born son of any family, and consequently, that no certain argument of Christ’s superior dignity and glory can be drawn from it, yet, from the pen of one so deeply impressed with the thought of it as Luke as well as Matthew was, I think it may probably contain some references to it.—On what terms Joseph and Mary afterwards lived is of so little importance to us, that I cannot but wonder it should have been the subject of so much debate. It is sufficient for us to know that she was a virgin, not only at the time of Christ’s conception, but at his birth, as the prophecy foretold she should be. The evangelist therefore wisely contented himself with recording this, without affirming any thing farther either way on this delicate subject: I say, either way, for that the manner of expression here used will not certainly prove that Mary had more children afterwards, appears from comparing Gen. xxviii. 15. 1 Sam. xv. 35. Job xxvii. 5. Psal. cx. 1. cxii. 5. and Mat. xii. 20.
Let our souls bow to **Emmanuel**, our incarnate God: and, while with holy wonder we survey the various scenes of his humiliation, let us remember too his native dignity and his divine glory. By him God hath fulfilled his ancient promises in the most ample and glorious manner, *in the fulness of time sending forth his Son, made of a woman*, and sprung like a tender shoot from the decayed stock of *David* his servant.

While we study the oracles of the **Old Testament**, let us with pleasure trace the notices of the great Messiah there, even of Jesus, to whom *all the prophets give witness*. May his name be ever inscribed upon our hearts! In that name may we lift up our banners, and judge those reproaches a glory which we may meet with in his sacred cause.

**SECT. IX.**

**The genealogy of Christ from Abraham, as recorded by Matthew; and from Adam, as recorded by Luke.** Mat. I. 1—17. Luke III. 23, to the end.

**MAT. I. 1.**

**BEFORE** we proceed to the birth of this Divine Infant, whose conception was so very remarkable, it will be proper to give some account of his descent according to the flesh. And we shall therefore introduce it with a table of the **genealogy of Jesus Christ**; which is intended, not only as an introduction to his history, but more especially to shew that he was the *son of David,* and *the son of Abraham,* as it was often foretold the Messiah should be. (Compare *Psal. cxxxii.* 11. *Isa. xi. 1.* *Jer. xxiii.* 5. *xxxii.* 15. and *Gen. xii.* 3. *xxii.* 18. *xxvi.* 4. *xxvii.* 14.)

Now it is well known that Abraham, that renowned patriarch and friend of God, from whom the whole Jewish nation had the honour to descend, begat Isaac in his old age, that son of Sarah, according to the promise, with whom God's covenant was established; and Isaac begat Jacob.

*In his sacred cause.] There was, humanly speaking, a probability that Joseph might have brought some suspicion on his character, or reflection on his family by admitting Mary in these circumstances.

*The genealogy of Jesus Christ.] I am well aware that the word γενεαλογία, and the Hebrew נָהַלָּא the which corresponds to it, sometimes signifies the *history* of a person's *life* (as well as other things,) and not merely his *genealogy*; (compare *Gen. i.* 9. *xxxviii.* 2. *Judith* xiii. 18. *Jam. i.* 23. and iii. 6. *Gr.*) and that the learned Vitringa understands it so in this place: (See *Vitring. Observ. Sacr. lib. i. dissert. i. pag. 29.*) Yet, as it is much more frequently used in the latter sense (see *Gen. v.* 1. x. 1. xi. 10—27. *xxv.* 12. *xxxv.* 1. *9.* Numb. i. 20. *etc.* and *Ruth* iv. 18. in all which places it is applied to genealogies), I think it best, with the learned Dr. Scott, to render it as above; only giving a little hint of the more extensive sense the word may possibly bear.

* till
3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thammar, and Phares begat Esrom, and Esrom begat Aram;

4 And Aram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Naasson, and Naasson begat Salmon;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rahab, and Booz begat Obed of Ruth, and Obed begat Jesse;

6 And Jesse begat David.

b Till Shiloh, that is, the Messiah, came.] This sense of Jacob's prophecy is so beautifully illustrated and so strongly asserted by the learned Dr. Sherborn, bishop of London, in his Discourses on Prophecy, Dissert. 3, page 317, &c. that, if I was writing on this passage of the Old Testament, I should have little to do but to refer my reader to it.

c Of Rahab.] It is not indeed expressly said she was Rahab of Jericho, commonly called the harlot; but I think there can be no room to doubt it, as we know she was contemporary with Salmon, and may conclude that she (this Rahab) was, as all the other women mentioned in this list, a remarkable person. Now there was no other of that name, especially of this age, of whom the compiler of this table could (so far as we can judge) suppose his reader to have any knowledge.

d Booz begat Obed of Ruth the Moabitess.] The son of a Moabitie, by an Israelitic woman, could never be allowed to enter into the congregation of the Lord; that is, at least he was rendered incapable of being a prince in Israel, and perhaps even of being naturalized by circumcision; which may be the meaning of the phrase, Deut. xiii. 3. (See Mr. Lowman's Hebrew Government, p. 130, & seq.) But it evidently appears, from this celebrated instance, that this precept was not understood as excluding the descendants of an Israelite by a Moabitish woman from any hereditary honours and privileges; otherwise, surely, Salmon, the son of Naasson, prince of Judah, would never have married Rahab, one of the accursed people of Canaan; nor would the kinsman of Booz have wanted a much better reason than he assigned (Ruth iv. 6.) for refusing to marry Ruth when she became a widow.

e Obed, in a very advanced age, begat Jesse.] That Salmon, Booz, and Obed, must each of them have been about an hundred years old at the birth of his son here recorded, hath been observed by many and is well accounted for by Dr. Whitby in particular: Annot. on ver. 4.

f Jehoram
elder children, David, the celebrated king of Israel, who was favoured with the title of "The man after God's own heart," and had an express promise that the Messiah should descend from him; (compare 2 Sam. vii. 12—16. and Acts ii. 30.) And David the king begat Solomon of Bathsheba, who had before been [the wife] of Uriah the Hittite: and, though that holy man, in this unhappy affair, acted in a way most unworthy his character, yet God, on his deep repentance, graciously forgave him, and entailed the promise on his seed by her.

7 And, to go forward therefore with the genealogy according to this line, Solomon begat Rehoboam, from whose government the ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam the son of Nebat; and Rehoboam begat Abijah; and Abijah begat Asa,

8 whose reign was so long and prosperous: And Asa begat the good Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat Jehoram, who unhappily dishonoured the holy family by an alliance with Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, 2 Kings viii. 18.

And (to omit Ahaziah, the son of that wicked woman, whose impieties and cruelties rendered her so infamous, 2 Chron. xxiv. 7. the ungrateful Joash, her grandson, who murdered Zechariah the prophet, the son of his great benefactor Jehoida, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21, 22. and Amaziah, his son, who succeeded him) Jehoram, at the distance of the fourth generation, may be said to have begat Uzziah the leper. And Uzziah begat Jotham; and Jotham begat that wicked Ahaz, who, instead of being reformed by the chastising hand of God, trespassed yet more and more against him, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. and Ahaz begat the religious Hezekiah, that distinguished favourite of heaven: And Hezekiah begat Manasseh, so remarkable once for his enormous wickedness and afterwards for his humble repentance; and Manasseh begat that infamous and hardened sinner, Amon; and Amon begat Josiah, that eminently pious prince, whose

David the king, and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

7 And Solomon begat Roboam, and Roboam begat Abia, and Abia begat Asa;

8 And Asa begat Joashaphat, and Joashaphat begat Joram, and Joram begat Ozias;

9 And Ozias begat Joatham, and Joatham begat Achaz, and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10 And Ezekias begat Manasses, and Manasses begat Amon, and Amon begat Josias;

9 Jehoram may be said to have begat Uzziah.] It is undeniably evident, from 2 Chron. chap. xxii. and following, that these princes are here omitted. If this table was taken from any public records amongst the Jews, the Evangelist does not seem responsible for the exactness of it: but, if he himself drew it up, I think it will be but modest in us to suppose that it was by some peculiar divine direction that the sin of Jehoram is thus animadverted upon even to the fourth generation; his intermediate descendants being thus blotted out of the records of Christ's family, and overlooked as if they had never been.

2 The
11 And Josiah begat Jeconias, and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconias begat Salathiel,

whose heart was so early and so tenderly impressed with an apprehension of God’s approaching judgments: And Josiah begat Jehoiakim and his royal brethren, Jehoahaz and Zedekiah, who both of them were kings of Judah, the former predecessor to Jehoiakim, and the latter the successor of his son: and about the time of the Babylonish captivity, Jehoiakim begat Jehoiachin, otherwise called Jeconiah, who was so long the prisoner of the Chaldeans.

And, after the Babylonish captivity commenced, 12 this Jeconiah begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat

The successor of his son.] On the death of Josiah the people took Jehoahaz, otherwise called Shallum, though a younger brother, and made him king in his father’s stead (2 Kings xxiii. 30, 31.) but Pharaoh-Necho, in three months time, deposed him and carried him captive to Egypt, according to the prediction of the prophet concerning him, (Jer. xxii. 10—12, compared with 2 Kings xxiii. 33, 34.) And, having thus deposed him, he made Jehoiakim, the elder brother, who was formerly called Eliakim, king in his room. But this Jehoiakim was soon subdued by the king of Babylon, who, after his conquest, suffered him for a while to continue on the throne; but, on his revolt to the king of Egypt again, he was slain by the Chaldeans (2 Kings xxiv. 1, 2), and thrown out unburied, as Josephus tells us, (Antiq. lib. x. cap. 6. [al. 8.] § 3. Havercamp.) agreeable to what the prophet had foretold, Jer. xxii. 18, 19, xxxvi. 30. After his death his son Jehoachin, by some called Jehoiakin the Second, was put in his place; and this is he who is elsewhere called Jeconiah, 1 Chron. iii. 16. and Coniah, Jer. xxii. 24. But, after a reign of three months, he was taken captive and imprisoned by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings xxiv. 6—16. (according to the prophecy, Jer. xxii. 24—26) and after thirty-seven years released, 2 Kings xxv. 27. In the mean time, upon his being deposed, his uncle Zedekiah, the third son of Josiah, was raised to the throne; but, after a reign of eleven years, his eyes were put out and he was carried captive to Babylon, Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed, 2 Kings xxiv. 17, 18. xxv. 7.

I have traced and stated the matter thus particularly, chiefly because it is a key not only to the paraphrase on this text, but to much of the book of Jeremiah, which, as it is plain that several chapters of it are displaced, cannot be well understood without a very exact knowledge of the preceding history.

I here follow the reading of the Bodleian and other manuscripts, (notice of which is taken in the margin of our Bibles) "and in captivity in Babylon," in captivity in the land of Egypt. And this indeed seems absolutely necessary, to keep up the number of fourteen generations; unless we suppose that the Jeconiah here is a different person from that Jeconiah mentioned in the next verse, which seems a very unreasonable supposition, since it is certain that throughout this whole table, each person is mentioned twice, first as the son of the preceding and then as the father of the following.—I am obliged to the candid amendment of Dr. Scott for the small alteration I have made in my reading of this verse from what was published in the first edition.

Jeconiah begat Salathiel.] I cannot take upon me certainly to determine whether Salathiel was the son of Jeconiah by descent or adoption. It is certain that Luke (chap. iii. 27.) derives Salathiel from David by Nathan, and not by Solomon, whose line might possibly fail in Jeconiah. And this would be most evidently congruous to Jerem. xxvii. 30. where it is said that Jeconiah should be written childless, as we render it: But, as the dispersion of Jeconiah’s seed is there threatened, and at least seven sons of his are reckoned up elsewhere, 1 Chron. iii. 17, 18, (supposing Asir, as the word signifies, to be only a kind of surname of Jeconiah the captive) a greater number than one could suppose so unhappy a prince would adopt in his imprisonment, I should rather think the word, translated childless in the fore-cited prophecy, signifies (as the Saxon suppose, who have translated it seqvaed, naked, stripped, or rooted up; and the more so, because it seems harsh to suppose seqvaed should signify only be adopted: Yet I own it is something strange that Salathiel, who on this supposition was a descendant of Solomon, should be adopted by Neri, a descendant of Nathan, a younger and much inferior
begat Zerubbabel, that illustrious instrument of restoring and settling the Jewish commonwealıth on their return from the captivity:

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat
14 Elia̔kim; and Elia̔kim begat Azor: And Azor
begat Zadok; and Zadok begat Achim; and
15 Achim begat Eliud: And Eliud begat Eleazar;
and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat
Jacob: And this Jacob begat Joseph, who
was the husband of Mary, that blessed virgin,
of whom was born, by the immediate power of
God, Jesus, who is commonly called Christ, as
he was indeed God’s Messiah, or anointed One;
the great Sovereign and Prophet and High
Priest of his Church, completely furnished for
the discharge of all those offices by a most
plentiful effusion of the Spirit which was given,
not by measure, to him.

17 This is the genealogy of his reputed father
so that we see, as it here stands, that all the
generations, in the first interval or class of this
illustrious family, from Abraham to David, when
we may look upon it as in its rising state, are
fourteen
different

inferior branch of David’s family; or that
it should be said by Jeremiah that none of
Jecomiah’s seed should rule any more in Judah,
if Zerubbabel, their first ruler after the cap-
tivity, was at farthest but his great-grand-
son. On the whole, I submit so difficult a
question to the determination of able
judges, and content myself with thus hint-
ing at what I found most material on
either side. If the two genealogies do not
speak of different persons that were named
alike, I should conjecture that Salathiel,
the son of Neri, might marry the daughter
of Jecomiah, and might possibly, on that
account, be also adopted by him. The
attentive reader will see that this hypothesis
at least softens the difficulties inseparable
from either of the former.

[Salathiel begat Zerubbabel.] This
illustrious person, Zerubbabel, is so often
said to have been the son of Salathiel, or
Shealtiel, which is so nearly the same, (and
accordingly the Syriac here reads Schal-
tiel) see Ezra iii. 2, 8, v. 2. Hag. i. 1,
12, 14. ii. 24. that I incline more and
more to think, with Brennus, that the
Zerubbabel mentioned, 1 Chron. iii. 17
—19, as the son of Pedaiah the brother of
Salathiel, was a different person from
this. As the name Zerubbabel signifies
a stranger in Babylon, it is no wonder
that it should be given to several children
born in the captivity. If this solution
be not allowed, I see not how the known
difficulty here can be removed unless by
acknowledging that the books of Chron-
icles (the author of which is unknown)
may have suffered by the injuries of time,
so that the present reading of some passages
may be incorrect; which is very consistent
with owning the plenary inspiration of
those books. By allowing this we should
fairly get rid of two parts in three of the
seeming contradictions in the writings of the
Old Testament, (I speak on an accurate
review of them,) and should be free from
the sad necessity of such emendation,
as are more likely to pain a candid heart
than to satisfy an attentive and penetrat-
ing mind. The omission of a word or two in
a genealogical table, and sometimes the
mistake of a letter or two in transcribing,
especially with regard to names or num-
bers, occasions many inexplicable difficul-
ties where, in the original reading, all might
be perfectly clear.

[Zerubbabel begat Abiud.] Rhesa, men-
tioned by Luke, chap. iii. ver. 27. was
probably another son of Zerubbabel. Abiud
might possibly be the same with Meshul-
لام, whose name is mentioned in 1 Chron.
iii. 12. or perhaps he and his descendants
falling into obscurity, their names might
be no where preserved but in this genealogy
of Joseph’s family, which the evangelist
transcribed as he found it.

They
fourteen generations: and after these, in the next class, from David to the Babylonish captivity, when it was seated on the throne, and may be reckoned as in its flourishing state, we may compute them as amounting to the same number; and, to consider them as they are represented here, they may again he counted fourteen generations: and, in like manner, in the last class, from the Babylonish captivity to Christ, when by degrees it sunk into obscurity, and manifestly was in its declining state, then also we may reckon them as fourteen generations.


But, though we have thus given the legal genealogy of Christ from Abraham, as derived from Joseph his reputed father, we shall yet add another that ascends to Adam; and this is the account which Luke hath given us in his gospel; where, after he had spoken of the baptism of Jesus when he was beginning [his public ministry], and was about thirty years of age, he traces his descent in the line of Mary, whose father Heli adopting Joseph, whom he made his son-in-law, the descent of Joseph may on that account be reckoned from him, and so is in effect the same with that of Mary. Christ therefore, being born of Mary after her espousals, may be considered, upon this account, to be (as at that time he commonly was reckoned) the son of Joseph, who, by adoption, or rather by the marriage of his daughter, was the son of Heli, The son of Mal-


I. The genealogy of Christ from Adam to Heli, the father of Joseph, his reputed father.

m They may be counted fourteen generations. I express it with this latitude, as it is manifest that three persons are omitted in the second class between Jehoram and Uzziah, ver. 8. and it is only by counting them as here represented that they make fourteen generations. And if, according to the reading of the Bodleian, Jehoiakim be introduced in ver. 11, and considered as the last of this class, (which seems the better reading, as Jecconiah does not appear to have had any brethren,) Jecconiah will thus be reserved for the third class, which otherwise would want one person to complete the number.

n In the line of Mary. I am aware that Mr. Le Clerc and many other learned men have thought that Joseph was begotten by Heli, and adopted by Jacob; but I much rather conclude that he was adopted by Heli, or rather taken by him for his son upon the marriage of his daughter, and that Heli was the father of Mary; because an ancient Jewish Rabbi expressly calls her the daughter of Heli; and chiefly, because else we have indeed no true genealogy of Christ at all, but only two different views of the line of Joseph his reputed father; which would by no means prove that Christ, who was only by adoption his son, was of the seed of Abraham and of the house of David. Yet the apostle speaks of it as evident that Christ was descended from Judah, Heb. vii. 14, in which, if this gospel were (as antiquity assures us) written by the direction of Paul, perhaps he may refer to this very table before us. (See Mr. Whiston's Harmony of the four Evangelists, Prop. xvi. p. 175, & seq.)

o Joseph, who by adoption, or rather by the marriage of his daughter, was the son
The genealogy of Christ,

Sect. ix.

Luke III. 24. 24 Which was the son of Matthan, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchizedek, which was the son of Jannai, which was the son of Joseph, 25 Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Nahum, the son of Elisha, the son of Eli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Shemai, 26 the son of Joseph, the son of Judah, The son of Johanna, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Salathiel, the son of Neri, The son of Melch, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmodam, the son of Er, The son of Joes, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthan, the son of Levi, The son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonan, the son of Eliakim, The son of Meleah, the son of Menan, the son of Mattathias, the son of Nathan, the son of that celebrated king of Israel, David, the man after God's own heart, The son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Naasson, The son of Antinadab, the son of Aram, the son of Esrom, the son of Judah, The son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, who was, according to the promise, the son of that honourable patriarch Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, The son of Serug, the son of Ragus, or Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Salah, The son of Canaan, The son of Arphaxad, the son of Sem, the son of Matthan, which was the son of Levi, 29 Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim, 31 Which was the son of Meleah, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David, 32 Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Boaz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson, 33 Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Shelah, which was the son of Judah, 34 Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nahor, 35 Which was the son of Saruc, which was the son of Ragus, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala, 26 Which was the son of Canaan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Heli.]

It is necessary to take the words in this latitude, because the true father of Joseph appears to have been Jacob or James, the son of Matthew. See Matt. i. 13, 16.

[The son of Neri.] See the latter part of note 1, page 58.

[The son of Canaan.] There is no mention made of this Canaan in either of the genealogies that Moses gives us, Gen. x. 24; and xi. 12; but Sala is there said to be the son of Arphaxad. Canaan must therefore have been introduced here from the translation of the Seventy interpreters, who have inserted him in both these places in the same order as we find him here; and, as this translation was then commonly used and was more generally understood than the Hebrew, it is probable that some transcriber of this gospel added Canaan from that version, unless we suppose that Luke himself might choose, in writing this genealogy, to follow the Septuagint, as he appears to do in several other passages that he has quoted from the Old Testament. Nor is it, after all, a point of any consequence, as the design of the Evangelist was only to present us with the genealogy of Christ in its ascent to Adam, which is equally
of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech, 37 Which was the son of Methusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Malahalel, which was the son of Cainan, 38 Which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

the son of Noah, with whom he was preserved in the ark, and it is well known that Noah was the son of Lamech. The son of Methusaleh, the son of Enoch, who was translated without dying, and was the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan. The son of Enoch, 33 the son of Seth, the son of Adam, who, being descended from no human parents, but formed by the immediate power of a Divine Creating Hand, might, with peculiar propriety, be called [the son] of God, in his original state, the heir of immortality and glory.

IMPROVEMENT.

When we survey any such series of generations, it is obvious to reflect how like the leaves of a tree, one passeth away and another cometh; yet the earth still abideth, and with it the goodness of the Lord, which runs on, from generation to generation, the common hope of parents and children.

Of those who formerly lived upon earth, and perhaps made the most conspicuous figure among the children of men, how many have there been whose names have perished with them! and how many of whom nothing but their names are remaining! Thus are we passing away, and thus shall we be shortly forgotten. Happy if, while we are forgotten of men, we are remembered by God, and our names are found written in the book of life! There they will make a much brighter appearance than in the records of fame, or than they would do even in such a catalogue of those who were related to Christ according to the flesh; whose memory is here preserved, when that of many, who were once the wonder and terror of the mighty in the land of the living, is lost in perpetual oblivion.

We observe, among these ancestors of Christ, some that were Heathens, and others that, on different accounts, were of infamous characters; and perhaps it might be the design of Providence that we should learn from it, or at least should, on reading it, take occasion to reflect that persons of all nations, and even the chief of equally clear, whether we reckon Salah as the immediate descendant of Arphaxad, or whether we consider him as his grand-son by Cainan.—And much less reason is there to object to the apparent difference there is between the names that Luke has given us and those we meet with of the same persons in the Old Testament: This is no more than what is usual when the same names are mentioned in a different language; nor will the Greek admit them to be so expressed as to agree exactly with the Hebrew. But to avoid confusion, I have rather chosen, both in the former genealogy and this, to give the names that are delivered in the Old Testament as they are written in the Hebrew, to which our language will admit us to come nearer than the Greek could do, and which must be allowed to be the more exact and truer method of pronouncing them. Compare Gen. v. 3, & seq. xi. 10—27, and 1 Chron. i. 1—27.

Vol. VI.
of sinners amongst them, are encouraged to trust in him as their Saviour. To him therefore let us look even from the ends of the earth, yea from the depths of guilt and distress, and the consequence will be happy beyond all expression or conception.

Adam, though originally the son of God, lost that inheritance of life and glory, which, in consequence of such a relation, he might reasonably have expected; but the second Adam repairs the loss which we had sustained by the transgression of the first. We are now predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, and raised by him to the hope of a fairer inheritance than the terrestrial Paradise. Let it be our daily labour to secure this invaluable blessing; that so, as we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, we may in due time bear the image of the heavenly, and at length attain to the perfect manifestation of the sons of God.

SECT. X.

Christ is born at Bethlehem, and his birth revealed by an angel to some shepherds in the neighbourhood of that town; and he is circumcised on the eighth day. Luke II. 1—21.

LUKE II. 1.

NOW it came to pass in those days, or about the time in which John the Baptist was born and Christ conceived in the manner related above, that the Roman Emperor, Augustus Caesar, published an edict, or decree, that all the land of Judæa, which was then united under one prince and governed by Herod, should be publicly enrolled; or that the number of its inhabitants, both male and female, with their families and estates, should be registered. This he ordered, as a token of his particular displeasure against Herod their king, and as an intimation that he intended quickly to lay them under a tax.

And here we may observe by the way, that this was the first enrolment of the Jews, and was committed to the care of Cyrenius, or, as the Latins write it, Quirinius, a Roman senator; who, being [afterwards] governor of Syria, made

[All the land.] Though both undoubtedly sometimes signify the whole world (Acts xvii. 31. Rom. x. 18. and Heb. i. 6.), and sometimes probably the Roman empire (as more especially in Rev. iii. 10. and xvi. 14.) see Elsner, in loc. yet I think the learned and ingenious Dr. Lardner hath fully proved that it is to be taken in a more limited sense both here and Acts xi. 28. as it plainly is, Luke xxii. 26. (See Lardn. Credib.

LUKE II. 1.

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria,
a second enrolment or taxation, which was so famous in the Jewish history for the tumults that attended it. And all the inhabitants of Judea were obliged to obey the edict, and went each of them to his own native city, or the place where his paternal inheritance lay, to be enrolled: a circumstance wisely ordered by Providence to verify the truth of ancient prophecies and introduce the promised Messiah; as, by their coming to be thus registered among the subjects of the Roman empire, the subjection of the Jews to the Romans very remarkably appeared.

And thus the parents of Christ were providentially brought to Bethlehem, the place where

Joseph and Mary come from Nazareth.

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out

Cyrenius, afterwards governor of Syria. 

Luke

11. 5.

1. Who is the person whom I mentioned above, Dr. Lardner, in his unequalled criticisms on this text, (Part I. Vol. II. page 718. & seq.) has given the reasons at large which determined me to prefer that literal version I have inserted. Our own is plainly mistaktem, and is indeed hardly intelligible. The words might perhaps have been rendered, This enrolment was before Cyrenius was governor of Syria; which, to be sure, is a true assertion, and may perhaps, after all, be vindicated; but I think the original expresses something more. Others have chosen to render it, And the taxation that was consequent upon this enrolment was first executed when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. —If none of those solutions proposed could be allowed (as I think, either of these justly may), it would be a thousand times more reasonable to suppose a word omitted by some early transcriber, (perhaps οὐδέ, after ἐπίθετο) than to think that so accurate a writer as Luke, were he to be considered only as a common historian, should make such a gross mistake as to confound this enrolment, in the reign of Herod, with that taxation which happened, several years after, on the baptism of his son Archelaus. A fact of this kind was too obvious, and, I may add, too mortifying to the whole Jewish nation to be so soon forgot; not to say that so strict a Pharisee as St. Paul, (who probably reviewed this gospel,) educated by Gamaliel, would be sure to remember it with some peculiar emotion. —Of the tumults that happened in the days of the taxing, which was afterwards made by Cyrenius, (when, on the baptism of Archelaus, Judea was reduced to the form of a province, and annexed to Syria under the government of Cyrenius,) in opposition to which a disturbance was raised by Judas of Galilee, see Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xvii. in fin. lib. xviii. cap. 1. § 1. Bel. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 8. § 1. and Acts v. 37.

6 When his paternal inheritance lay.] Some have conjectured that Joseph might have a small estate here: but that is, at least, very uncertain; at least it is improbable that Jesus inherited it (Mat. viii. 20,) or that his mother enjoyed it during her widowhood. See John xix. 26, 27.

It is true, indeed, that the original settlement of the divine law being duly regarded, estates in the land of promise would have been unalienable; and every male descended from Jacob, and not of the tribe of Levi, must have been born heir to a certain portion of land allotted to some of his ancestors when the division was first made; on which, however it might have been mortgaged, he must, if his father were dead, have entered at the next jubilee, if he lived to see it. But things were now fallen into confusion. The small remains of the ten tribes, who were brought back at all, were, after their return from the captivity, incorporated together in the neighborhood of Judea, while strangers were in possession of large tracts of land once theirs; and the whole country of Samaria was in the hands of those whom the Jews looked upon as the vilest kind of Gentiles, that is, the Samaritans. —All that appears as to the circumstances now before us is, that every one was obliged to be enrolled at the place to which his family belonged; and the obedience of the Jews to this decree is a plain proof that they were now dependant on the Romans, and the sceptre was departing from Judah. See Lightfoot's Harmony on Luke ii. 1, and compare Gen. xlix. 10. and Num. xxiv. 24.
the Messiah was to be born, without leaving any room to suspect them of artifice and design: for, being thus obliged by the emperor's authority, Joseph went up from Galilee, even out of the city of Nazareth, where he then dwelt, into the land of Judea, most properly so called, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, which was the town where his ancestors had formerly been settled: (for, notwithstanding Joseph was reduced so low as to follow the trade of a carpenter, yet he was originally of the family and royal household of David.)

It was to Bethlehem therefore that he went up to be enrolled; and thither he took with him, by divine direction, Mary his espoused wife, who was now big with child, and very near the time of her delivery.

But the town was so crowded on this occasion, that they were obliged to lodge in the stable of a public house; though, in her present circumstances, it was so very inconvenient for her.

And so it was that, while they were there, either waiting for the proper officer who was to register the people, or staying till their own turn came, the days of her pregnancy were fulfilled, and the time came that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her Son, even him that justly bears the character of the First Born; that glorious and excellent Person, who was the First-born of every creature, and the Heir of all things. And she no sooner was delivered, but immediately she swaddled him; being so miraculously strengthened by God, in this hour of extremity, as to be able to perform that office herself; and, having no
And laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night:

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people:

For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

No other convenience near, she laid him in a manger which belonged to one of the stalls there; because (as we have just now said) there was no room for them in any of the chambers belonging to the inn.

And there were some shepherds in that country who were then lying out in the field and watching, in their turns, over their flocks by night; which it was necessary they should do, to guard against the wolves and other beasts of prey which were common there. And, behold, on a sudden, an angel of the Lord came upon them, and appeared in a visible form, standing in the air over their heads; and their eyes were immediately directed to it by the glory of the Lord, which shone round about them with such incomparable lustre, as had in former ages been the usual symbol of the Divine Presence: And they were exceedingly terrified at so uncommon and so awful an appearance. And, while they stood in silent amazement, the angel said unto them, in the mildest and most condescending manner, Be not affrighted, O ye shepherds! for the design of my appearance to you hath nothing terrible in it; but, on the contrary, behold, and take the most thankful notice of it, I bring you good news, and greet you with the tidings of great and universal joy, which shall be now occasioned, not only to you, but to all people in the whole Jewish nation, yea, and to all the human race. For this very day, this welcome blessed day, there is born unto you, k and unto all nations, a Glorious Saviour, which intimates their taking it by turns to watch, according to the usual divisions of the night. And as it is not probable that they exposed their flocks to the coldness of winter-nights in that climate where, as Dr. Shaw has shewn, they were so very unwholesome (see Shaw's Travels, p. 379), it may be strongly argued, from this circumstance, that those who have fixed upon December for the birth of Christ have been mistaken in the time of it.

k There is born unto you.] That one of the Bodleian manuscripts reads it, {μας} to us, is of very little weight, considering the consent of copies on the other side; and affords but a very slender support to Mr. Fleming's conjecture, that this was a glorified human spirit, perhaps that of Adam, all whose happy descendants might, he thinks, make up the chorus. (Fleming's Christology, vol. I. p. 80.) I should rather imagine, with Grosius, that this angel was Gabriel.

1 Watching in their turns over their flock by night.] The original ἔπησαν τοὺς θηρίστας, might more literally be rendered, keeping the watches of the night;
Saviour, who is even Christ the Lord, that Illustrious sovereign, whom you have so long been taught to expect, by the title and under the character of the Messiah: He is even now born in the neighbouring city of David his royal father; and I call you to offer him your earliest homage. Go, therefore, into the town without any farther delay, and inquire after him: for

12 [this shall be] a sign unto you, by which you will easily know him: you will find him an infant in swaddling bands, lying in a manger belonging to one of the inns.

13 And immediately, to confirm them in the belief of so strange a truth as that this illustrious Prince should be born in such mean circumstances as he had now described, there was seen with the angel that spake to them a great multitude of the celestial army praising God, and saying, in the most cheerful and harmonious accents,

14 Glory to be to God in the highest heavens, and let all the angelic legions resound his praises in the most exalted strains: for with the Redeemer's birth peace and all kinds of happiness come down to dwell on earth; yea, the overflowings of divine benevolence and favour are now exercised towards sinful men, 1 who, through this Saviour, become

1 Glory to God in the highest; and peace on earth; benevolence and favour towards men. I am well aware of the ambiguity of these words. I do not mean as to the reading: For though the Alexandrian, and other manuscripts, instead of ἰδονέως, give it ὑδονέως, as if the angels were proclaiming peace to men of favour and good-will, or unto those who were the objects of the divine benevolence and complacency; (which is a reading that has been approved by many learned men, and in particular by Beza;) yet I think the authority of that is overborne by the more general consent of the most ancient manuscripts, as well as by the version of the oldest date, and the quotations of the fathers in the most early ages, which almost universally oppose it. (See Mill and Groten.) But, taking the original as it stands, Δώς ἐπὶ τῇ γῇ τῇ θεότητι, and eπὶ τῇ γῇ τῇ θεότητι, we must allow it to be capable of different senses. — Some choose to render it Glory to God in the highest, (that is, in heaven;) and on earth; peace, yea favour, towards men: But then, I think, instead of επὶ τῇ γῇ τῇ θεότητι, it rather would have been επὶ τῷ θεῷ; for so it is always usual to express, in heaven and upon earth. (Compare Matt. vi. 10. Luke xii. 1. 1 Cor. viii. 5. Eph. i. 10. iii. 15. Col. i. 16. 20. Rev. v. 5, 13.) Others have given as the sense of it, that the good-will, or favour, which is now shown to men, is the glory of God in the highest, and is the peace or happiness of those that dwell on earth; And this indeed is an important sense, and the original well enough will bear it. But thus to change the doxology into a kind of proverb or aphorism, seems to destroy much of its beauty. — I rather think that they are all to be considered as the words of a rejoicing acclamation, and that they strongly represent the piety and benevolence of these heavenly spirits, and their affectionate good wishes for the prosperity of the Messiah's kingdom. (Compare Matt. xx. 9. Mark xi. 10. and especially Luke xix. 50.) The new translation that has been lately published, where it is rendered, to men on earth, felicity in the divine favour, does indeed express the sense of the two latter clauses, but by no means with equal adorn. The shouts of a multitude are generally broken into short sentences, and are commonly elliptic; which is the only cause of the ambiguity here. As this beauty could not be preserved in a paraphrase, I have repeated the words, after they had been explained.
become the objects of his complacential delight: Echo it back, O ye mortal abodes, to ours! “Glory to God in the highest! on earth peace! benevolence and favour unto men!”

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even into Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even into Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. And, when they had viewed this scene of wonders and had attentively considered [it], they humbly paid their dutiful respects unto their new-born Saviour; and having acquainted his parents with the marvellous vision they had seen, they immediately published abroad a full account of this remarkable occurrence, and gave a particular relation of the whole of that which had been told them, in so wonderful a way, concerning this Child. And, upon hearing this strange ac- count there was a general surprise; and, though they were prevented, by the meanness of his birth, from shewing a due regard to one that made no better an appearance, yet all that heard [it] were astonished at those things which were related to them by the shepherds on this subject. But Mary in particular treasured up all these things, and carefully retained them in her memory; and though she did not blaze them abroad among the populace, or make any vain boast of such extraordinary favours and testimonies, yet she attentively regarded all these wonderful events, entering into the meaning [of them] in the secret reflections of her heart; and improving them all, as a further confirmation of what had been before revealed to her, and a foundation for the early acting of her faith and reverence towards her Divine Son.

And

Entering into the meaning, &c.] I apprehend Elscner has abundantly vindicated this sense of the word συμπεριστάσεις, in his note on this place.
Reflections on the birth of Christ.

And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen at Bethlehem, so perfectly agreeable in every circumstance to the account they had received but just before, as it was told unto them by the angel; admiring the mercy of God in sending such a Saviour and his condescension in favouring them with such early discoveries of him.

21 And when eight days from the birth of this Holy Infant were fulfilled, (that is, when the eighth day was come,) his pious parents failed not, according to the Mosaic law, under which they were placed, to circumcise the Child, that so, though he had not any corruptions of nature to mortify, which was in part represented by that institution, he might nevertheless, in a regular manner be initiated into the Jewish Church and thereby be engaged to the duties and intituled to the privileges of a son of Abraham, according to that covenant. And his name was called JESUS; that is, the Divine Saviour; a name by which the angel had called him before he was conceived in the womb of his virgin mother.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. With what humble amazement should we contemplate this first appearance of our Incarnate Redeemer! Surely all the angels of heaven might justly have admired his condescension in assuming such a nature as ours and wearing a mortal frame, though it had been attended with all the ornaments and splendors earth could have given it. Though, at his entrance into our low world, he had been born of an imperial family, placed under a canopy of velvet and gold, or laid to repose on pillows of down, all this had been deep abasement in the eyes of those who had beheld the glories of his celestial throne and the honours paid him by cherubims and seraphims: But, behold, the Son of God, and the Heir of all things, is not merely in the abodes of men, but in a place destined for beasts, and, while, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, is laid in a manger!

n Which they had heard and seen at Bethlehem.] Joseph and Mary would, no doubt, upon such an occasion, give them an account of those particulars, which the sacred historians have recounted above, relating to the conception of this Divine Infant; and this interview must greatly confirm and comfort the minds of all concerned.

o His name was called Jesus.] Grotius thinks there might be an assembly of most of the remainders of David's family on this occasion; but surely, had there been many of them inhabitants of Bethlehem, their kinswoman would not, in such circumstances, have been reduced to the necessity of lodging in a stable.

a Her
Yet, O blessed Jesus, how much more venerable was that stable and manger, when graced with thy sacred presence, than the most magnificent palace, or most shining throne of earthly princes! How ill doth it become thy disciples to seek for themselves great things in this life, or to be proud of its pomp and grandeur! Give us, O God, the simplicity of children and make us willing to be conformed to the birth of thy Son as well as to his death!

Yet, mean as his birth might appear, his Heavenly Father did not leave him without witness. We see him, in this wonderful account that the Evangelist hath given us, surrounded with a brighter lustre than a court or a crown could have afforded. Angelic legions are employed as heralds to proclaim the new-born King. And to whom are they sent? To humble pious shepherds, diligently employed in the duties of their proper calling and watching by night for the security of their flocks. Who would not gladly have shared in their poverty and fatigue, to have heard with them these good tidings of great joy?

Let us observe with what delight these courtiers of heaven undertook the happy embassy to these lowly mortals. Let us with pleasure attend to the anthem of these benevolent spirits. Far from envying the favours that was done us, they ascribe glory to God for it, and take their part in the joy they give. Let this love of the whole heavenly host to us awaken our love to them and our longing for that blessed world where we and they shall surround our dearest Redeemer, not in such a form of abasement as that in which he here appeared, but clothed in that celestial lustre with which God hath rewarded the humiliations of the manger and the cross.

In the mean time let our more intimate concern in this great salvation engage us more cordially to join with these blessed angels in their hallelujahs; ascribing glory to God in the highest for this peace on earth, this good-will towards men, the great fountain of our present tranquility and future hope! Above all, if Divine Grace hath conquered all the foolish prejudices of our hearts against Christ, and taught us with humble faith to apply to him, let us, with the shepherds, bless God for the things which have been shewn us, and make it our care to spread abroad the favour of his name, that others may join with us in paying their homage and their praises to him!
The purification of Mary ;

SECT. XI.

The purification of Mary and her offering in the temple; where Christ is presented to God, and has a very memorable testimony given him by Simeon and Anna. Luke II. 22—39.


AND, after Mary had been thus delivered of her son at Bethlehem, when the forty days appointed for her purification, a according to the time limited by the law of Moses, (Lev. xi. 2, 4.) were fulfilled, b Jesus was taken by his parents from the place where he was born, and, in obedience to the divine command, they brought him to Jerusalem, there to present him as a first-born son before the Lord in the temple: According as it is written in the law of the Lord (Exod. xiii. 2. Numb. viii. 16, 17.) that " every first-born male shall be called holy to the Lord, and shall be treated as devoted in a peculiar manner to his service." Agreeably to this precept

a Her purification; καθαρισθηκεν αυτην;] The Alexandrian, and some other manuscripts, read αυτην; and, as it must be owned that both mother and child, for a while after the birth, were looked upon as ceremonially unclean, it might not be improper (with Erasmus and some of the most considerable expositors) to admit this reading, and to render it their purification, as referring to them both. For, notwithstanding it is true that Christ had no moral impurity, from which he needed to be cleansed, yet we may well enough suppose him, as bare our sins, to have submitted to this ordinance as well as circumcision: and as he came into the world, made of a woman, made under the law, he would be ready to comply with any institution of the law, that he might thus fulfil all righteousness. But as the law that is referred to in this place, speaks only of the woman, and of the sacrifice that was appointed to be offered for her purification, I have retained the common reading, and have made no alteration in the version.

b The forty days—were fulfilled.] Mr. Whiston has supposed in his Harmony, (prop. xiv. p. 158, & seq.) that these forty days were not accomplished till their return from Egypt: But although this may give the easiest solution to ver. 39, it crowds so many events into that little space and so entirely depends on a precarious hypothesis, that Christ was born about a month before the death of Herod (which I think Mr. Mann has entirely overthrown, in his Dissertation on the birth of Christ, p. 42—45.) that it seems evident upon the whole that the purification preceded the flight into Egypt, as most Harmonizers have thought. But whether the purification was before or after the visit of the wise men is not so plain: I have placed it before, chiefly that I might not interrupt the thread of the story; and partly because the meanness of the virgin's sacrifice makes it probable she had not then received the presents that were offered by the wise men. Nevertheless, I acknowledge it very possible that the purification might happen during the interval of Herod's waiting for the return of the wise men; and that the holy family might go from Jerusalem to Egypt the very night after Jesus had been presented in the temple; as Garthwait intimates in his excellent Harmony (chap. xi. xii.) which is so accurately and judiciously composed, that, as far as I can judge, most of the faults in Le Clerc, Whiston, Wells, &c. may be corrected by it. It was first printed at Cambridge, 1634, and is almost entirely the same with that which was afterwards published under the name of Mr. Locke's Life of Christ.—After all, I shall only observe that this is one of the many instances in which the order of the sacred story cannot be circumstantially determined with demonstrative evidence.

c They
precept they now went up to redeem him, at the price of five shekels, which was the sum appointed to be paid for every eldest son, without any regard to the condition of the family (compare Numb. xviii. 15, 16). And to offer a sacrifice, according to what is enjoined in the law of the Lord, Lev. xii. 6, 8. where they, whose circumstances were so mean as that they could not conveniently afford a lamb, are ordered to bring a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; which offering suited best the virgin's rank in life, and she did not affect on this occasion to exceed it.

And behold, there was then at Jerusalem a certain man, whose name was Simeon; and he [zeas] one that was a singularly righteous and religious person, who was waiting, with many others at that time, for the coming of the Messiah, the great expected consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit of prophecy was sometimes in an extraordinary manner upon him: And among other things it was divinely revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not die before he had seen the Great Anointed of the Lord, and his eyes had beheld the promised Messiah.

They went up to redeem him.] God having acquired a peculiar right to the first-born of Israel, by preserving them amidst the destruction brought on the first-born of the Egyptians, though he had accepted of the tribe of Levi as an equivalent, yet would have the memory of it preserved by this little acknowledgement of five shekels (or about twelve shillings and sixpence of our money), which was the price that every first-born child must be redeemed at; and in case of an omission here, it might reasonably have been expected that the child should be cut off by some judgment. The first-born therefore were redeemed by paying of this money, in such a sense as all the people were, when, at the time that they were numbered, each of them paid half a shekel as a ransom for their souls, that there might be no plague among them; as there might otherwise have been if that acknowledgment of the Divine Goodness had been omitted: Exod. xxx. 12—16. But that the five shekels demanded for the first-born were paid to redeem them from being sacrificed on the altar, is one of the most false and malicious insinuations that ever came even from the most inveterate enemy of revelation.

a Whose name was Simeon.] Had Simeon been, as some suppose, the president of the council, and father of the celebrated Gamaliel, St. Luke would probably have inserted so honourable a circumstance.

c The consolation of Israel.] This is a phrase that frequently is used, both by the ancient and modern Jews, for a description of the Messiah. The days of consolation is a common phrase among them, to signify the days of the Messiah: nor is there any thing more usual with them than to swear by their desire of seeing this consolation; as Dr. Lightfoot proves by several instances, Hor. Hebr. in loc. And it is easy to observe that the same way of speaking was made use of by the prophets, who often introduce the promise of the Messiah's coming, to comfort the people of God in their afflictions. Compare Isa. lxix. 13. lix. ixvi. 13. Jer. xxxiii. 13, and Zech. i. 17.

f That he should not die.] Our translation, that he should not see death, is most literal; but I did not apprehend the antithesis, between seeing death, and seeing Christ, to be intended as at all material, and therefore did not retain the Hebraism.
And he came under the secret, but powerful impulse of the Spirit, into the temple, just at the juncture of time when [his] parents brought in the child Jesus into the court of Israel there, that they might do for him according to the custom which the authority of the divine law had required and established in such cases. And when the pious Simeon had discovered him by his prophetic gift and saw that well-known prophecy accomplished, (Hag. ii. 7.) that the Desire of all nations should come into that second temple, he was transported at the sight of this desirable Child, and took him with a sacred rapture into his arms, and praised God, and said, with the highest elevations of devotion and joy,

29 Now, O, my Sovereign Lord and Master, I thankfully acknowledge that thou dismissest thy servant to the repose of the grave in peace; and I can die with pleasure, since thou hast dealt with me according to the gracious engagements of thy word to me; For mine eyes have at length beheld him, whom thou hast appointed as the great instrument of thy long expected salvation;

Even that salvation, which thou hast prepared to set before the face of all people, as the glorious object of their faith and hope; Ordaining him to be a light for the illumination of the Gentiles, to reveal the way of life to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, as well as giving him to be the consolation and the glory of thy people Israel, who have the honour of being peculiarly related to him.

And when they heard this glorious testimony given to the infant Jesus, Joseph and his mother were astonished at those things which were spoken of him by so eminent a prophet; which appeared to them so much the more remarkable when compared with the miraculous circumstances which had attended his conception and birth.

And Simeon, in the warmth of his devotion, blessed them both, praying affectionately for them, that the favour of God might continually attend them; and said to Mary his mother, Behold this [Child] of thine is appointed for an occasion of the fall and rising again of many in Israel, as he in fact shall be the means of bringing aggravated

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against:

Thou dismissest thy servant in peace.] There may perhaps be an allusion here to the custom of saying, especially to an inferior, when parting, Go in peace. See note, on Luke vii. 50. sect. ix.

b A mark
_The testimony of Anna._

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also;) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asser: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she was a widow.

h A mark of contradiction and reproach.] The word _epistaxis_ seems here to be used for a _mark_ or _bolt_ to shoot or dart at; which finely intimates the deliberate malice and hellish artifice with which the character and person of Christ was assaulted while he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, Heb. xii. 3.

i A dart shall pierce through thine own soul._ Though _epistaxis_ seems often to signify a _sword, as particularly, in Rev. i. 16. ii. 12, 16. vi. 8._ yet we are assured by Grotius it properly signifies a _Thracian javelin._ It may perhaps (as L’Enfant observes) be a beautiful allusion to the preceding figure, as if it had been told her, that the darts levelled at her son should be reflected from his breast to hers in such a manner as to wound her very heart. Whether it be rendered _sword_ or _dart_ it must undoubtedly refer to the part the holy virgin took in all the reproaches and persecutions which Jesus met with; but never was it so soonly fulfilled as when she stood by the cross, and saw him at once so scornfully insulted and so cruelly murdered. See John xix. 25.

k Had now been a widow about eighty-four years._ I know that Grotius and many others interpret this of her whole age; but I think it most natural to suppose that the time of her marriage is opposed to that of her widowhood.
Joseph and Mary depart from Jerusalem.

**Sect. xi. Luke II. 37.**

estate she might have in the country, departed not from Jerusalem, but kept always so near the temple as to be able to resort thither at the hours of morning and evening sacrifice; serving [God] with frequent fastings and prayers in which this devout matron spent a considerable part of the night as well as of the day. And she coming in at that very time, which was the hour of prayer, joined with Simeon in what he had done, and publicly made her acknowledgments to the Lord, that is, to Jesus, who was now present in the temple; and afterwards spake concerning him to all those of her acquaintance in Jerusalem that were waiting, like her, for the promised redemption of Israel by the Messiah, of whose speedy appearance there was an earnest expectation raised among the pious and devout, as the appointed period of his coming now evidently approached.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

39 And the parents of Jesus, when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, departed from Jerusalem; and full of admiration at the glorious testimonies that were given to their Child, they some time afterwards returned to make her acknowledgments to the Lord, if she addressed herself to the Child, as Simeon had done, confessing him to be the Messiah. The original phrase may have a reference to Simeon's speech, and might be intended to intimate that this of Anna was a kind of response, or counterpart to his. But it is also very probable that she, like Simeon, might also address some lofty hymn of praise to the God of Israel on this great occasion; and if any one think the word "Lord" is here put for Jehovah, though the former interpretation seems to me more just and natural, I shall not oppose it as an error of any importance.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law

1 In which she spent a considerable part of the night as well as of the day.] This is plainly the meaning of night and day, nor can the expression possibly signify more. Perhaps she might sometimes attend those anthems which the priests sung in the temple during the night-watches, Ps. cxxxiv. 1, 2. to which David may also allude, Psal. cxix. 62.

m Made her acknowledgments to the Lord, that is, to Jesus: ἀναθέωσεν αὐτῷ τῷ Κυρίῳ.] The late English version renders it, She expressed her thanks to the Lord, and spake of Jesus; and it must be acknowledged there are in this very section two instances in which the relative pronoun refers to a remote, and not immediately preceding, substantive; ver. 22 and 27. But it is so evident, that Christ is often called the Lord by Luke, as well as by the other sacred writers, that I can see no necessity for giving this passage such a turn, contrary to all the ordinary rules of language.—And if it be objected that the infant Jesus did not seem capable at that time of resenting her gratitude, as a rational agent, I answer that Anna might properly be said to make her acknowledgments to the Lord, if she addressed herself to the Child, as Simeon had done, confessing him to be the Messiah. The original phrase may have a reference to Simeon's speech, and might be intended to intimate that this of Anna was a kind of response, or counterpart to his. But it is also very probable that she, like Simeon, might also address some lofty hymn of praise to the God of Israel on this great occasion; and if any one think the word "Lord" is here put for Jehovah, though the former interpretation seems to me more just and natural, I shall not oppose it as an error of any importance.

n The period of his coming now evidently approached.] The sceptre now appeared to be departing from Judah, though it was not actually gone; Daniel's weeks were plainly near their period; and the revival of the spirit of prophecy, joined with the memorable occurrences relating to the birth of John the Baptist, and of Jesus, could not but encourage and quicken the expectation of pious persons at this time.
who can behold the pious Simeon thus welcoming death, whilst Ver.

the Gentiles as well as to be the glory of his people Israel.

As such may Christ be universally owned and adored, both by Jews and Gentiles! In the mean time, while he is set up as a mark of contradiction and contempt, let us not be ashamed of him or of his words; but rather let those indignities which are offered to

\[p\] To their own city Nazareth.\] It hath been suggested to me by a very learned and ingenious writer, since the publication of the preceding note, that the parents of Christ carried him back from Jerusalem to Bethlehem after the purification, and lived there a year or more before the Magi came; Joseph probably thinking it his duty to settle there, from the persuasion he had, that this wonderful Child was the Messiah, and that the Messiah was to be educated, as well as born, at Bethlehem, David's city. From hence he removed to Egypt; and when he was directed to come back, Joseph appears to have designed to return with Jesus to Bethlehem, had not God commanded him to go to Nazareth, a place which he seems to have esteemed too contemptible to be the abode of so illustrious a person. And this gentleman thinks that when Nazareth is here called τὴν πόλιν αυτῆς, their own city, it intimates an attempt to settle elsewhere in a city that was not their own.

\[o\] They afterwards returned to Galilee.] Luke has omitted the account that Matthew gives us of the visit of the wise men, and of the holy family's retiring into Egypt; and so has taken no notice of their returning any more to Bethlehem. But there is no sufficient reason to conclude from hence, that these occurrences were antecedent to the purification of Mary, and that the holy family immediately returned from Jerusalem to Nazareth. For we have many other instances of a like kind, where events are connected by Luke and the other Evangelists, which did not immediately follow each other; of which Luke xxiv. 50, is particularly memorable, as will be shown in its proper place. I have expressed it therefore with some latitude, as it seems to me probable that upon leaving Jerusalem they returned to Bethlehem, where they were visited by the wise men; and which, as they had found it to be the place appointed for the birth of Christ, they might suppose also to be the place designed for his education and abode, and might not chuse to remove from thence till God had ordered them to do it. (See Lightfoot's Harmony, Matt. ii. init.) However, if they now returned to Nazareth, it is more than possible that Providence might bring them afterwards to Bethlehem, upon some occasion or other, that when the wise men came to inquire after Jesus they might find him in the place to which they were directed. See Mr. Mann's first Dissertation on the Birth of Christ, p. 41, 42, and compare note \[n\], on Matt. ii. 11. in the next section.
to him be as a sword to pierce through our own souls! Let us remember that the gospel, with all the difficulties which attend it, is the great touch-stone by which God will try the characters of all to whom it comes! May our ready acceptance of it, and our zealous adherence to that sacred cause, approve the humble sincerity with which we inquire into its evidence; that Christ may not be to us a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, but rather the means of raising us to God and happiness, even to that redemption for which they that wait shall never be ashamed!

Our circumstances in life are various: There are comparatively few who have such leisure for extraordinary devotion as was the privilege of the pious Anna: Where it is found, let it be valued and improved: But how great and how many soever our engagements and entanglements in life may be, let the care of our souls be still our chief concern. Let us be serving God in one sense or another, night and day; with prayers, pouring out our souls before him morning and evening; and at proper seasons adding fasting to prayer, and public solemnities to private retirements!

To conclude; let the example of these aged saints impress and animate those, whose hoary heads, like theirs, are a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness, (Prov. xvi. 31). Let those venerable lips, so soon to be silent in the grave, be now employed in shewing forth the praises of their Redeemer. Surely days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach, such wisdom. (Job xxxii. 7.) Such fruit may they produce in old age; and may they have the pleasure to see all these pious attempts most thankfully received by the rising generation, and most gratefully improved by them; that they may quit the world with the greater tranquility, in the view of leaving those behind them to whom Christ shall be as precious as he hath been to them, and who will be waiting for God’s salvation, while they are gone to enjoy it! Amen.

The sages, or wise men, came from the east, under the guidance of a star, to enquire after Christ; and being directed unto Bethlehem, pay him their homage, and offer him their presents there.

NOW when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, even in the days of Herod the Great, who at the time of Christ’s nativity was king of that country, there happened a memorable occurrence, which gave a great alarm to the Jews, and made...
The wise men come to enquire after Christ.

the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

made the era of Christ's birth very remarkable among them. For behold, there were [certain] sages, that is, wise and learned men (who, on account of their applying themselves to the study of natural philosophy, were called Magi) that had observed a bright and unusual luminary in the heavens, which they were taught to understand as an intimation that a very Illustrious Person was then born in Judea, who was destined by God to that universal empire, the same and expectation of which had spread so far in those parts: they therefore came from the east-country, where they dwelt, to Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish kingdom; and there they began the inquiry which had occasioned them to undertake so long a journey, saying to those who they thought might be most likely to inform them, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen a beautiful light, which we understand to be his star, in the east-country, of which we are natives; and therefore

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him,

a Certain sages.] It would be quite foreign to my purpose to enumerate the various conjectures of learned men relating to these Magi. I find not amongst them all so wild an hypothesis as that of Vander Hard, (New Memoirs of Lit. Vol. ii. p. 62. &c seq.) that they were learned Jews, who came from the colonies carried away by Shalmanezer and Nebuchadnezzar, and were ambassadors in the name of the whole body to pay their homage to the Messiah, and to congratulate their brethren on his birth. It is most probable they were Gentile Philosophers, who, by the Divine Influence on their minds, had been led to improve their knowledge of nature, as the means of leading them to that of the one living and true God; and it is not at all unreasonable to suppose that God had favoured them with some extraordinary revelations of himself, as he did Melchizedeck, Abimelech, Job and his friends, and some others who did not belong to the Abrahamic family, to which he never intended absolutely to confine his favours.—As to the title that is here given them, it is certain that the word Magi was not appropriate in ancient times to such as practised wicked arts, but frequently was used to express philosophers, or men of learning; and those particularly that were curious in examining the works of nature and in observing the motions of the heavenly bodies, (compare Dan. i. 2, 27. and v. 11. Septang.) And indeed Magi is become a title so familiar to us, and is so far naturalized among us, that I was almost ready to retain it in my version, had I not feared it might excite in common readers something of the same idea with magicians, which always suggests a bad sense.

b Came from the east-country.] I do not venture to determine in the paraphrase, from what part of the east these philosophers came. Had they been (as Mr. Fleming supposes in his Christology, Vol. ii. p. 392.) a deputation from all the Magi in Persia, Media, Arabia and Chaldea, or had they been kings, as the Papiists fancy, so grand a circumstance as either of these would in all probability have been expressly recorded. I rather think, with Grotius, that they came from Arabia, which is often called the east, (see Gen. xxv. 6, 18. Job i. 3. Judg. vi. 3. 1 Kings iv. 30. and Jer. xlix. 28.) and was famous for gold, frankincense, and myrrh (compare ver. 11.) And if so, their journey lay through a barren and scorching country, and they were obliged to pass through deserts infamous for robbery and murder, which much illustrated their piety and zeal.

c We have seen his star in the east-country.] There is no need of supposing with some of the fathers, that they knew the signification of this star, by comparing it with Baalam's prophecy, Numb. xxiv. 17. or Daniel's, Dan. ii. 44. and ix. 23. nor can we think, as Grotius seems to intimate, that they discovered it by the rules of their art.
fore we are come, in humble submission to the will of Providence, to prostrate ourselves before him, and to pay our homage to him.

And king Herod, who was a prince of a very suspicious temper, and whose cruelties had rendered him exceedingly obnoxious to his subjects, when he heard [of this] inquiry of theirs, was very much troubled; and all Jerusalem was also in perplexity with him, fearing he should make it an occasion of renewing some of those tyrannical actions which had lately filled them with so much horror.

And therefore, to secure his crown, which Herod was afraid might be in danger from this new-born King, when he had called a council and had assembled all the chief of the priests, and with them the scribes of the people, whose peculiar business it was to study and explain the scriptures, he inquired of them, where it was, according to the Jewish prophecies, that the long-expected Messiah was to be born. And they said unto him, with one consent, He is certainly to be born at Bethlehem in Judaea; for so it is written

by the prophet Micah, chap. v. 2. “And thou Bethlehem Ephratah, in the land of Judah, inconsider-

It is much more probable that they learned it by a Divine Revelation, which it is plain that they were guided by in their return, as we see afterwards at ver. 12.

4 To prostrate ourselves before him." This I take to be generally the signification of the phrase. It is a ceremony still used by eastern princes, and hath been of great antiquity. Compare Gen. xlii. 6. and xliii. 26, 28.

5 When Herod the king had heard these things he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And then they gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6 And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among

took away the kingdom from him; and likewise slew every one in his own family who adhered to those things that were said by the Pharisees. (Antiq. lib. xvi. cap. 2. (al. 5.) § 4.) From whence it might be seen there was not any thing so barbarous and horrid which such a cruel tyrant was not capable of doing.

All the chief of the priests.] All the chief priests must comprehend here, not only the high-priest for the time being, and his deputy, with those who formerly had borne that office, but also the heads of the twenty-four courses, as well as any other persons of peculiar eminence in the priesthood. In this sense Josephus uses the word. (Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 8. (al. 6.) § 8. p. 973. Edit. Havercamp.)

8 Where the Messiah was to be born.] How strongly all this story implies a general expectation of the Messiah, I need not say. I would only observe that Herod seems to have believed that such a person was foretold; and, on the credit of the chief priests and scribes, that he was to be born in Bethlehem; and yet was, at the same time, contriving to destroy him; which was the height of impious madness as well as cruelty.
Inconsiderable as thou mayest now appear; yet art by no means the least among the cities belonging to the princes or heads of thousands in Judah; for out of thee shall come a Great and Illustrious Ruler, who shall feed and govern my people Israel, most wisely and tenderly performing the office of their Great Shepherd."

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. Then Herod having secretly called the sages to an audience, got exact information from them about what time the star, which they had seen, and which proved the occasion of their journey, first appeared to them; that he might thereby make some conjecture concerning the age of the child to whose birth it referred. (Compare ver. 16.) And after they had satisfied his curiosity and had informed him of the observations they had made about this star, Herod communicated to them the answer he had received from the priests and scribes; and, sending them to Bethlehem, as the place where they might expect to see the new-born Prince, he said, Go, and make a very exact inquiry concerning the Child you are seeking; and when you have found him return hither directly, and inform me of it, that I also, who would permit no interests of mine to interfere with the decrees of heaven, may come with my
The wise men are guided by a star to Bethlehem.

**Sect. xii.**

my family and court to pay my homage to him, to which I look upon myself as peculiarly obliged.

**Mat. II. 9.**

And, having heard this charge from the king, they departed from Jerusalem without the least suspicion of his treacherous and cruel design: And behold, to confirm their faith in him to whom they were going, the very same star, or meteor, which they had seen in the east country, appeared to them again, and moved on before them in the air till it came down still nearer to the earth, and at length stood directly over [the place] where the sacred Infant was. And when they saw the star, thus pointing out their way, and at length by its station over it marking the very house in which they were to find him, they rejoiced with a transport of joy [which was] exceeding great, to seethemselves in so remarkable a manner under the Divine direction, and with such certainty conducted to the glorious Person whom they came to seek.

II. 10 And when they were come into the house, \(a\) where Mary was lodged, being now something better accommodated than at the time of her delivery, they found the young child with Mary his mother; and, how different soever this appearance might be from what they had expected, they were not at

1 The star, or meteor. \(b\) I say meteor, because no star could point out not only a town, but a particular house. It is not at all strange Justin Martyr and other fathers should suppose it was a comet, considering how little astronomy was known in their days; but one would not have imagined Grotius should have gone so far as in the least to intimate such a suspicion.

2 They rejoiced with a joy which was exceeding great. \(c\) The original phrase, εὐαγγέλια γενέσεως κυρίου εὕφρικα εστίν, is emphatical beyond any thing which I can think of in our language. They joyed a great joy, very much, though very had English, comes nearest to a literal version.

3 When they were come into the house. \(d\) Mr. Bedford observes in his Chronology, p. 740, 741, that it is not expressly said that the sages came to Bethlehem: but from the series of the account that Matthew gives us, it seems so very plain that few have questioned it; and it is the less to be doubted, because if Christ (as that author supposes) had been now at Nazareth, he could hardly have been carried into Egypt without passing through Herod's dominions. But it is more difficult to determine whether, if the sages found him at Bethlehem, (as we have reason to conclude they did,) it was within a few weeks of his birth; or (as Mr. Maune supposes, p. 41,) about a year after, when they had spent some considerable time at Nazareth; and afterwards, on some unknown occasion, made a visit to Bethlehem, where they must have contracted some acquaintance. The latter supposition is undoubtedly favoured by Luke ii. 29, and Mat. ii. 16; unless we say that the star appeared about the time of Christ's conception. It also suits best with all the arguments brought to prove that Christ was born A. D. C. 717, or 749, and that Herod died A. D. C. 759, or 751, compared with the tradition of the holy family's spending two years in Egypt. (See Munster on Mat. ii. 14.) These reasons have a face of strong probability, but I cannot say they entirely convince me; and therefore in the paraphrase I have determined nothing either way. Compare note o and p, in the last section, on Luke ii. 39. p. 57.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

10 When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him, and when they had opened their treasures,
Make presents to him, and return home another way.

at all offended at its meanness; but, falling down on their faces before him, they paid him their homage: And, as it was customary in those countries to offer some present to any illustrious personage they came to visit, they opened their treasures, which they had brought along with them for this very purpose, and presented him with the choicest produce of their country, fine gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

And, after this, they were preparing to go back to Jerusalem, as Herod had desired them; but God, who knew the barbarous intent of the king, interposed for the preservation of his Son and for their security and comfort. So, being divinely admonished in a dream that they should not go back to Herod, they returned into their own country another and more direct way; not at all solicitous as to the consequence of Herod's resentment.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us observe, with pleasure, this farther honour which God Ver. did to his only begotten Son in ordering a new star to appear as the signal of his birth, and in calling these illustrious persons from afar to pay their early adorations to him. No doubt they thought such a discovery, as brought them to the feet of their infant Saviour, an ample recompence for all the fatigue and expense of such

have been born in the family of Herod; at least, we may be sure it was some surprise to them to find him accommodated only like a carpenter's child; but they wisely considered that such miraculous honours as the star gave him were far beyond any external circumstance, and therefore paid him their homage as readily as if they had found him in the richest palace. An amiable example of that humble ingenuous temper which fits a man for the reception of the gospel.

P Customary in those countries to offer some present to any illustrious personage they came to visit. That this was customary appears from many passages of the Old Testament. (Gen. xlii. 11—25. 1 Sam. ix. 7, 8. x. 27. 1 Kings x. 2. Psalm lxxii. 10. and Prov. xviii. 16.) And Maunten, Chardin, and many other modern writers of the best credit, assure us the custom is yet retained. See also (Edin. Var. Hist. lib. i. cap. 31, 52, 53. 4 Gold, frankincense, and myrrh.) This was a most reasonable providential assistance to furnish Joseph and Mary for so long and expensive a journey as that into Egypt; a country where they were entirely strangers, and yet were to abide there for some considerable time.

Another and more direct way.] This seems to be intimated in the word _ἀπελθοῦντο_, which might perhaps more literally have been rendered _went back their course_. Herod in the mean-while waiting for their return they had time to get out of his reach before his passion rose, which might have been fatal to them.

Such a discovery of their infant Saviour.] I take it for granted here that they had some divine intimation or human instruction, (which Joseph or Mary might indeed have given them,) that Christ was to save his people from their sins, and was Emmanuel, God with us. Surely God would not have guided them in this extraordinary manner merely to pay a transient compliment to Jesus. Their _prostrations_ probably expressed religious adoration as well as civil respect; and it is not unlikely that their report might in due time make way for the reception of the gospel in the country.
such a journey. They were exceedingly transported when they saw the star. So let us rejoice in every thing which may be a means of leading our souls to Christ, and of disposing us to cast our selves down before him with humility and self-resignation!

Let us look upon this circumstance of the sacred story as a beautiful emblem of that more glorious state of the Christian church when the Gentiles shall come to its light, and sages and kings to the brightness of its rising; when the abundance of the sea shall be converted to it, and the wealth of the Gentiles shall be consecrated to its honour. The multitude of camels shall cover it, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. Isa. lx. 3, 5, 6.

6 How wonderful was the honour conferred upon so obscure a town as Bethlehem when it was made thus illustrious among the thousands of Judah! Happy they who consecrate not only their gold and their other possessions, but also their souls and their bodies to their great Ruler, whose office it is to feed and govern the Israel of God: under whose conduct and care they shall receive blessings infinitely more valuable than all the treasures of the east or the west!

But oh, the fatal power of carnal influence on the heart! This engaged Herod to receive the news of a Redeemer's birth with horror; and with execrable cruelty and vilehypocrisy, to contrive his murder under the specious form of doing him homage. Vain and self-confounding artifice! Let us rejoice in the thought, that there is no understanding, or wisdom, or counsel against the Lord: no scheme so artfully disguised that he cannot penetrate it, or so politically formed that he cannot with infinite ease confound it.

To what perplexity and grief might these sages have been brought had they been made even the innocent instruments of an assault on this Holy Child! But God delivered them from such an alarm, and happily guided their return; so that, through his care and favour, they carried home, in the tidings of the new-born Messiah, far richer treasures than they had left behind. Thus shall they, who in all their ways acknowledge God, by one method or another find that he will graciously direct their paths.

country from whence they came.—And if, as early antiquity reports, (Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. i. cap. 13,) and both Dr. Cave, (Lit. Hist. Vol. i. p. 2) and the learned Dr. Grabe (Spicileg. Patr. Vol. i. p. 1—6,) seem to think some messages of extraordinary respect were afterwards sent from Abgarus, king of Edessa in Arabia, to our Lord Jesus Christ, (which might be fact, though the letters now remaining should be supposed spurious,) it is very possible the report of these sages, preserved by tradition (if they were then dead,) might add weight to that of Christ's miracles, (about thirty years after,) and dispose that prince to take the greater notice of him.
SECT. XIII.

The flight into Egypt; the slaughter of the infants; and the settlement of the holy family at Nazareth after Herod's death.

Mat. II. 13—23.

AND when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy him.

14 When he arose, he took the young Child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15 And was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "In Egypt shall your Child be saved from the sword, and the sight of the child shall be upon me to destruction", Mat. II. 13.

AND after the return of the wise men, when they had paid their homage unto Christ and were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, with a message from heaven, saying, "Rise up without any delay, and take with thee the Infant and his mother, and flee directly into the land of Egypt; and continue there till I shall give thee notice to return; for Herod, alarmed by the extraordinary circumstances which have lately happened, is about to make a strict search after the young Child to destroy him, lest he in time should prove a formidable rival to his family.

And Joseph, rising from his bed, immediately obeyed the heavenly vision; for he took the Infant and his mother by night, and withdrew, with as hasty a flight as their circumstances would allow, into the land of Egypt, near the borders of which Bethlehem lay. And they continued there till after the death of Herod, which happened not till several months after; that what was spoken of the Lord by the prophet Hosea, on another occasion of Christ in the temple, which might at first be only taken notice of by a few pious persons, would probably be now reported to Herod, and must add to the alarm which the inquiry of the sages gave him.

a Flee into the land of Egypt.] This circumstance doth not at all agree with the conjecture of Grotius, that this vision might appear after their return to Nazareth; for then (as the Clericus justly observes) it is much more probable that they would have been ordered to flee into Syria, which was much nearer to Nazareth than Egypt; to which they could not have passed from thence without going through the very heart of Herod's dominions, unless they had taken a very large circuit with great expense and danger. The great number of Jews which resided in Egypt would make their abode there so much the more comfortable.

b Alarmed by the extraordinary circumstances which have lately happened. [When the wise men had come so far to pay their homage to a new-born Prince, the several reports of what had lately happened, would, upon this occasion, be revived, and the behaviour of two such celebrated persons as Simeon and Anna, on the presentation

1754

1754

1754

1754
other occasion, might thus, as it were, be fulfilled anew; and that in this appointment of the place where Christ should take up his abode, there might appear to be a manifest allusion to that saying, (Hos. xi. 1.) "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," Christ being in a much higher and nobler sense the Son of God than Israel, of whom the words were originally spoken.

16 Then Herod, seeing that he was deluded, and that a great affront (as he imagined) was designed him by the sages, as there was now no farther prospect of their returning to him, was exceedingly enraged; and, in order to make the destruction of this unknown Infant as sure as possible, he sent forth a band of murderers, and inhumanly slew all the male children that were in

the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son.

It is well known that, from the time of Julian at least, the enemies of Christianness have been cavilling at the application here made of a prophecy to Christ, which in its original sense seems to belong to the people of Israel. Learned men have laboured with great solicitude to prove it literally applicable to Christ.—Mr. Pierce's hypothesis (see in his Dissertation on this text, added to his paraphrase on Philippians, p. 103, 108.) that the prophet is pursuing two subjects together, and alternately treating of each, which must therefore be read interchangeably, one part referring to the people of Israel, and the other to Christ (as if it were designed by God that the prophecy of Christ's being called out of Egypt should be obscured by such a method) appears indeed to be very ingenious: But I fear, if such liberties were to be allowed, it would render the Scripture the most uncertain book in the world.—Bishop Chandler (in his Defence of Christianity, p. 294.) supposes that calling out of Egypt is a proverbial expression for being delivered from imminent danger; which might have been said to have its accomplishment in Christ's escape, though he had fled into Syria, Arabia, or any other country: But, with all due deference to so great a name, I must observe, that neither Isa. x. 26. Dount. xxviii. 68. or Zach. x. 11. seem sufficient to prove the use of such a phrase; and I apprehend that, if the use of such a proverb were proved, the passage before us would still seem a plainer reference to Hos. xi. 1. than to such a general form of speech; so that the difficulty would still remain.—I once thought the words xi. 6 Nehemiah Israel Deanehu might be rendered and paraphrased after this manner: "Though Israel be a child, that is, wayward and troublesome like a little infant, yet I have loved him, and, in token of my tenderness to him, will call (Jesus) my Son out of Egypt; having there preserved him from the dangers which threatened his infancy, that he may at length accomplish my great intended salvation." I still think that this conjecture deserves some consideration, as much more probable than any other solution of this kind I have ever met with. But, on the whole, especially considering the context, I chose to take them, as Grotius, Heinsius, and many of the best critics do, for a mere allusion; and the rather, as I am fully convinced that the next quotation, in ver. 17. must necessarily be taken in this sense.

Sending that he was deluded.] The word נשביה, which properly signifies to be played with, well expresses the view in which the pride of Herod taught him to regard this action, as if it were intended to expose him to the derision of his subjects, and to treat him as a child, rather than a prince of so great experience and renown.

Sent forth a band of murderers, and slew all the male-children.] A very ingenious and learned friend of mine has attempted to account for Josephus's silence as to this remarkable fact, by a conjecture, that instead of sending forth (as it was in the first edition) a detachment of soldiers, (of which he justly urges, nothing is expressly said in the text) he might only send private orders to have the children taken off so secretly as possible; so that it might not make any public noise and come to the notice of the Jewish historian. But, in answer to this (not to insist upon the argument from Macrobius, Saturnal. lib. ii. cap. 4. that the Emperor Augustus had heard of it at Rome) I would observe that it
An allusion here to the prophecy of Jeremiah.

in Bethlehem, and in all the confines of it, from their entrance upon the second year, and under:

And then, as this cruel execution extended itself to the neighbouring places, and in particular to Ramah, a town of Benjamin, which lay near Bethlehem, that remarkable saying was farther fulfilled which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet (Jer. xxxi. 15.) for this was plainly an event to which those words might be applied with more literal propriety than to the captivity of the Jews in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, which they were originally intended to describe, when they were first delivered by the prophet.

it is certain nothing of such privacy in the dispatch of these children can be inferred from the word as in the Latin, since it is also used to express the crucifixion of our Lord, (Acts xii. 23. x. 59.) the stoning of Stephen, (Acts xxxii. 20.) and the beheading of James the Apostle, (Acts xii. 2.) all which were public executions; as well as the intended assassination of Paul by a band of armed men, (Acts xxxiii. 15.) And if it be considered, on the one hand, how difficult it is privately to murder children under two years old, as they are hardly ever left alone; and on the other, how ill such a cautious and uncertain procedure would have agreed with the furious disposition of Herod and the haughty rage in which these orders were given, I believe few will incline to this hypothesis. As for the silence of Josephus, it is to be considered that Bethlehem was but a small place; and therefore, in a reign of so much cruelty, the slaughter of its infants might not be taken very much notice of. Josephus was not old enough to remember it himself; and if he did not find it in the Memoirs of Nicholas of Damascus (that flattering historian, of whom we know he made great use in compiling the life of Herod), he might be unwilling to introduce it, even if he were particularly acquainted with it; lest the occasion might have led him to mention what generally at least he is solicitous to decline, I mean Christian affairs. On the whole, if we compare contemporary historians of every age we shall find some material fact or another omitted by each of them; yet that silence of one is never urged as an argument against admitting the express testimony of the rest. See Dr. Lardner's Credibility. Part I. Vol. ii. book ii. chap. 2. § 1. p. 746. & seq. 

From their entrance upon the second year.] The reasons which determined me to render ano b
dug thus, may be seen in Sir Norton Knatchbull's excellent note on this place. It is probable that Herod in his passion ordered the slaughter of the infants as soon as he perceived that he was disappointed in his expectation of the return of the wise men, lest otherwise the Child he was so jealous of might be removed; and as his cruelty extended even to those who had entered on the second year, which is expressly said to be according to the time of which he had got exact information from the sages, it must be natural to conclude from hence, that it was not till some considerable time after the birth of Christ that he was visited by the wise men, even though we should allow the first appearance of the star to have been (as some suppose) about the time of Christ's conception. Compare note a on Matt. ii. 11. For the version of an
dug, see note i on ver. 7.

h Which they were originally intended to describe.] It is very evident from the following clause, (Jer. xxxii. 17.) Thy children shall come again to their own border, that these lamented persons were not slain, but carried into captivity; and it is well known that Ramah was the place where they were assembled to be led away to Babylon. (Jer. xl. 1.) So that it is certain this can only be an allusion, as it is intimated in the paraphrase. And I look upon this as a sure argument, that a passage in scripture, whether prophetic, historical or poetical, may, in the language of the New Testament, be said to be fulfilled, when an event happens to which it may with great propriety be accommodated. See Dr. Sykes on the Truth of Christianity, chap. xiii. p. 217, & seq. 

I Rechel.
Joseph returns with Jesus from Egypt.

Joseph, Rachel, and Jesus travelled to Egypt to escape Herod's edict. After the murder of Herod, the child Jesus was removed from Herod's powers. The family settled in Egypt, where Jesus grew up peacefully. When Herod died, the family returned to Israel, and Jesus continued his life and teachings there.

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19 But after this, when Herod was dead, and an end put to all his cruelties, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, while he continued to sojourn in Egypt.

20 Saying, The way is now prepared for thy return from hence, and I am sent, according to the intimation that was given thee before, to bring thee notice of it: and therefore now arise and take the Infant and his mother, and go back to thine own abode in the land of Israel; for thou mayest safely do it, since they are dead who sought to destroy the young Child's life.

21 And Joseph had no sooner heard the message that was brought him by the angel, but he immediately arose, and, cheerfully confiding in the Divine protection, took the young Child and his mother, according to the command he had received, and came into the land of Israel. But when, upon his coming to the borders of it, he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judah in the room of his father Herod, knowing him to be the heir of his cruelty, as well as of his kingdom, he

Rachel, who was buried near this place.] See Gen. xxxv. 19. and 1 Sam. x. 9.

k When Herod was dead.] It is well worth while to read the particular and affecting account which Josephus has given of the terrible death of this inhuman tyrant, whom God so remarkably made a terror to himself, as well as to all about him. (See Joseph. Antig. lib. xvii. cap. 6. al. 8. § 5. & Bell. Jud. lib. i. cap. 33. al. 21. § 5. 6. 7.) Eusebius thought it so great an illustration of the gospel history, that he has inserted it at large (Vieil. Hist. lib. i. cap. 8.) with a degree of exactness, which joins with many other instances of the like nature, to show us how cheerfully we may depend upon the many invaluable extracts from a multitude of ancient books now lost, which he has given us both in his Ecclesiastical History and in his other writings, especially in his Preparatio Evangelica.

They are dead who sought to destroy the young Child's life.] It is a very ingenious conjecture of Mr. Manne, that Antipater, the son of Herod, who, at the time when Christ was born, was heir-apparent to his crown, and was a prince so cruel and ambitious, that he had procured the death of his two elder brothers to clear his way to the succession, would very probably be an active counsellor and instrument in seeking the destruction of the new-born Jesus, and in advising to the slaughter of the infants. And, as this Antipater died but five days before Herod, both might be referred to in these words of the angel, They are dead, &c. See Manne's Dissert. p. 74, 75. and compare Joseph. Antig. Jud. lib. vii. cap. 8. (al. 11.) § 4. lib. xvii. cap. 1. & 8. (al. 10.) § 1. Edit. Havercamp.

The heir of his cruelty.] Archelaus, in the very beginning of his reign, massacred three thousand Jews at once in the temple, and was afterwards banished, in the tenth year of his government, to Vienne in Gaul, by Augustus, on a complaint brought against him by the chief of the Jews for his various cruelties. See Joseph. Antig. lib. xvii. cap. 9. (al. 11.) § 3. p. 551, & cap. 13. (al. 15.) § 2. p. 566.

n Galilee—
he was afraid to go thither to settle, or so much as to take it in his way; but, being again divinely admonished in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee, which was under the government of Herod Antipas, a prince of a milder character; and who was then on such hostile terms with Archelaus, that there was no danger of his giving them up to him. And he went and dwelt in a little city, on the confines of Zabulon and Issachar, which was called Nazareth, where he had formerly resided before he went to Bethlehem; and being thus returned to his own city, Jesus was there brought up and educated in a place so very contemptible among the Jews, that it was grown into a proverb with them. That no good thing could be expected from thence (John i. 46. vii. 52.) so that by this a way was further opened by the providence of God, that it might be fulfilled what had been spoken in effect by many of the prophets. "He shall be called a Nazarene:" that is, he shall appear in mean and despicable circumstances, and be treated as the mark of public contempt and reproach.

**Improvement.**

What is our fallen nature, that it can be capable of such enormities as we have now been surveying! Or what imaginably contemptible circumstances of grandeur and power can free the mind of an ambitious creature from servitude and misery! Who can behold Herod...

---

**(Footnotes)**

1. Galilee—under the government of Herod Antipas.] Herod the Great divided his dominions by his last will, appointing Archelaus to succeed him as king of Judea, Herod Antipas to be Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and Philip to be Tetrarch of Trachonitis and the neighbouring countries. (Joseph. Antig. lib. xvii. cap. 8. (al. 11.) § 1.) But Herod Antipas endeavoured to supplant his brother Archelaus, when application was made to the Romans to confirm the will, and went to Rome, with a view of obtaining the kingdom, (which was left to him in a former will,) in which he was supported by the interest of the whole family who hated Archelaus, and thought his brother to be far more worthy of the kingdom; and, though he did not carry his point, the attempt was such as could not but widen the breach there was before between them, and left no room for any future correspondence. See Joseph. Antig. lib. xvii. cap. 9. (al. 11.) § 4. & cap. 11. (al. 13.) § 4.

2. He shall be called a Nazarene.] If the solution given in the paraphrase be not allowed, I must acquiesce in Chrysostom’s opinion, that the passage referred to is lost: For it is very unnatural to explain this text by Sampson’s being appointed a Nazarite, Judges xiii. 5. or the Messiah’s being spoken of as Netzer, the branch, Isa. xi. 1. or to account for it with Wis- sius, by God’s being called Netzer, the preserver of men, Job vii. 20. See Wits. Meletem. Diss. § 16.) The joint sense of many scriptures is thus referred to, John vii. 38. and James iv. 5. And that the Messiah should be treated in a very contemptuous manner, was foretold by David, Psal. xcvii. 6. & seq. lxix. 9. by Isaiah cha. ii. and iii. and by Zechariah, chap. xi. 12, 13.
Reflections on the preservation of Jesus in Egypt.

**Sect.**

**XIII.**

**Mat.**

**ii. 21.**

*Herod* under the agitation of such a barbarous rage, and not see the vanity even of royal dignity, when the man that sways the sceptre over others hath no rule over his own spirit? Surely none of the innocent victims of *Herod's* wrath felt so much from the sword of their barbarous murderers as the guilty mind of the tyrant from its own unnatural transports.

The indignation which arises in our minds on the view of so much wickedness, finds a secret satisfaction in this thought. But how grievous is it to reflect on what the parents of these poor babes felt while the sword that murdered their children in their very sight pierced through their own bowels? Happy, in comparison with these, were the wombs that never bare and the paps that never gave suck! Let parents remember how soon their dearest hopes may be turned into lamentation and learn to moderate their expectation from their infant offspring and check too fond a delight in them.

Let us all learn to be very thankful that we are not under the arbitrary power of a tyrant, whose sallies of distracted fury might spread desolation through houses and provinces. Let us not say, Where was the great Regent of the universe when such a horrible butchery was transacted? His all-wise counsels knew how to bring good out of all the evil of it. The agony of a few moments transmitted these oppressed innocents to peace and joy, while the impotent rage of *Herod* only heaped on his own head guilt, infamy and horror. *He conceived mischief, and he brought forth vanity, (Job xv. 35:)* and while he studied to prevent the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, and *set himself with impious rage against the Lord,* and *against his Anointed, He that sitteth in the heavens did laugh,* yea, *the Lord had him in derision.* (Psalm ii. 2, 4.) That God, who discerns every secret purpose of his enemies, and foresees every intended assault, knows how, whenever he pleases, by a thought, by a dream, to baffle it.

The preservation of the holy child Jesus in Egypt may be considered as a figure of God's care over his church in its greatest danger. God doth not often, as he easily could, strike their persecutors with immediate destruction; but he provides a hiding-place for his people, and, by methods not less effectual, though less pompous, preserves his chosen seed from being swept away, even when the enemy comes in like a flood.

*Egypt,* that was once the seat of persecution and oppression to the Israel of God, is now a refuge to his Son: and thus all places will be to us what Divine Providence will be pleased to make them. When, like Joseph and Mary, we are cut off from the worship of his temple and perhaps removed into a strange land, he can be a little sanctuary to us and give us, in his gracious presence, a rich equivalent for all that we have lost.

They
They continued here till he gave the signal for their departure. Let us, in like manner, remember that it is God's part to direct and ours to obey; nor can we be out of the way of safety and Ver, of comfort while we are following his directions, and steering our course by the intimations of his pleasure!

Jesus survived his persecutors, and returned into the land of Israel again; but such was his condescension, that he abode at Nazareth, which seems to have been allotted him as the most humble station. Let us never be unwilling to bear reproach for him, who from his infancy endured it for us; nor take offence at the meanness of his condition, whose removes were directed by angelic messengers, as immediate envoys from the God of heaven!

**SECT. XIV.**

Jesus, at the age of twelve years, comes up to the passover at Jerusalem, and there discourses with the doctors in the temple. Luke II. 40. to the end.


AND the Child grew, and waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast.

a Came under the yoke of the law.] Though I am not satisfied of the truth of Gronin's assertion, that the Jewish children under this age were called Ketanim, or little ones, and afterwards Nekharim, or children, (since it is certain that the word Nekhar is often used for those under that age; see 1 Sam. i. 24. Judg. xiii. 24. and Hos. xi. 1, 3.) yet I think the fact asserted in the paraphrase is generally allowed by learned men. See Walton's Miscel. Vol. I. p. 520, and Lightf. Hor. Heb. in loc.

b Three
sects. xiv.

Luke ii. 42.

43 And when they had finished all the religious solemnities to be observed in the days of unleavened bread, and were returning home, the child Jesus, charmed with the sacred entertainments of the temple, and eagerly desirous of improving in the knowledge of his Father's law, staid behind them in Jerusalem: and neither Joseph nor his mother were aware [of it.] But though they saw he was not with them, yet knowing his sociable temper, they supposed he was somewhere in the company (as several families travelled together on such occasions): And they went a whole day's journey before they missed him; and then, in the evening, they sought for him amongst their kindred and acquaintance, who were their companions in the journey, and with whom they concluded he had been. And, not finding him with them, they returned immediately, and came back to Jerusalem, seeking him every where with great concern, and ready to suspect that some hostile assault might have been made upon him.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass that, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, whose profession it was to teach on these occasions; for he had placed himself among others at their feet, and was, with these things are so well illustrated and confirmed by Dr. Lightfoot, in his Hor. Heb. on this place, that I cannot but refer the reader thither. See also Drusius's excellent note on this place.

d Sitting—at their feet.] I have often thought it a great injury to the character of our Blessed Redeemer, to represent this story, whether in pictures or words, as if Christ, at this tender age, were up into the seats of the doctors, and there disputed with
And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And all who heard him, considering the ten-derness of his age, were in a perfect transport of admiration at his understanding, and at the penetration which he shewed, both in the questions he put to them, and also in the answers he returned to what they asked him.

And when he was discovered by his parents, and they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And he said unto them, What is the cause that you have sought me with so much concern? and why is it, you were at such a loss where you should find me? Did ye not know that I ought to be at my Father's house? and that wherever I was, I should be so employed in his service as to be secure of his protection? And they did not perfectly understand the words which he spake unto them upon this occasion, as being expressed in something of a concise and ambiguous manner.

with them. Not one word is said of his disputing by the Evangelist, but only of his asking some questions and answering others, which was a very usual thing in these assemblies and indeed the very end of them. All was, no doubt, conducted with the utmost modesty and decorum. And if he were with others at the feet of these teachers (where learners generally sat, see Luke x. 39. and Acts xxii. 3.) he might be said to be in the midst of them, as they sat on benches of a semicircular form, raised above their auditors and disciples.

Were in a transport of admiration.] Every learned reader must know that the word εκπληκτός here, and εκκενδρίας in the next verse, are much more forcible than our translation of them, and much more literally rendered here.

I ought to be at my Father's; ὦ τοῖς ὧν παρεῖς καὶ διήκοναί μοι. There is a known ambiguity in the original. I have chosen with Grotius, Capellus, Fuller, &c. to follow the Syriac version of the words, where it is rendered in my Father's house, which it is certain they will well bear; and so Josephus puts ὦ τοῖς ὧν ἔλεσεν for in Jupiter's temple; contra Apion. lib. i. § 18. p. 449.

Hazzerc. (Compare John xix. 27. Esther v. 10. vi. 12. vii. 9. Gr.) And indeed, though a general apprehension of his being well employed might be a reason (as it is intimated in the paraphrase) against their expressive anxiety, yet it could not (as the words in this connection seem to imply) have directed them where to find him. It is to be remembered this was the first visit Christ had ever made to the temple since he was a child in arms; and it is no wonder, therefore, that the delight he found there inclined him to prolong it.

They did not perfectly understand the words that he spake unto them.] It is strange Grotius should think ἔσκηνων should here be rendered, They did not attentively consider what he said, when the very next verse assures us Mary kept all these sayings in her heart. The phrase only implies that there was something more in Christ's words than at first appeared. He conjectures there might be a reference to his being the Lord who was to come into his temple (Mul. iii. 1.) which, if there be, it is indeed very obscure. It seems more probable it may be an intimation that he had many other important visits to make to
Reflections on the childhood of Jesus.

And he went down into the country with them, and came to Nazareth; and there he did not assume any air of superiority on account of the extraordinary applause he had met with from the people who had heard him in the temple, but still continued subject to his parents, and respectful to them, as a most dutiful and obedient child. And his mother kept all these sayings and occurrences in her heart and often reflected very seriously upon them.

And Jesus advanced considerably in wisdom, as well as in age and stature, and grew proportionally in favour both with God and men; his behaviour being not only remarkably religious, but so benevolent and obliging, as to gain the friendship and affection of all that were about him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let us, who are heads of families, take occasion from the story before us to renew our resolutions, that we and our house will serve the Lord; and remember that it is a part of our duty, not only to God but to our domestics, to engage them with us in his public worship; the pleasures of which will surely be increased when we see them, and, especially our dear children, joining with us in attendance on our great common Father.

Let children view the example of the holy child Jesus with an humble desire to copy after it. Let them love the house and ordinances of God and thirst for the instructions of his good word.

Let them think themselves happy if his servants in the ministry will bestow a part of their important time in those exercises which are especially suited for their instruction; and let them not only be careful to return the properest answers they can, but at convenient times, with modesty and respect, ask such questions as may be likely to improve them in knowledge and grace.

Let those children, whose genius is most promising and most admired, learn from the blessed Jesus to behave themselves in an humble and submissive manner to all their elders and especially to their parents; for though he was the Lord of all, yet was he subject not only to Mary his real mother, but to Joseph, though only supposed to his Father's house; which evidently appears by the sequel of the history.

h In wisdom, as well as in age and stature.] It is well known that wisdom may signify either age or stature; but I think the latter is meant here, because the former was too apparent to need the mention. It seems a very just and important remark of Erasmus here, that all the endowments of the Man Christ Jesus were owing to the Divine beneficence, and that the Deity communicated itself in a gradual manner to that human nature which it had assumed.
supposed to be his father. Such children may well hope that the grace of God will still be upon them; and, growing in wisdom as they do in stature, they will also advance in favour with God and men, and be the darlings of heaven as well as of earth.

And, oh, that the greatest and wisest of us, those of the longest standing and of the most eminent stations in the church, might learn of this admirable and Divine Child; that, always remembering our relation to God, and ever intent on learning his will and promoting his glory, we might, with humble acquiescence, accommodate ourselves to all the dispositions of his providence! How easily could he, who discovered such early marks of a sublime genius and a lively wit, have relished the most elegant delights of science and have eclipsed all the most celebrated poets, orators and philosophers of that learned and polite age! But he laid all those views aside, that he might pursue the duties of that humble rank of life which his heavenly Father's infinite wisdom had assigned him; and joined, as it would seem, to assist in maintaining himself and his parents too by the daily labour of his hands. Let us learn from hence, that it is the truest greatness of soul to know our own place and office, and to deny ourselves those amusements of the mind, as well as those gratifications of the senses, which are inconsistent with the proper services of our different relations and callings.

SECT. XV.


MARK I. 1.

T HE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God;

As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

MARK I. 1.

THE beginning of the gospel-history of Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, as it is recorded by the evangelist Mark, thus takes its rise from the first opening of John's ministry. It was this John that came under the character of the great forerunner of the Messiah; As it is written in the prophets, and particularly in Malachi (chap. iii. 1.) "Behold, I will send my messenger before thy face, O my Anointed Son, who shall prepare thy way before thee; and, as the souls, they see cause in their last moments to adopt the words of dying Grotius, perhaps with much greater propriety than he could use them: Præs! vitae perdidi, operose nihil agendo: — alas! I have thrown away life in doing nothing with a great deal of pains.
John the Baptist enters on his ministry;

the harbinger appointed to proclaim thy coming, shall, with remarkable solemnity, make it the business of his ministry to introduce thy kingdom." So also it was prophesied concerning him by Isaiah (chap. xi. 3.) "There shall be heard the voice of one crying in the wilderness, and solemnly proclaiming to this purpose in the deserts of Judea, Prepare ye with readiness the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight and smooth by removing every thing which might prove an obstruction to his gracious appearance." These prophecies (as it will presently be seen) received a very signal and remarkable accomplishment in John, who, from his office, was surnamed the Baptist.

Luke III. 1. Now this eminent person made his first public appearance in the fifteenth year of the reign of the emperor Tiberius Caesar, (reckoning the beginning of his reign from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire) when Archelaus being banished, and his kingdom reduced into a Roman province, Pontius Pilate was governor, or procurator, of Judea; and, as the dominions of Herod the Great had been divided after his death, Herod Antipas, one of his sons, was tetrarch of Galilee, or governor of that fourth part of his dominions; and his brother Philip tetrarch of another fourth part, which was the region of Iturea and Trachonitis (the name now given to that tract of land on the other side Jordan which had formerly belonged to

a The voice of one crying in the wilderness.] Most commentators have imagined these words originally to refer to the proclamation of deliverance from the Babylonish captivity: but there is no imaginable reason for supposing an immediate connection between the conclusion of the thirty-ninth chapter of Isaiah and the beginning of the fortieth; nor can I observe anything in the process of this chapter which may not literally suit the evangelical sense here given it by Mark as well as Matthew and Luke.

b Reckoning from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire.] Supposing Christ was born A. D. 747. (as in note e) it is absolutely necessary to interpret the words thus; because the fifteenth year of Tiberius, if reckoned from the death of Augustus, began in August, A. D. 781, and would thus be the thirty-fourth year of Christ's life, which is plainly inconsistent with Luke iii. 23. (See Munne's Dissert. p. 156-140.) But if the birth of Christ be placed (as seems most probable) in September, A. D. 749, and Tiberius was admitted to a part in the empire (three years before Augustus died) in August, 754, the fifteenth year of Tiberius on this computation began in August 778. And if John entered on his ministry in the spring following, A. D. 750, in the same year of Tiberius; and, after he had preached about twelve months, baptized Jesus in the spring 780, then Jesus at his baptism would be but thirty years of age, and some odd months, which perfectly agrees with what St. Luke says of his being at that time about thirty years old. See Dr. Lord's Credib. Part I. Vol. ii. p. 838, 839.

c Divided after his death.] See note n, on Mat. ii. 22.

d Lysanias

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
And preaches the baptism of repentance.

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God [in those days] came unto John [the Baptist] the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness [of Judaea]. [MAT. III. 1.] 3 And [Mark] John did baptize in the wilderness, and came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; [MAT. III. 1. MARK I. 4.]

a Lysias was tetrarch of Abilene.] Some have thought this Lysias another son of Herod the Great; but it seems much more probable that he was descended from a prince of that name, who had been governor of that country several years before. See Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xiv. cap. 13. (ad 23.) § 3. p. 722. Have remap.

b In those days.] This is supplied from Mat. iii. 1, where it is proper to observe that the phrase of τὰς ἡμέρας αυτῶν is used in a very extensive sense for that age of which he had spoken in the preceding words, though these events happened near thirty years after those recorded in the former chapter of that gospel. And the phrase is here used with the greater propriety, as John did indeed appear under his public character while Christ continued to dwell at Nazareth; which was the event that Matthew had last mentioned.

c While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. As it was not Caiaphas but Ishmael that immediately succeeded Annas or Ananus (Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xvi. cap. 2. (ad 3.) § 2. p. 873.) I cannot suppose, as some have done, that Annas was high priest the former part of this year, and Caiaphas the latter; much less that Luke knew so little of the Jewish constitution as to suppose there could be two high priests properly so called. The easiest solution is, that one was the high priest, and the other his agnus or deputy; so that the title might, with a very pardonable liberty, be applied to both. See note 3 on John xviii. 13. Vol. II. sect. 184.

8 The word of God came unto John the Baptist.] I think these words declare, as expressly as any words can, that John was called to his prophetic work in the fifteenth year of Tiberius; so that, if Mr. M'Nan's arguments prove (as he supposes they do) that Christ was crucified in that fifteenth year, then it will follow, that all the events, both of John's ministry and of our Lord's must be reduced within the compass of one year; which is, for reasons elsewhere given, utterly incredible. To conclude, that by the language which Luke here uses, he intends to express the time of Christ's death, though it did not happen in the same year, is doing the greatest violence imaginable to the whole passage. How much easier would it be to admit of a little more latitude in the in-
The design of his coming foretold by Isaiah.

And while he was thus urging his exhortation, and saying, Repent ye, he pleaded with them a very new and important argument: For (said he, the long-expected kingdom of heaven is now approaching); and God is about to appear, in an extraordinary manner, to erect that kingdom spoken of by Daniel (chap. ii. 44. and vii. 13, 14.) as the kingdom of the God of heaven, which he would set up and give to the Son of man; making it finally victorious over all other kingdoms. It is therefore (said the Baptist) of the highest importance that you should be the subjects of this kingdom; which, without a sincere and universal repentance, you cannot possibly be.

And upon this occasion he failed not to repel and to insist upon that passage of scripture, (which has in part been just now mentioned,) making it evident that this was all exactly as it is written in the book of discourses and prophecies of the prophet Isaiah; for this indeed is he who was spoken of so expressly by that sacred writer (chap. xl. 3, 4, 5.) when he is saying, with a manifest reference to the Messiah’s kingdom, “There shall be heard the voice of one crying aloud in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord with the most thankful readiness, and cheerfully set yourselves to make his paths straight and plain, by removing every thing which might prove an obstruction when he comes on so gracious a design. Every valley shall therefore be filled up, and every mountain includes both. It is plain that the Jews understood it of a temporal monarchy which God would erect; the seat of which they supposed would be Jerusalem, which would become, instead of Rome, the capital of the world; and the expected Sovereign of this kingdom they learned from Daniel to call the Son of man; by which title they understood a very excellent person, who was the promised Messiah, the Christ, or the Anointed One of God. Both John the Baptist and Christ took up this phrase, and used it as they found it, and gradually taught the Jews to affix right ideas to it, though it was a lesson they were remarkably unwilling to learn. This very demand of repentance showed it was a spiritual kingdom; and that no wick- ed man, how polite or brave, how learned or renowned soever, could possibly be a genuine member of it. See my Sermons on Regeneration, Numb. IV. p. 106—117.

**SECT. XV.**

**Mat. III. 2.** And saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

**Luke III. 4.** As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet [for this is he that was spoken of] saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. [Mat. III. 5.]

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the
The remarkable manner of his appearance.

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Mat. III. 4. And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

[Mark. I. 6.]

1 Every mountain and hill shall be brought down before him; even the crooked roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; tain and hill shall be brought down before him; even the crooked roads shall be made into a straight way, and the rough places shall be laid smooth and level: for by the mighty power of his grace, which shall be now remarkably displayed, such a victorious way shall be made for his gospel, and it shall be propagated with such speed and success, that it shall seem as if the whole face of nature were miraculously changed; and mountains and valleys and forests and rocks were to spread themselves into a spacious plain before the messenger of it. And thus, not the land of Israel alone, but all flesh, or the whole human race, not excepting the remotest Gentile nations, shall see and admire the great salvation of God.”

Now, that this extraordinary message might meet with the greater regard, God was pleased to send it by a person on many accounts remarkable, and especially for the temperance and even the severity of his manner of living. For this John wore (as the ancient prophets used to do) a rough garment which was made of camel’s hair, and so indeed was but a kind of sackcloth: and he had a leathern girdle about his waist (compare 2 Kings i. 8. Zech. xiii. 4. Rev. vi. 12. and xi. 3.) And as for his food, it was such as the wilderness afforded, which was frequently nothing but a large kind of locusts, which the law allowed

1 [Every mountain and hill shall be brought down before him.] Græcius has most elegantly illustrated the reference that appears so plainly in this passage to the custom of sending pioneers to level the way before princes when they are coming with numerous attendants: but, by the import of the language that the prophet uses, it is plainly to be seen that the main work is God’s, though men are called to concur with him in it; which is every where the scheme of scripture, as it certainly is of sound reason. Compare Phil. ii. 12, 13.

k A large kind of locusts.] Though it may be allowed, on the authority of the accurate Senedy (see his valuable Travels, p. 183) and many others, that there is in these parts a shrub talk d the Locust-Tree, the buds of which something resemble asparagus; yet, notwithstanding all the pains Sir Norton Knatchbull has taken to prove it, I cannot imagine the word ἀσπαράγης is here to be understood as referring to the product of it. It is certain the word in the Septuagint and elsewhere generally signifies the animal which we call a locust, or a large winged grasshopper (see Rev. ix. 3, 7, 8,) which the law allowed the Jews to eat (Lev. xi. 21, 22,) and which Pliny assures us made a considerable part of the food of the Parthians and Ethiopians. (See Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xi. cap. 29. and lib. vi. cap. 30.) The matter is excellently illustrated by the learned notes of Hein- slas, Drusus and Elseu, on this place; but Erasmus is tediously prolix upon it, and, which is strange, he is very warm too. What need have we to keep a guard upon our spirits when so great and so good a natured a man could be angry in a debate of so small importance!—I shall add only on this point, with respect to the use of locusts for food, what Dr. Shaw tells us, that, when sprinkled with salt and fried, they taste much like the river cray fish; who justly contends for this signification of the word ἀσπαράγης; in his excellent Travels, p. 253; where he also observes that, as the months of April and May are the time when these insects abound, it may
 allowed him to eat (Lev. xi. 21, 22,) and wild honey, often to be found in hollow trees or in the clefts of the rocks. (Compare 1 Sam. xiv. 26. 
Mat. iii. 4. and Psal. lxxxvi. 16.)

5 These uncommon circumstances of his public appearance concurred with the time of it to awaken in the people a great regard for his preaching: for their uneasiness under the Roman yoke, which then bore hard upon them, raised the most impatient desire of the Messiah's arrival; by whom they expected not only deliverance, but conquest and universal monarchy. They therefore attentively listened to this proclamation of his approach; so that the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and multitudes out of all the land of Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to hear him, and were attentive to him.

6 And great numbers of them were brought under very serious impressions by his faithful remonstrances, expostulations and warnings: and those that were awakened to repentance were all baptized by him in the river Jordan; expressing the convictions they were under by confessing their sins, and, by submitting to this rite, engaging themselves for the future to reformation and obedience.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what pleasure should we hear, the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God! and with what reverence remember the dignity of his Divine nature amidst all the condescensions of his incarnate state!

It is surely matter of unspeakable thankfulness that the kingdom of heaven should be erected among men! that the great God should condescend so far as to take to himself a people from our mean and sinful world, and appoint his own Son to be the governor of that kingdom! How happy are we that it is preached among us and we are called into it! Let it be our great care that we be not only nominal but real members of it.

For this purpose let us remember and consider that, to become the subjects of this kingdom, we are to enter into it by the way possibly be conjectured that John began his ministry about that season of the year, which might also seem more convenient for receiving, and especially, for baptizing so great a number of people, than winter could have been.

1 Went out to him.] The novelty of a prophet's appearance in Israel, the family of John, the circumstances of his birth, and the extraordinary character he had, no doubt, maintained for strict and undissembled piety, all concurred with the causes mentioned in the paraphrase to draw such vast multitudes after him.
The Pharisees and Sadducees come to hear John.

way of repentance; humbly confessing our sins, and resolutely forsaking them, if we do indeed desire to find mercy.

Let us bless God, both for the promises of pardon and for the appointment of the seals of it, particularly of baptismal washing; always remembering the obligation it brings upon us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

And, being ourselves become members of Christ's kingdom, let Ver. us pray that it may be every where extended. May Divine grace remove every obstruction, and make a free course for his gospel, that it may every where run and be glorified, so that all flesh may see the salvation of God!

John, with this awful severity of manners and of doctrine, was sent before Christ to prepare his way. Let us learn to reflect how necessary it is that the law should thus introduce the gospel; and let all the terrors of Moses and Elias render the mild and blessed Redeemer so much the more welcome to our souls!

SECT XVI.

John the Baptist addresses suitable admonitions to those that attended his ministry, and proclaims the approach of the Messiah. Mat. iii. 7—12. Mark i. 7, 8. Luke iii. 7—18.

MAT. III. 7.

BUT when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? [Luke i. 7.]

MAT. III. 7.

WHEN John opened his ministry there were two different sects among the Jews; that of the Pharisees, who were exceeding strict in ceremonial institutions and in the observation of human traditions; and that of the Sadducees, who, among other very obnoxious notions, denied the existence of spirits and a future state of rewards and punishments: yet some of both these sects, out of curiosity or popular custom, or for some other unknown reason, attended on the preaching of this holy man: And when he saw among the multitudes that came to be baptized by him, that many both of the Pharisees and Sadducees were coming to receive his baptism, as he well knew the open profaneness of the one and the secret wickedness of the other, he

2 Pharisees and Sadducees.] The most authentic account of these sects may be seen in Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xviii. cap. 1. (al. 2) & Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 8. (al. 7) Hasee. All writers of Jewish Antiquities describe them largely; but, I think on the whole, none better than Dr. Prideaux, Connect. Vol. II. p. 535—540.

b Coming to receive his baptism.] I express it in this manner, for though some understand the words εἰς τῇ ἁγιάσματι, of their coming to oppose his baptism, I think the reasons for that interpretation not worth mentioning here, and refer my reader to Raphaelus, who has given them a larger examination than they deserve. Ant. or Xen. p. 7—11.
They are exhortd to repentance.

he did not flatter them at all in his address, but said unto them, as with some surprize, O ye abominable broods of vipers, crafty, malignant, mischievous creatures, who hath taught you to put on this form of humility and repentance and admonished you to flee from the wrath which is surely and speedily to come? What is it that hath moved you to it, when you Pharisees think yourselves so secure from it on account of the pretended sanctity of your lives, and you Sadducees imagine it to be no other than a mere fable and a dream? Let me exhort you therefore, if you design to be baptized by me, to make it your serious and resolute care to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, and to act like those that are penitents indeed, forsaking as well as confessing your sins: And, if you neglect this, do not presumptuously think it will be to any purpose for you to say within yourselves, We have Abraham, for our father; as relying on your descent from that holy patriarch, and your being that seed of his with whom a peculiar covenant was made; for I solemnly say, and declare it unto you, as a certain and important truth, That God is able, of these very stones that are before your eyes, which he can animate and sanctify whenever he sees fit, to raise up those who, though not descended from human parents, shall be in a much nobler sense than you children to Abraham, as being made the heirs of his faith and obedience; and he would sooner work such a miracle as this than he would suffer his promise to fail, or admit you to the blessings of his approaching...

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for [or worthy of] repentance: [Luke III. 8.]

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. [Luke III. 8.]

c O ye broods of vipers.] Some think this is to be understood as if it had been said, Ye wicked children of wicked parents, but such a reflection on their parents is not necessarily implied. The children of pious Eli are called sons of Belial, merely with reference to their own licentious characters as they knew not the Lord. See 1 Sam. ii. 12.—The word πρωτογενής may be used in the plural number in reference to the different sentiments, and, if I may be allowed the expression (familiar enough to the Jewish doctors,) the different families of these sects in question.

d We have Abraham for our father.] Dr. Whitby well shows how great the presumption of the Jews on this relation to Abraham was. Munster, on this text, quotes a remarkable passage from the Talmud, in which it is said, "That Abraham sits next the gates of hell, and doth not permit any wicked Israelite to go down into it."

These Jews might perhaps pervert the promise in Jer. xxxxi. 35, 36, to support this vain and dangerous confidence, in opposition to such a multitude of most express and awful threatenings; particularly Deut. xxxiii. 19, & seq.

e Of these very stones that are before your eyes.] The many learned commentators who refer this to God's calling the Gentiles, supposing some of them to be present here, seem to lose all the beauty of the expression; which I have paraphrased at large, because I think few, if any, have set it in so strong a light as it will well bear. It is but a precarious conjecture that the stones here referred to were those set up in Gilgal. Josh. iv. 5, 20.

1 Is
proaching kingdom, merely because you have the abused honour to descend from that peculiar favourite of heaven.

These are truths of constant concern, and now particularly seasonable; for the patience of God will not much longer endure so provoking a people. You think of national deliverance, but beware of national judgments; for I assure you that the hand of God is lifted up, and the axe of Divine Justice is even now, as it were, applied to the very root of the trees; and therefore every tree that doth not produce good fruit, (even every one that, while he professeth himself to be one of God's people, contradicts that profession by a life of wickedness, or by the neglect of vital and practical religion) is very certainly and quickly to be cut down by death, and thrown into the fire of hell.

Upon this, many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who expected to have been treated with greater respect, were so provoked that they turned their backs upon the prophet, and refused to be baptized. (Compare Luke vii. 29, 30. and Mat. xxi. 25.) But it was otherwise with the common people, who were alarmed by what he said, and the multitudes, who were more teachable, asked him, saying, What then shall we do, that we may be prepared for the kingdom of the Messiah, and may escape this dreadful condemnation and approaching wrath? And he answereth and saith unto them, Be careful not only to observe the ceremonies of religion, but to attend to the great duties of justice and of charity too, which are incumbent upon you as well as on the great and rich; and he, for instance, that hath two coats, let him impart one of them to him that hath none; and he that hath plenty of food, let him do the like.

Then there came also some of the Publicans to be baptized: now these Publicans were a set of men whose office it was to collect the taxes which the Romans had imposed on the Jews, and to pay them to others who were called the chief

---

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. [Luke iii.—9.

Luke iii. 10.

And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also Publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do then?
chief of the Publicans; and these people, being generally persons of an infamous character, for their injustice and oppression, applied themselves to John under a strong conviction of their guilt, and said unto him, Master what shall we do to testify the sincerity of our repentance? And he said unto them, Though you are not absolutely required to quit your employment, take care that you exact nothing more than is enjoined you by your principals, whose servants you are in collecting the public money.

And the soldiers also applied themselves to him on the same occasion, and in like manner asked him saying, And as for us, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Terrify no man by a violent overbearing conduct, nor wrong [any] by false accusation, in order to get a liberty of living upon him at free quarters; and be contented with your legal wages, or pay, not raising mutinies and seditions to get it increased.

And, as the people were in great suspense, and all were reasoning in their hearts with much solicitude concerning John, debating the matter with themselves, whether he were the Messiah or not, John answered all that put the question to him, in the most direct and positive manner, saying, I indeed baptize you with water, to engage you to the exercise of repentance, which, by submitting to that rite, you solemnly profess; but there is one coming after me, even the Messiah himself, who is much more powerful and considerable than I can pretend to be (see John x. 41.) whose very shoes I am not worthy so much as to carry after him, [or] to stoop down and untie the latchet of [them], but should esteem it as an honour to perform the humblest office of menial

There is no reason to believe that these were Gentile soldiers. Grotius has excellently proved that the Jews in general did not scruple a military life; and a multitude of passages from Josephus might be added to the same purpose; and though most of the soldiers in Judæa, which was now a province, might be Romans, yet those belonging to Galilee might probably be Jews. Had these been Gentiles, John would surely have begun his instructions to them with urging the worship of the true God.

The word terrify properly signifies "to take a man by the collar and shake him;" and seems to have been used proverbially for that violent manner in which persons of this station of life are often ready to bully those about them whom they imagine their inferiors in strength and spirit; though nothing is an argument of a meaner spirit, or more unworthy that true courage which constitutes so essential a part of a good military character.

With your legal wages or pay.] The word wages is well known to signify provision or food; but, when applied to soldiers, it is generally used to signify the pay that was allotted for their subsistence. (Compare Rom. vi. 23, where it is rendered wages; and I Cor. ix. 7, where we translate it charges.)
He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: [Mat. III. 11. Mark I. 7, 8.]

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. [Mat. III. 12.]

And warns them of the consequences of it. 103

mennial service for him. And, if you are indeed his people, he shall baptize you with a most plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit and with fire; causing his Spirit to descend upon his followers in the appearance of a flame of fire, to represent its operating on the heart like fire, to kindle pious and devout affections and to purify and enliven the souls of believers. (Compare Acts i. 5. and ii. 3.)

But you are to remember this is an awful, as well as an amiable Person, whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly winnow and cleanse his church, which is (as it were) his threshing floor, and at present is covered with a mixture of wheat and chaff: for such will be the nature of the doctrine he shall teach as will effectually discover what is the real disposition of the hearts of men and perfectly distinguish between the hypocritical and the sincere. And happy will it be for those that stand the trial; for he will carefully gather them, as the wheat into his granary, and lay them up in heaven as his peculiar treasure: but as for the chaff which is found among them, as for those empty vain professors that are now mingled with his people, he will then treat them as men do the sweepings and the refuse of the floor, and burn them up as worthless and unprofitable trash; and I faithfully warn you that it will be with unquenchable fire: let this excite you therefore to escape so terrible a doom. (Compare Isa. xli. 16. Jer. xv. 7. and Ezek. xxii. 15.)

Such
Reflections on the ministry of John the Baptist.

Such was in general the tendency and pur-
port of John’s preaching: And, offering many
other exhortations to them to the same effect, he
published to the people these glad tidings of the
Messiah’s approach and endeavoured to prepare
them to receive him in a proper manner; as
will be more particularly shewn hereafter. (See
John i. 15, & seq. and iii. 28, & seq.)

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT an excellent pattern of ministerial service does John
exhibit in the passage before us! Blessed is that gospel preacher
who, like him, seeks not his own ease and pleasure and indulges
not too luxurious and sensual inclinations, but cheerfully accom-
modates himself to the state and circumstances which Providence
hath assigned him, as infinitely more intent on the success of his
ministry than on any little interest of his own that can interfere
with it!—Happy the man who, imitating the impartiality of this
faithful servant of God, giveth to every one his portion of meat in
due season and abhors the thoughts of flattering men in their vices,
or buoying them up with delusive hopes in their birth and pro-
fession, while they are destitute of real and vital religion!

May this plain and awakening address be felt by every soul that
hears it! And, in particular, let the children of religious parents,
let those that enjoy the most eminent privileges and that make
even the strictest profession, weigh themselves in this balance of the
sanctuary, lest they be found wanting in the awful decisive day.
And if the warnings of the gospel have alarmed our hearts, and
put us upon fleeing from the wrath to come, oh, let the terrors of
the Lord engage us not only to confess but to forsake our sins, and
to bring forth fruits meet for repentance!

Let all, to whom the gospel message comes, most attentively and
seriously consider in what alarming circumstances of danger and
extremity impenitent sinners are here represented. The gospel is
the last dispensation we must ever expect; the axe is at the root of
the unfruitful tree, and it must ere long be cut down and burnt, be
its branches ever so diffusive and its leaves ever so green.

Christ hath a fan in his hand to winnow us as well as the Jews,
O that we may stand the trial! And O that, as his wheat, we may
be laid up in the store-house of heaven when that day cometh which
shall burn as an oven, and when all that do wickedly shall be con-
sumed as stubble and be burnt up as chaff! (Mal. iv. 1.)

1 Published these glad tidings.] Ewry-
γελεῖδος has plainly this import; and as it
was a very imperfect intimation, rather
than a full discovery of the gospel that
was given by the Baptist, it does not seem
so proper here to render it by preaching
the gospel, though the word has often that
signification; see Mat. xi. 5. Luke iv. 18.
and Acts viii. 4, &c.

a Thâs
And to conclude: that we may be prepared for that final trial, let us be earnest in our applications to our gracious Redeemer, that as we are baptized with water in his name, he would also baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire; that, by the operations of his Holy Spirit on our cold and stupid hearts, he would enkindle and quicken that Divine life, that sacred love, that flaming, yet well-governed zeal for his glory, which distinguishes the true Christian from the hypocritical professor, and is indeed the seal of God set upon the heart to mark it for eternal happiness.

SECT. XVII.

The testimony John the Baptist gave to Christ is taken notice of by John the Evangelist, and his own testimony added to confirm it. John I. 15—18.

John I. 15.

As the Messiah now was shortly to appear, and the time just at hand in which he was to enter on his public ministry, the way (as we have seen) was opened for his coming by John the Baptist’s being sent to preach the doctrine of repentance: and when the people came in crowds from every part to hear him, John bore his testimony of him in a public declaration of the dignity of his person and of the great design for which he was to come; which, though it was at first expressed in general terms, yet did he afterwards apply it in particular to Jesus of Nazareth, pointing him out to be the person he had spoken of; and, with an earnestness that suited the importance of this grand occasion, he openly proclaimed him to be the promised Messiah, and cried, saying, This is the person that I told you of; and this is he of whom I said before, (Mat. iii. 11.) He that cometh after me, as to the

[This was he of whom I said.] This probably might happen at the time when Jesus made his first appearance among those that came to be baptized by John; when at his offering to receive his baptism, though John before had been a stranger to him, and knew him not by any personal acquaintance with him, yet, by some powerful impression on his mind, he presently discerned that this was he whom he before had taught the people to expect and of whose person he had given them so high a character. For it was plainly from his knowledge of him that John at first would have declined baptizing him, as an honour of which he looked upon himself to be unworthy. Nor is it to be doubted, but that when he first knew the person, of whose appearance he had raised such expectations by his preaching, he would immediately be ready to acquaint his hearers that this was he who was intended by him; which they themselves might have been ready to conclude, from the uncommon veneration and respect with which the Baptist treated him who had been always used to treat men with the greatest plainness. And upon this account it may be proper that this testimony of him should be introduced (as I have placed it here) before the particular account that the other evangelists have given of his baptism. Compare Mat. iii. 14. and John i. 27–30.

b He
The testimony that the Baptist gave to Christ.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, and we own it an honour to our nation to have received it, and to that holy man to have been the messenger of it; yet to the sinner it is a dispensation of death, and passes an awful sentence of condemnation upon him: [but] the Redeemer whom we celebrate is worthy of much more affectionate regards; for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, who gives us an ample declaration of pardon from Christ. The last French version, with great propriety, includes ver. 15 in a parenthesis, and so connects this 16th verse with the 14th— as if it had been said, He dwelt among us— full of grace and truth; and of his fulness have we all received.

b He existed long before me; περιεταίμαι ἐμοὶ ὑπὲρ. This must undoubtedly refer to that state of glory in which Christ existed before his incarnation, of which the Baptist speaks so plainly, Jo. iii. 31. as abundantly to justify the paraphrase (compare note b on John i. 30. sect. 21.) As for the preceding clause, μετεξησασθήμεν ὑπὲρ γενεσίων, which we render, is preferred before me, I think Erasmus truly expresses the sense of it in supposing it to refer to those distinguishing honours which had been paid to Christ in his infancy, by prophets, sages and angels too, which nothing that had yet occurred in the life of John could by any means equal.

c I add my testimony to that of the Baptist.] It is most evident that what is said here in this verse, as Chrysostom justly observes, must be considered as the words of the evangelist. John the Baptist had never yet mentioned the name of Jesus; and the expression we all shews it could not be his words; for those to whom he addressed himself do not appear to have received grace.

d Grace upon grace.] This seems the most easy sense of ἔχωμεν ὑπέρ ἐμοῦ, as αὐτοίς ἁπαντησάμενοι is grief upon grief. [Theogn. v. 344.] Compare Ecclus. xxvi. 15-17. and see Blackwell's Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 164. Next to this I should prefer Grocius's interpretation, who would render it grace of more grace: that is, the freest grace imaginable.

e Came by Jesus Christ.] I cannot lay so much stress on the word εὐρέθη here, as opposed to ἦσθον, as to suppose it, with Erasmus, to imply, that whereas Moses was only the messenger of the law, Christ was the original of the grace and truth he brought into the world by the gospel; since all that is intended by εὐρέθη is nothing more than that it was, or that it came, by
pardon and an abundant effusion of the Spirit, those substantial blessings of which the Mosaic dispensation was but a shadow. His gospel therefore should be received with the most cheerful consent; for no man hath ever seen God, nor indeed can see him, as he is an incorporeal and therefore an invisible Being; but the Only-Begotten Son, who is always in the bosom of the Father, and ever favoured with the most endearing and intimate converse with him, He hath revealed and made him known in a much clearer manner than he was before, by those discoveries of his nature and will which may have the most powerful tendency to form us to virtue and happiness.

IMPROVEMENT.

Happy are they that (like this beloved apostle), when they hear the praises of Christ uttered by others, can echo back the testimony from their own experience, as having themselves received of his fulness! May an abundance of grace be communicated from him to us! We are not straitened in him; oh, may we not be straitened in ourselves; but daily renewing our application to him as our Living Head, may vital influences be continually imparted to our souls from him!

With pleasure let us compare the dispensation of Jesus with that of Moses, and observe the excellency of its superior grace and of its brighter truth: but let us remember, as a necessary consequence of this, that if the despisers of Moses's law died without mercy, they shall be thought worthy of a much sorner punishment and a more aggravated condemnation who tread under foot the Son of God. (Heb. x. 28, 29.)

May we ever regard him as the Only-Begotten of the Father; and, since he hath condescended so far as to come down from his very bosom to instruct us in his nature and will, let us with all humility receive his dictates and earnestly pray that, under his revelations and teachings, we may so know God as faithfully to serve him now and, at length, eternally to enjoy him.  

Jesus Christ, according to the sense in which the word is often used in other places; and the here is used of Christ as well as of Moses: so that both are represented as messengers, though of very different dispensations.  

[In the bosom of the Father.] Critics generally agree this is one of the places in which is put for ; but had it here been rendered near his Father's bosom, it might as well have answered the design of the original, and would, I think, have been as expressive of that intimate converse and entire friendship which the phrase implies.—Elshere here cites a passage from Plato concerning the regard due to the authority of a Son of God when speaking of his Father; and it is indeed surprisingly opposite. Elsh. Observ. Vol. I. p. 296.
Christ comes to John from Nazareth in Galilee.

SECT. XVIII.

Christ is baptized by John, and the holy Spirit descends upon him in a visible form. Mark i. 9—11. Mat. iii. 13. to the end; Luke iii. 21—23.

Mark i. 9. AND it came to pass in those days, when great numbers of all ranks and professions among the Jewish people were baptized, that Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, where he had lived for many years in a retired manner with his parents, to the river Jordan; and applied himself to John, that he might be baptized by him: and was accordingly baptized by John in Jordan, near Bethabara; (see John i. 28. sect. 20.)

14 Now the providence of God had so ordered it, to prevent all appearance of a combination between them, that John was personally a stranger to Christ. (John i. 33.) But nevertheless, as soon as he saw him, he received a secret intimation from above that this was the Messiah upon whom the Spirit should visibly descend; (see the note on John i. 33. sect. 21.) And, upon this account, such was the modesty of John that he was ready to decline the service, and would have

---

a When all the people were baptized.] John continued baptizing so long after this, that it is very evident the word all must be taken with the restriction used in the paraphrase, as it is oftentimes in other places.

b Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee.] The learned Dr. Thomas Jackson, in his elaborate examination of this context (see his works, vol. ii. p. 515—519), supposed that John the Baptist, inquiring into and hearing the name of Jesus, and the place from whence he came, and comparing it in his own mind with that celebrated prophecy, Isa. xi. 1, 2, concluded that this Jesus, or Divine Saviour, as the word may signify (see note d on Mat. i. 21. p. 59), coming from Nazareth, the town of Rods, as the etymology of that name imports, was the rod out of the stem of Jesse, upon whom the Spirit should descend, and rest like a dove on a branch. And thus he would reconcile John's address to Christ as so extraordinary a person, Mat. iii. 14, with his declaring (John i. 31, 33.) that he knew him not before: but this seems a very precarious solution, considering how possible it might be that in so large a place as Nazareth there might be several persons of the name of Jesus or Joshua, so very common among the Jews. It appears therefore much more reasonable to have recourse to the solution given in the paraphrase and noted on the last cited text, sect. 21. that he had a secret intimation given him who it was that came to be baptized by him; and all that this very ingenious writer has said to show the various marks by which John might know Christ, without supposing such a particular revelation as is there suggested, does but confirm me the more in the necessity of admitting it.

c That he might be baptized by him.] By this he intended to do an honour to John's ministry, and to conform himself to what he appointed to his followers: for which last reason it was that he drank likewise of the sacramental cup. And this we may consider as a plain argument that baptism may be administered to those who are not capable of all the purposes for which it was designed. See Dr. Whitby's note on Mat. iii. 16.

"The
Having hindered him from doing what he proposed; and accordingly said unto him, Thou art so much my superior, that I have need to be baptized by thee with that far nobler baptism which thou art to administer! and dost thou come to me on such an occasion as this? I am confounded at the thought, and cannot but consider it as too high an honour for me. And Jesus, replying, said unto him, Though it be really as thou sayest, yet do not go about to hinder me, but *permit it* now; for, however unable thou mayest be at present to enter into the particular reasons of it, yet, in submission to the Divine appointments, it is decent for us thus to comply with all the duties of religion, and in this manner it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness: and upon this account, as it is a part of my duty to attend this institution, it is therefore a part of thine to administer it. Then, as John knew that it became him not to debate the matter any farther, he permitted him to be baptized.

And after Jesus was baptized, as soon as he ascended out of the water to the bank of Jordan, behold, the heavens were immediately opened unto him [Luke, being baptized, and praying,] and he saw the Spirit of God descending [Luke, in a bodily shape] like a dove, and lighting upon him. [Mark i. 10. Luke iii. 21, 22.]

15 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him [Luke, being baptized, and praying,] and he saw the Spirit of God descending [Luke, in a bodily shape] like a dove, and lighting upon him. [Mark i. 10. Luke iii. 21, 22.]

The heavens were immediately opened. I think it plain (as Grotius and Blackwall have observed) that what is here intended is to intimate, that directly on his coming up out of the water the heavens were opened; for it must certainly appear to be a circumstance of smallimportance, and of very little use, for the evangelist to say that Jesus went up straightway out of the water after he was baptized; but, if we take it in the other way, it very fitly introduces the remarkable account of what directly followed it. There seems to be such a transposition of the word visio; Mark i. 29. and xi. 2. See Blackwall's Sacred Classics, Vol. i. p. 89.

As he was praying. It is observable that all the three voices from heaven, by which the Father bare witness to Christ, were pronounced while he was praying, or very quickly after it. Compare Luke ix. 29.—35. and John xii. 28.

He saw the Spirit of God. There is no question to be made but that this wonderful sight was seen by both of them; for Mark has so expressed it as plainly to re-er the seeing it to Christ; and John the Baptist has in another place assured us that he saw it, and took particular notice of it as the sign he was directed to observe as the distinguishing and certain characteristic of the Messiah. John i. 32—34. And I have therefore so expressed it in the paraphrase, as not directly to confine the sight of it to either.

A corporeal form. This is the exact English of σωματικόν φόρημα; a phrase, which might with propriety have been used, though there had not been (as most understand it) any appearance in the shape of the animal here mentioned, but only a lambent flame falling from heaven with a hovering dove-like motion, which Dr. Scott (in his Christian Life, Vol. III, p. 66) supposes to have been all, Dr. Owen and M.

Grotius
The Spirit in a visible form descends upon him.

motion like a dove, and coming upon him; as a visible token of those secret operations of that Blessed Spirit on his mind, by which, according to the intimations God had given in his word, he was anointed in a peculiar manner and abundantly fitted for his public work. (Compare Psal. xlv. 7, and Isa. lxi. 1.)

And, as a farther testimony of the Divine regard to Christ and of the glorious dignity of his person, this was attended with a very memorable event: for, behold, a loud and awful voice came out of heaven, when it was thus opened, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased; that is, I perfectly approve thy character, and acquiesce in thee as the Great Mediator, through whom I will shew myself favourable unto sinful creatures. (Conpare Isai. xlii. 1.)

And Jesus at that time, when he received the baptism of John, and was beginning the public exercise of [his ministry,] was about thirty years old; at which time he chose to quit his retirement, being then in the full vigour of nature, and having attained the age in which the priests used to begin their ministrations in the temple. (Compare Numb. iv. 3—47; and 1 Chron. xxiii. 3.)

Grotius think it was a bright flame in the shape of a dove; and Justin Martyr (who adds, that all Jordan shone with the reflection of the light) says, that it was η εν τοις πτερωσι; and Jerom calls it πτερωσων οφις, the appearance of a dove. Both these phrases are much more determinate than the original; but I choose to leave this, and many other things, in the same latitude as I find them.

b Thou art my beloved Son.] Both Mark and Luke express it thus; which inclines me to follow those copies of Matthew which agree with them, rather than the more common reading there, This is my beloved Son. Ευδοκιμα properly expresses an entire acquiescence in him.

1 And Jesus, when beginning [his ministry] was about thirty years old.] Of the age of Jesus at this time, see note b on Luke iii. 1. p. 94.—I can recollect no sufficient authority to justify our translators in rendering τη ωρα ην της πτερωσιν αυχεχων, began to be about thirty years of age, or was now entering on his thirtieth year. To express that sense it should have been τη αυχεχων εννα, &c. as Epiphanius, probably by a mistake, has quoted it.—The learned author of the Indication of the beginning of Matthew's and Luke's gospel, extremely dissatisfied with all the common versions and explications of these words, would render them, And Jesus was obedient, or living in subjection [to his parents] about thirty years; and produces several passages from approved Greek writers, in which αυχεχω signifies subject. But in all these places it is used in some connection or opposition which determines the sense; and therefore none of them are instances parallel to this. Luke evidently uses αυχεχω in chap. xxi. 28. in the sense we suppose it to have here; and since he had before expressed our Lord's subjection to his parents by the word ὑπόθεσαμενη, chap. ii. 51, there is great reason to believe he would have used the same here, had he intended to give us the same idea. And indeed, if αυχεχω be allowed to have the signification which this accurate critic (for such he undoubtedly is) contends for here, since there is nothing in the text to limit it, the phrase would intimate he was subject to none after this time; an assertion which I should think both groundless and dangerous. This clause of Luke has been already mentioned in another place where it was only inserted (out of its proper order) to complete the sentence; see sect. 9.
IMPROVEMENT.

Let our Lord’s submitting himself to baptism, teach us a holy exactness and care in the observance of those positive institutions which owe their obligations merely to a Divine command; for thus it also becometh us to fulfil all righteousness; lest by breaking one of the least of Christ’s commandments, and teaching others to do it, we become unworthy of a part in the kingdom of heaven. (Mat. v. 19.)

Jesus had no sin to confess or wash away, yet he was baptized; and God owned that ordinance so far as to make it the season of pouring forth the Spirit upon him. And where can we expect this sacred effusion, but in a conscientious and humble attendance on Divine appointments?

Let us remember in how distinguishing a sense Jesus is the Christ, the anointed of God, to whom the Father hath not given the Spirit by measure, but hath poured it out upon him in the most abundant degree. Let us trace the workings of this Spirit in Jesus, not only as a Spirit of miraculous power, but of the richest grace and holiness; earnestly praying that this holy unction may, from Christ our head, descend upon our souls! May his enlivening Spirit kindle its sacred flame there with such vigour that many waters may not be able to quench it, nor floods of temptation and corruption to drown it.

Behold God’s beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased! As such let us honour and love him; and, as such, let our souls acquiesce in him, as, in every respect, such a Saviour as our wishes might have asked and our necessities required.

With what amazement should we reflect upon it that the blessed Jesus, though so early ripened for the most extensive services, should live in retirement even till his thirtieth year! That he deferred his ministry so long should teach us not to thrust ourselves forward to public stations till we are qualified for them, and plainly discover a Divine call: that he deferred it no longer should be an engagement to us to avoid unnecessary delays, and to give God the prime and vigour of our life.

Our Great Master attained not, as it seems, to the conclusion of his thirty-fifth year, if he so much as entered upon it; yet what glorious achievements did he accomplish within those narrow limits of time! Happy that servant who with any proportionable zeal dispatches the great business of life! so much the more happy if his sun go down at noon; for the space that is taken from the labours of time will be added to the rewards of eternity.
Christ is led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

SECT. XIX.

Christ's victory over the temptations of Satan in the wilderness.


**Luke IV. 1.**

*THEN* Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit,*

with which he had been just anointed in so extraordinary a manner, returned from Jordan, where he had been baptized; and immediately after this was led by the strong impulse of that Spirit on his mind into that desolate and solitary place the wilderness; that he might there be exercised and tempted by the most violent assaults of the devil; and, by conquering him, might afford an illustrious example of heroic virtue, and lay a foundation for the encouragement and support of his people in their future combats with that malignant adversary.

**Mark i. 13.** And he was there in the wilderness forty days: and during that time he was tempted by Satan; and also was surrounded with a variety of the most savage and voracious kinds of wild beasts; but they were so overawed by his presence that (as in the case of Daniel when in the den of lions, Dan. vi. 22) none of them offered him the least injury: and in all those days he did eat nothing at all.

**Mat. IV. 2.** And when he had thus fasted forty days and forty nights, as Moses the giver of the law, (Exod.

... into the wilderness.] Christ probably intended this as a devout retirement, to which he found himself strongly inclined, that might give vent to those sacred passions which the late grand occurrences of the descent of the Spirit upon him and the miraculous attestation of a voice from heaven, had such a tendencie to inspire. It seems a very groundless conjecture of Mr. Fleming (in his Christology, vol. ii. p. 315) that he was carried through the air to mount Sinai. Mr. Maundrell's is much more probable, that it might be the wilderness near Jordan; which, as he, who travelled through it, assures us, is a miserable and horrid place, consisting of high barren mountains, so that it looks as if nature had suffered some violent convulsions there. (See Maundrell's Travels, p. 78.) This is the scene of the parable of the good Samaritan. (Luke x. 30.) Our Lord probably was assaulted in the northern part of it, near the sea of Galilee, because he is said here to be returning or going back to Nazareth, from whence he came to be baptized: Mark i. p. 108.

... the wild beasts: this is the more improbable, as such a hurry would have been inconsistent with the design of God in leading him thither; which was, that he might be assaulted by Satan, at first probably by secret suggestions, the horror of which would be increased by such a gloomy place. The angels might be the instruments of intimidating the beasts. Could Dr. Lightfoot have proved what he asserts, that this happened in October or November, the cold would have been, as he suggests, an additional circumstance of affliction to our Lord: but it seems rather to have been in the beginning of Summer; see note b, on Luke iii. 1. p. 94. and note k, on Mat. iii. 4. p. 97.

... The
Where having fasted forty days he is tempted.

nights, he was afterwards an hungered, [Luke iv. 2.]

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. [Luke iv. 3.]

4 But [Jesus] answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. [Luke iv. 4.]

5 Then the devil took him up into [Jerusalem] the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple; [Luke iv. 9.]

(Exod. xxxiv. 28.) and Elias the great restorer of it, had done before him, (1 Kings xix. 8.) having been thus far miraculously borne above the appetites of nature, at length he felt them and was very hungry; but was entirely unprovided with any proper food.

And just at that time the tempter coming to him in a visible form (putting on a human appearance, as one that desired to inquire farther into the evidences of his mission) said, If thou art the Son of God, in such an extraordinary manner as thou hast been declared to be, and art indeed the promised Messiah, who is expected under that character, command that these stones become bread [of bread] to relieve thy hunger; for in such a circumstance it will undoubtedly be done.

But Jesus answered, and said unto him, It is written in the sacred volume, (Dent. viii. 3.) "Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God, or by whatever he shall appoint for the preservation of his life." He can therefore support me without bread, as he fed the Israelites in the wilderness; and, on the other hand, even bread itself, if these stones were turned into it, could not nourish me without his blessing; which I could not expect, were I to attempt a miracle of this kind merely in compliance with thy suggestions, without any intimation of my Father's will.

Then, as the devil found it was in vain that he had tempted Christ to a distrust of Providence, he was for trying to persuade him to presumption: and to this end he took him along with him to Jerusalem, which, being the place where God dwelt in so distinguished a manner, was commonly called the Holy City; and there he settheth

c The tempter coming to him.] Our translation, which in its rendering of these words is not so literal as the version I have given, seems to intimate, what is not any where asserted in the sacred story, that this was the first time the tempter came unto him; a circumstance which can hardly be supposed.

d The promised Messiah, who is expected under that character.] That the Jews supposed the Messiah would be in a very extraordinary manner the Son of God, appears from comparing Mat. xiv. 33, xvi. 16, xxvi. 63, John i. 34, 49, xi. 27, xx. 31, and Acts viii. 37.

e As he fed the Israelites in the wilderness.] It is to this the passage that is quoted here hath a plain reference, as it stands in the Old Testament.

f Taketh him along with him.] This is the exact English of ταιηθηκας αριθμον. (See Elser. Observ. in loc.) But whether he did or did not transport him through the air, cannot, I think, be determined from this passage.

g The holy city.] This is a phrase that frequently, and very properly, is used to express Jerusalem. (Compare Neh. xi. 1, Isa. lii. 1, Dan. ix. 24, and Mat. xxvii. 53. The heathen writers, in like manner, often
The devil would urge him to presumption.

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee [to keep thee] and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone, [Luke iv. 9, 10, 11.]

7 And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is also written, to prevent the ungrateful abuse of such gracious promises as these, (Deut. vi. 16.) "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," by demanding farther evidence of what is already made sufficiently plain, as my relation to God is, by the miraculous and glorious testimony he hath so lately given me.

8 Again, the devil being resolved once more to attack him by the most dangerous temptation he could devise, taketh him up into a mountain in those parts, which was exceeding high; and from thence, in a moment of time, sheweth him, in an artful visionary representation, all the most magnificent kingdoms of the world, and all the luxury, and

often call those cities holy in which any of their deities were supposed to hold their special residence and from whence their oracles were delivered. (See Elenor. Observ. Vol. i. p. 17, 18.

b One of the battlements of the temple.] Though pinnacle agrees very well with the etymology of the Greek word, yet, according to its use among us, it leads the English reader to imagine that he stood on the point of a spire. The truth is, the roof of the temple was flat, and had a kind of balustrade round it (see Deut. xxvii. 8.) and somewhere on the edge of this battlement we may suppose that Satan placed Christ in his attacking him with this temptation.


k A charge concerning thee, to keep thee.] Many (after Jerom) have observed that Satan made his advantage of quoting scripture merely by scraps, leaving out those words, in all thy ways. The cause of truth, and sometimes of common sense, hath suffered a great deal by those who have followed his example.

1 By demanding farther evidence of what is already made sufficiently plain.] That this is the purport of the phrase tempting God, is easy to be seen from comparing Exod. xvii. 2, &c. Numb. xiv. 22. Psal. lxxxviii. 18. and Psal. cxi. 14. See Limborch. Theol. lib. v. cap. 22. § 16.
The devil vanquished in all his temptations.

Luke IV. 6. And the devil said unto him, All this power [All these things] will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it. [MAT. IV. 9.]

If thou therefore wilt [fall down and] worship me, all shall be thine. [MAT. IV. 8.]

And Jesus answered and said unto him, [Get thee hence.] Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, [MAT. IV. 10.]

One of the finest prospects that the most pleasurable and triumphant scenes could furnish out. As Christ was probably attacked with this temptation upon some mountain in the wilderness, this beautiful and taking prospect that was represented to him, being set off by the horror of the place he was in, would in such a contrast appear peculiarly charming: see note a, p. 112.

For it is all delivered to me.] Grotius has well observed that this contains a vile insinuation that God had done what none that truly understands the nature of God and the creature can suppose possible, namely, that he had parted with the government of the world out of his own hands. And we may add to this, that in the text which Christ has quoted there is enough to overthrow that notion; since God's appropriating to himself the worship of all his creatures, plainly implies his universal empire and dominion over all, and the regard he has to the religious adoration and obedience of all the subjects of his kingdom.—It is remarkable that, among other things which several heathen writers learnt of the primitive Christians, this was one; to represent evil spirits as tempting men from their duty by views of worldly riches and grandeur; over which, Porphyry in particular says, they often would pretend to much more power than they really have. See Eisner. Observ. Vol. I. p. 18, 19.

I am so charmed with that—which I have now observed in thee.] This seems the most plausible view in which the temptation could be introduced.—It is plain from the next verse that this was the last temptation; but Luke makes it the second; whence it evidently appears that Luke did not confine himself exactly to observe the order of time in his story; a remark of vast importance for settling the Harmony. See note g on Luke i. 3, p. 22.

The word which plainly expresses his authority over Satan, as well as his detestation of so vile a suggestion.
Reflections on the temptation of Christ.

And when the devil had ended all the temptation we have given an account of, being so baffled and confounded as not to be able to present any others which seemed more likely to succeed, he departed from him for a season; yet secretly meditating some future assault. (Compare John xiv. 30)

And, then the devil having left him, behold, a detachment of angels came and waited upon him, furnishing him with proper supplies for his hunger, and congratulating so illustrious a victory over the prince of darkness.

IMPROVEMENT.

Who can read this account without amazement, when he compares the insolence and malice of the prince of darkness with the condescension and grace of the Son of God!

What was it that astonished and emboldened Satan to undertake such a work? Was it the easy victory he had obtained over the first Adam in Paradise? or was it the remembrance of his own fall, from whence he arrogantly concluded that no heart could stand against the temptations of pride and ambition? Could he, who afterwards proclaimed Christ to be the Son of the Most High God, and had perhaps but lately heard him owned as such by a voice from heaven, make any doubt of his Divinity? Or, if he actually believed it, could he expect to vanquish him? We may rather conclude that he did not expect it; but, mad with rage and despair, he was determined at least to worry that Lamb of God which he knew he could not devour; and to vex with his hellish suggestions

9 The great avowed enemy of God and man.] This audacious character is intimated in the name Satan, which our Lord gives him, by which he made it to appear he knew him, however he might seek to be disguised. If we suppose him now to have worn the form of an angel of light (as 2 Cor. xi. 14.) it will make both this and the former temptation look more plausible; for thus he might pretend, in the former, to take the charge of Christ in his fall, as one of his celestial guards; and in this, to resign him a province which God had committed to his administration and care. And this may be consistent with supposing that he first appeared as a man (it may be, as a hungry traveller who pretended to ask the miracle of turning stones into loaves for his own supply), for angels under the Old Testament had often worn a human form. Compare Gen. xviii. 1, xix. 1, 10, 16. Josh. v. 13, 14. Judg. vi. 11, 12. and xiii. 9, 3, 10.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

Mat. IV. 11. Then the devil heaventh him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him. [Mark I.—13.]
suggestions, that innocent and holy soul which he knew he could never seduce. Wretched degeneracy! How art thou fallen, O, Lucifer, son of the morning! to be thus eagerly driving on thine own repulse and disgrace!

But, on the other hand, how highly are we obliged to our Great Deliverer, who hath brought forth meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong? who can sufficiently adore thy condescension, O, blessed Jesus! who wouldst permit thyself to be thus Ver. assaulted and led from place to place by an infernal spirit, whom thou coudest in a moment have remanded back to hell to be bound in chains of darkness and overwhelmed with flaming ruin!

The apostle tells us why he permitted this: it was that, having himself suffered, being tempted, he might by this experience that he had of Satan's subtilty, and of the strength of his temptations, contract an additional tenderness and be the more inclined, as well as better able, to succour us when we are tempted. (Heb. ii. 18.) Let this embolden us to come unto the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need. (Heb. iv. 16.)

Let us remember and imitate the conduct of the Great Captain of our Salvation; and, like him, let us learn to resist Satan, Ver. that he may flee from us. Like Christ, let us maintain such an humble dependance on the Divine blessing as never to venture out of the way of it, be the necessity ever so urgent: nor let us ever expose ourselves to unnecessary danger, in expectation of extraordinary deliverance. Like him let us learn to overcome the 8, 9 world, and to despise all its pomps and vanities when offered at the price of our innocence.

To furnish us for such a combat, let us take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Let us not only make ourselves familiarly acquainted with the words of scripture, but let us study to enter into the true design and meaning of it; that so, if Satan should attempt to draw his artillery from thence, we may be able to guard against that most dangerous stratagem, and to answer perverted passages of holy writ by others more justly applied.

Once more; when the suggestions of Satan grow most horrible, let us not conclude that we are utterly abandoned by God, because we are proved by such a trial; since Christ himself was tempted even to worship the infernal tyrant. But in such cases let us resolutely repel the solicitation, rather than parley with it, and say in imitation of our Lord's example, and with a dependance on his grace, Get thee behind me, Satan.

If our conflict be thus maintained, the struggle will ere long be over; and angels, who are now the spectators of the combat, will at length congratulate our victory.
The Jews inquire into the character of John,

SECT. XX.

John the Baptist being examined by the great men among the Jews acknowledges that he was not the Christ; and refers them to one among them whom he confesses to be vastly his superior. John I. 19—28.

JOHN I. 19.

We have already taken notice of the honourable testimonies that were given by John in a more general way to the Messiah in his discourses to the people, before Jesus was baptized. We shall proceed to others that were more particular, which followed after that event; and this which we shall now produce is the testimony of John, when the sanhedrim or grand council of the Jews at Jerusalem sent some who were reckoned among the most venerable and holy men of the nation, even some of the priests and Levites, to inquire of him, saying, Tell us plainly who art thou that drawest such a crowd of people after thee, and pretendest to something so uncommon?

20 And John, according to the natural plainness of his temper, presently replied to their inquiry; and with the utmost freedom he most readily acknowledged, and did not at all affect either to deny or to disguise his real character; but in the strongest terms he solemnly protested, I am not the Messiah, nor would I in the least pretend to arrogate to myself the honours which are due to none but him.

21 And, upon this, they farther asked him, What art thou then, if thou art not the promised Messiah? Art thou the celebrated Elijah, come down from that abode in heaven to which he was miraculously translated (2 Kings ii. 11.) to introduce the great and terrible day of the Lord? (Mal. iv. 5.) And in reply to this he said, with the same plainness as before, Though it is true that I am come in the spirit and power of Elijah, yet

a Solemnly protested.] The word ως-ολογησας is the same which is rendered acknowledged in the former clause; but being thus repeated, its significance seems to be heightened, especially by its opposition to ὕστερος, he denied not.

b Art thou the celebrated Elijah?] It is plain by this question, that they were strangers to the parentage of John the Baptist. And with regard to the reply he makes to this inquiry, there is no scruple to be made, but that the Baptist might justly deny that he was Elijah, as he indeed was not that prophet, though he came in his spirit. See Luke i. 17. p. 33.

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou?
Who acknowledges, that he was not the Christ.

Yet I am not he. And they again inquired of him, Art thou a prophet of the former generation raised from the dead? And he directly answered, No.

Now as it only was in negatives that he had hitherto replied, they said unto him therefore yet once more, Tell us then plainly who art thou? that we may in a more direct and satisfactory manner give an answer to them that sent us: What dost thou say concerning thyself? And, that they might not be mistaken in his character, and might be wholly left without excuse if they regarded not the end for which he came, he said, I am (what I have frequently before declared myself to be) the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord; as said the prophet Esaias.

Now the messengers that came on this errand were of the sect of the Pharisees; who, as on the one hand they professed a great regard for the prophets, and believed their existence in a future state, so on the other hand they strenuously opposed

c Art thou a prophet of the former generation raised from the dead? It is necessary that this question should be understood with such a limitation, because John the Baptist was really a very illusory prophet, as we may plainly see from what is said by Christ himself, Matt. xi. 9. And this interpretation (which is largely vindicated by Calvinus) seems much preferable to that of Theophylact and Erasmus, who, because of the article a diæphérein, would render it as we do, that prophet; concluding without any proof, that the Jews understood Deut. xviii. 18, not of the Messiah himself, but of some prophet of considerable note, who was to introduce him: and Grotius has supposed the question that they offer to refer to Jeremiah, of whose return to life there was a mighty rumour that prevailed among the Jews. (Compare Mat. xvi. 14.) But I can see no reason to restrain it to a particular prophet; and since (as Limborch well observes in his dispute with Orobia the Jew) that text in Deuteronomy was the clearest and strongest in all the Mosaic writings to enforce the necessity of submitting to the Messiah, it is probable John would have corrected so great a mistake if they had put the question to him upon this presumption. The best French versions render it as I have done: and indeed it seems to me that the word prophet, in the evangelists, generally signifies one of those holy men who were the messengers of God to Israel of old; which especially appears from Mark vi. 15, where to be a prophet, and to be as one of the prophets, are spoken of as distinct, which they could not be but on this interpretation: and if the alternative be left out, and it be read as it is in some manuscripts and printed copies, He is a prophet like one of the prophets, there will be a foundation for the same remark, and one of the prophets must signify one of the ancient prophets.

d I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.] The late Archibishop of Cambray beautifully illustrates the humility of this reply, as if this illustrious prophet had said, Far from being the Messiah, or Elias or one of the old prophets, I am nothing but a voice; a sound that, as soon as it has expressed the thought of which it is the sign, dies into air, and is known to none. See Fovroy. Oeuvres Philos. Vol. ii. p. 193.
John refers them to Jesus as the Messiah.

SEC. 20. John L. 24. opposed any innovations in religion which were not warranted by the tradition of the elders. And therefore, upon hearing this account that John the Baptist gave them of himself, they asked him again, and said unto him with some warmth, Why then dost thou take upon thee thus to baptize all that appear to be awakened by thy preaching, in token of the forgiveness of their sins; since, by thine own confession, thou art neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor even a prophet of lower rank raised from the dead?

26 And John answered them, by repeating the testimony he had formerly borne to the people (Luke iii. 16. p. 102), saying, I indeed baptize you with water; but there is one that for some time has stood in the midst of you, and is now coming to be daily conversant among you, whom as yet you know not to be so eminent a person, who will administer a much more noble baptism, attended with such miraculous effects as will abundantly justify mine. And this is he that cometh after me, as to the time of his appearance in the world, whom yet I have declared to have existed long before me; and who is therefore upon all accounts deservedly preferred before me, as being one, whose glorious dignity is such as that I freely own him to be vastly my superior; of whom I am not worthy to be employed in any office as his menial servant, not even to unloose the latchet of his shoe, or to untie the string with which his sandals are bound on.

These things passed on the other side Jordan, at a place called Bethabara, or the house of passage; which lay near that part of the river which was miraculously dried up that the Israelites under the command of Joshua might pass over into Canaan (See Josh. iii. 16. and Judges xii. 6.) which was the place where John was now baptizing.

IMPROVE-

c Why then dost thou take upon thee thus to baptize? It is not to be certainly determined from this text whether the baptism of proselytes was then in use among the Jews or not. The words indeed will make a very strong and well adapted sense, should they be understood, as if it had been said, Why is it then that thou dost institute such a new rite as this? But surely too, they will be very proper in the other sense, if we should take them to imply, Why is it then that thou dost take upon thee, without any commission from the sanhedrin, to administer baptism? and that, not only (as is usual) unto those who before this were heathens, but even to the Jews? And this (for reasons which it would not be proper here to enter upon at large) I take to be the more probable sense, and so suppose John's use of this ceremony in such a manner to be a strong intimation that Jews, as well as Gentiles, must become proselytes to the new dispensation that was then opening to the world; and
**IMPROVEMENT.**

How remarkably were the words of our blessed Redeemer fulfilled in John, *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted*? (Luke xvi. 14.) He declined assuming the name of any of the servants of God among the prophets; and yet our Lord bore testimony to him as of a higher rank than any of the prophets, than whom there was none greater among those that had in a natural way been born of women. (Luke vii. 28.)

Did John, this great and illustrious saint, speak of himself as *unworthy to untie even the sandals of Christ?* what reverence then do we owe him? and what reason have we to admire his condescension, that he should honour us, who are so much more unworthy, with the title of his servants?

Let not any, the most distinguished of that happy number, wonder if they be *unknown* by the world, and perhaps too, slighted and despised; since it appears that even Jesus himself, not only at his first appearance *stood unknown* among the Jews, but afterwards was *rejected* by them, when his claim was solemnly entered and his miracles most publicly wrought.

Vain, and worse than vain, was this message and inquiry which when answered, was so soon overlooked and forgot. May Divine grace teach us to inquire as those that are in earnest in our search! and *then shall we know* to saving purposes, *if we thus follow on to know the Lord.* (Hos. vi. 3.)

**SECT. XXI.**

John the Baptist bears a repeated testimony to Jesus as the Lamb of God; which proves an occasion of introducing some of his disciples into an acquaintance with him. John i. 29—42.

John i. 22.
The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John i. 29.
The next day, after John had returned this answer to the priests and Levites who were sent to inquire into his character and mission, he seeth Jesus (who was now returned from his temptation in the desert coming towards him; and says to them that were near him, Behold, with the strictest attention and regard, that innocent and holy Person, who may properly be called the Lamb of God; as it is he that is the great

and howsoever holy they imagined themselves to be, yet they all stood in absolute need of being washed from their sins; as he before had most emphatically declared.

Mat. iii. 8, 9. p. 100.
The testimony that the Baptist gave to Christ.

Great atoning sacrifice, of which the lambs, that by Divine command are daily offered in the temple, were intended to be types; which expiates and takes away the sin of the whole world, and is set forth to be a propitiation, not only for the Jews, for whom alone the sacrifices of the law were offered, but for the Gentiles too, that through his name whosoever believeth in him may receive remission of sins. And I now point him out, and tell you, This is he of whom I formerly have said, That after me there comes a man who is to be preferred abundantly before me, as being one that is incomparably greater and more excellent than I; for he existed long before me. (Compare John i. 15, 27. p. 105, 120.)

And, till the time of his appearance in a public way, I was a stranger to him, and did not personally know him; for it was ordered so by Providence that, notwithstanding the relation which there was between us, we were not brought up in any intimacy of acquaintance with each other; yet in the general I was aware of his intended approach; and it was chiefly for this end, with a particular regard to him, that I came (as you see) baptizing with water, that he might thus

a The Lamb of God, which expiates and takes away sin.] It is well observed by the author of that excellent treatise, called Christ the Mediator, that this is the only sense in which a lamb can be said to take away sin. Many suppose this refers to the paschal lamb; but that was not in its chief intention so much an expiatory, as an eucharistic sacrifice. Grotius strangely enervates the force of this text, by choosing to explain it of that reformation of the lives of men, to which Christ did not only press them by the doctrine that he taught, but gave them an example of it in his death, redeeming them (as it is said) from their vain conversation with his own precious blood. (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) Whereas there is not any thing more evident, than that the great design for which he died, was to atone for sin, and to exempt us from the punishment that our iniquities deserved; that, having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself we might have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins. Compare Heb. ix. 26, 28. Eph. i. 7, and Col. i. 14.

b For he existed before me.] Dr. Hammond abundantly vindicates this interpretation. Had ἐπεράσα here, as in some other places, signified chief, but, not ις, would have been joined with it, and John the Baptist would have said he is, and not he was my chief, which would apparently have been a very flat tautology, instead of a reason; whereas Christ's having existed before John, though he was born after him, was a most convincing proof that he was a very extraordinary person, and was the strongest reason that could well have been assigned to show that he was worthy of their superior regard. Compare note b on John i. 15. p. 106.

c We were not brought up in any intimacy of acquaintance with each other.] This was very surprising, considering how nearly related they were to each other, and how remarkable the conception and birth of both of them had been, as well as what frequent interviews they might have had at the yearly feasts at Jerusalem. There seems to have been a particular hand of Providence in thus preventing that acquaintance that might otherwise have grown up to an intimacy and tenderness of friendship, which in the eyes of a prejudiced and censorious world might have rendered John's testimony to Christ something suspected. It is probable that both Zacharias and Elizabeth died while John was very young; and then he might soon forget Jesus, though he had seen him in his infancy.
Thus be more remarkably made manifest to Israel, and might be introduced with greater solemnity.

And John proceeded at the same time, while Jesus was before him, and bore his testimony to him, saying, This must be certainly the Son of God; for I declare, that when he was baptized I plainly saw the Holy Spirit, in a surprising token of his presence, descending, with a hovering motion like a dove, from heaven, and it abode upon him. And that you may not suspect any 33 confederacy between us, I repeat the assurance which I but just now gave you, that I did not personally know him: but as he was proceeding to me, I had a secret intimation given me that it was he whom I should see to be distinguished by this sign: for he that sent me to baptize with water, as an earnest of that nobler baptism which is now soon to be expected, even that God whose messenger I am, he said unto me by an unquestionable revelation, This is the sign that I will give thee, that upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending in a corporeal and miraculous appearance, and remaining upon him, this is he that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw this sign with my own eyes; and upon this convincing evidence it is that I have testified already, and still go on to testify, that this is really the Son of God, who is come into the world in a human form to accomplish the great work of redemption and salvation; who is therefore most reverently and affectionately to be received by us, as we regard his Father's protection and favour.

Again it came to pass on the next day, that John was standing near the same place, and two of his disciples at that time were with him:

And looking steadfastly at Jesus, as he was walking at some little distance, he takes occasion to repeat his former declaration, and says to his disciples, that he might lead them to a due regard to Christ, Behold the Lamb of God, whom I before

I had a secret intimation given me.] The supposition of this, which is so perfectly agreeable to John's prophetic character, easily reconciles this text with John's respectful speech to Christ when he came to be baptized (Mar. iii. 14, p. 108), as Jansenius, and before him, Chrysostom, observed.

c Two of his disciples were with him.] It plainly appears by ver. 40, that Andrew was one of these; and perhaps John, the beloved apostle, might be the other; who being the penman of this gospel, does frequently conceal his name. Compare John xiii. 23, and xx. 2.

Looking steadfastly on Jesus.] This seems the most exact signification of the word ἀκολογία, and I have thus translated it again in ver. 42.
I before have represented as the great expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men.

And when the two disciples that were with him heard him speak such high and honourable things of Christ, they took such notice of it that they immediately went on and followed Jesus, who was then returning to a lodging which he had at a small distance from that place. And Jesus turning back, and seeing them intent on following and coming after [him,] says to them, not to discouragement and turn them back, but to encourage and invite them to a free converse with him, What do you seek? and what may be the business that you have with me? And they said to him, with the greatest reverence and respect, Rabbi, (which being translated from the Syriac, which was the language that was then spoken by the Jews, is the same with master,) may we have leave to ask thee where dost thou dwell? for we are desirous of making thee a visit, that we may enter into some conversation with thee, which would not be so proper or convenient in this public way. And, pleased to hear of the inquiry they made, he says unto them, Come with me now, and see where it is I lodge; for you shall both be welcome to attend me home. And they most readily complied with his kind invitation, and came and saw where he dwelt, taking particular notice of the place; and they went in and continued with him all the remainder of that day; it being then about the tenth hour, or four in the afternoon; so that they had an opportunity of spending the whole evening in conversation with him abundantly to their delight and satisfaction.

Now Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, who will make so considerable a figure in this history, was one of the two disciples that heard John [speak of Jesus] in the manner we have before related, and followed him. And so exceedingly was he transported with the pleasure that he found in his acquaintance with him, that he was ready to impart the joyful news to others, to whom he knew it would be welcome; and hastening from the place where John baptized, as may be gathered from his appearing there from day to day. And by this means he did an honour to John's ministry, and had an opportunity of receiving his testimony.
42 And he brought him to Jesus; and when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas (which is, by interpretation, a stone.)

And, that his brother Simon might be satisfied of the truth of what he told him, he brought him unto Jesus; and Jesus looking steadfastly upon him, as if he had read in his countenance the traces of his character and of his future service in the church, said, at his coming to him, Thou art Simon the son of Jonas; and thou shalt also be called Cephas; (which in the Greek may be expressed by Peter, and signifies a rock;) a name well adapted to his character upon account of that resolute and patient firmness with which he should maintain the cause of the gospel; and which also expressed the use which should afterwards be made of him, as he should prove in subordination to Christ one of the great foundations of the church.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Let our faith daily behold Jesus under the character of the Ver. Lamb of God, a Lamb indeed without blemish and without spot; by whose precious blood we are redeemed, as by an infinitely more valuable ransom than silver and gold. (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) As such let us humbly apply to him to take away our sins, and rejoice that (as the apostle John elsewhere expresses it) he is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world; all ages and nations being interested in the benefit of his atonement. (1 John ii. 2.)

b *He first findeth his own brother Simon.* This is a much more literal translation of Καὶ ἠναντίωσεν τῷ αδελφῷ τῷ λόγῳ θεοῦ, than that of the new translation in 1727, which renders it, The first that he found, or happened to meet with, was Peter.—He may perhaps be called his own brother to distinguish him from some other that belonged to the family, who possibly might be his brother-in-law, or was related to him only in half blood. Peter was so remarkable a person that it might be proper to tell us who was the first means of bringing him acquainted with Christ; and if John was the other disciple that is here referred to, he might mean this as an humble intimation that Andrew's zeal was in this respect greater than his own. We may observe here by the way, that Peter was not the first of Christ's disciples, (in which the Papists would have been ready to have gloated), but that another was the means of bringing him to an acquaintance with Jesus.

i *Thou art Simon.* Some have thought that Christ intended an allusion here to his name Simon, which may signify a hearer, intimating the candour and impartiality with which he was willing to hear Christ's instructions; (see Dr. Clark's note,) but I did not express this in the paraphrase, because it is not certain. Perhaps our Lord only meant to show that, though he had never seen him before, he knew his name and his family. Compare ver. 48, and John iv. 16, 19.
Let us consider him as *anointed* by the *Holy Spirit*, and as *baptizing* his church with it; and learn, after the example of *John the Baptist*, to bear our *testimony* to him again and again, with continued steadiness and growing zeal.

Our satisfaction in him, as the great and only Saviour, will surely grow in proportion to our acquaintance with him. If Divine grace hath discovered him to us, and taught us to repose the confidence of our souls upon him, let us, like *Andrew* in the passage before us, be concerned to make him known to others; and especially to lead our nearest relatives and our most intimate friends into that acquaintance with him which is so absolutely necessary to their eternal happiness!

Let the condescending readiness with which our blessed Redeemer accepted and even invited the visit of these *two disciples*, engage every preacher of righteousness most willingly to give his private as well as his public labours and his time (valuable as that treasure is) to the service of those who are seriously affected with the concerns of their souls, and are inquiring after the way to salvation. We are sufficiently honoured, if, by any means, and by all, we may be instrumental in promoting that cause which employed the daily labours of God's incarnate Son, and at length cost him his very blood!

**SECT. XXII.**

The calling of Philip, and the interview of Christ with Nathaniel. John I. 43, to the end.

**SECT. XXII.**

**John I. 43.**

The next day after he had met with Peter, *Jesus determined to depart from thence* *a* to Galilee, and there to enter on his public ministry; and at his coming thither he *findeth Philip*, whom he intended for one of his most intimate companions, and *says unto him*, *Follow me*; which, being secretly influenced by his grace, *b*,

---

*a Determined to depart from thence; Θεοσω σημείον εἰς τος πόλις.] The force of the word seems to be something greater than our translation expresses; and there are several other texts which may suggest the same remark. (Compare Mat. xiv. 5. xix. 17. xx. 14. Luke iv. 6. xxii. 20. John iii. 8. v. 21. 40. vii. 17. viii. 44. xvii. 24. xxi. 22. and 2 Tim. iii. 12.) Perhaps it may here intimate that our Lord on this occasion broke through the importance of some who would rather have persuaded him to continue at Betha-

*b Being secretly influenced by his grace.] When we consider how suddenly some of Christ's disciples left their stated employments to follow him (according as we read Mat. iv. 18—22. Luke v. 27, 28. and xix. 5, 6.) it seems reasonable to allow some singular kind of impression on their mind (28
Philip tells Nathaniel of his finding Christ.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathaniel said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.

he accordingly did. Now Philip was an inhabitant of Bethsaida, which was a town of Galilee on the sea of Tiberias, and was also the city of Andrew and Peter, who have already been particularly mentioned; and by his calling these disciples he gave an intimation of his purpose of making some longer stay in that country.

And Philip, after he was thus become a follower of Christ, findeth his pious friend Nathaniel, who was also of Galilee, and lived in a town of it which was called Cana (John xxi. 2.) and says unto him, We have found him who has so long been earnestly expected by us, even that illustrious and extraordinary Person whom Moses gave us an account of in the law, and whom the prophets also have described in such a strong and lively manner; and with the greatest joy I am come to tell thee I know him who he is, [even] Jesus the son of Joseph, who comes from Nazareth, and is undoubtedly the promised Messiah.

And when Nathaniel heard that he was one of Nazareth, his prejudice against the place was such that he was ready to conclude that Philip was mistaken; and he therefore said unto him, Can any good thing at all, and especially any such great and glorious blessing as this, come out of a place so infamous as Nazareth? And Philip says unto him, Do not suffer yourself to be borne away by a vain popular prejudice, but come and see; converse with him yourself, and you will soon be satisfied.

Now when Jesus saw Nathaniel coming towards him, (though there was no personal acquaintance between them) at the first sight of him he presently discerns what was his real character, and says concerning him, so loud that he might easily hear it, Behold here cometh one [that is] truly an Israelite (compare Rev. iii. 9.

(as there was in the calling of Elisha, 1 Kings xix. 19--21.) which though for the present it superseded the necessity of arguments, yet did not exclude their attending to that afterwards which might be necessary to defend their conduct to others.

c Whom Moses—and the prophets have described: or γράφει Μωυσῆς καὶ οἱ προφήται This is a very literal translation; for γράφει frequently is used in the same sense elsewhere, and in particular is justly rendered thus, Rom. x. 5. (Compare Josh. xviii. 9. Judg. viii. 14. and Ezra vii. 22. Septuag.)

d A place so infamous as Nazareth.

As Nathaniel was a native of Galilee, it appears from hence that the Galilæans themselves had but an ill opinion of Nazareth, as worse than the rest of that country; and indeed, by the figure its inhabitants make in the evangelists, they seem to have deserved it. See Luke iv. 16, 28, 29. and Mat. xiii. 34, & seq.
The interview of Christ with Nathaniel.

Nathaniel, perfectly surprised at such an unexpected testimony, presently says, with all the natural frankness of his temper, to him, Whence dost thou know me, or how canst thou at once thus undertake to answer for the most secret part of a stranger's character? Jesus replied, and said unto him, I am not so entirely a stranger to thy character as thou art ready to suppose, nor do I take it merely from uncertain report; for before Philip called thee, I saw thee when thou wast alone under the fig-tree; and as I was present in Spirit to observe what passed in that secret retirement, I know how well thou deservest the testimony which I have now borne to thine integrity.

Nathaniel was so struck with this express reference to what he knew none could be witness to but God and his own conscience, that all his prejudices were at once removed; and he immediately replied to Christ, and says, with all that openness and candour that was so natural to him, Rabbi, from this one circumstance I cannot but believe all that my friend hath told me concerning thee; and therefore I not only honour thee as a wise and holy teacher, but am convinced that thou art the Son of God; yea, that thou art the promised Messiah, whom we so earnestly have been expecting as the King of Israel; for surely such Divine knowledge can be lodged in no meaner person.

And

When thou wast under the fig-tree.] I see no reason at all to think, with Heinsius, that the conviction produced by these words in the mind of Nathaniel proceeded from the allusion he perceived them to bear to Zech. iii. 10. In that day ye shall call every man his neighbour, under the vine, and under the fig-tree. It was Christ's saying that he saw him there that struck his mind in so powerful a manner; and it is very probable that he was then employed in some secret devout meditations. See Dr. Green's Christian Temper, Vol. ii. p. 348.

Such Divine knowledge can be lodged in no meaner person.] Just thus the woman of Samaria argued, John iv. 29. Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ? which plainly intimates that they supposed the Messiah would be endowed with the most perfect knowledge, and have the gift of prophecy in the highest degree. There was a great deal of courage in Nathaniel's making such a declaration, if it was before a mixed company: for Christ's assuming the title of the Son of God was afterwards interpreted to be no less than blasphemy. John x. 36. and xix. 7.
50 Jesus answered and said unto him, 
Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree; believest thou, that thou shalt see greater things than these.
And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Dost thou believe me to be the promised Messiah, and the Son of God, merely because I told thee that I saw thee under the fig-tree? Thou, who discoverest so honest and teachable a temper, shalt see much greater things than these to prove it. And he accordingly proceeds and says, not only unto him, but unto all that were then present with him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, and solemnly declare it as a most certain truth, to be regarded with the most diligent attention, and received as coming from the mouth of one who is truth itself, That from this time you shall see such a surprising train of miracles, written by me in the whole course of my succeeding ministry, that it shall seem as if heaven was opened, and all the angels of God were continually (as they appeared in vision to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 12.) ascending and descending [to visit] upon the Son of man, and to receive and execute his orders: and thus you will be furnished with a most convincing proof that, humble as the form of my present appearance is, I am indeed the

{Verily, verily, I say unto you: amen, amen, amen.] There is no doubt but that these words are to be taken for a solemn affirmation; in which it is observable that John has constantly repeated the amen, while it is only mentioned once by the other evangelists. And this we may suppose he had to do, either to excite the greater attention, or in a more emphatic and stronger manner to assert the truth, not only of the thing affirmed, but of the person that affirms it. For as amen in Hebrew signifies truth, Isa. lxv. 16, so Christ, as being the true and faithful witness, is called the Amen. Rev. iii. 14. This repeated assurance therefore may be considered as an intimation tons, not only that the saying unto which it is prefixed is true, but that we should regard it as proceeding from the true and faithful Witness. See Dr. Lightfoot's Harmony, and Hor. Heb. in loc.

{From this time you shall see a train of miracles.] Accordingly within three days one glorious miracle was performed by Christ at Cana of Galilee; which being the town to which Nathaniel belonged, there is great reason to believe he was present with the rest of Christ's disciples at it. Compare John ii. 2, 11, sect. 25.

{The angels of God ascending and descending.] If Nathaniel was, assume we have thought, the person afterwards called Bartholomew, and made an apostle (see Light- foot's Hor. Heb. on Matth. x. 3.) he must regard the vision of angels attending Christ's ascension as a glorious accomplishment of these words, as his final appearance at the day of judgment, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, will yet more eminently be. Compare Matth. xxvi. 64, where εκάστη so plainly signifies hereafter, that I much question whether it might not justly have been rendered so here; but where I am dubious, I always choose the more extensive sense, in which (where) the more limited is generally comprehended.

k Humble as the form of my present appearance is.] Though it be very true, as Dr. Sykes has excellently proved at large, that the phrase Son of man does generally refer to the glorious kingdom over which Christ was to preside, according to the prophecies of Daniel, yet I think it equally evident that it is originally used in the Old Testament in a sense that carries something of humiliation in it. See Job xxvi. 6. Psal. viii. 4. cxliv. 3. Isa. li. 12, and especially Psal. lxxii. 9. where we justly translate beni Adam, men of low degree. A multitude of texts, as well as this before us, appear with great advantage when this remark is attended to; though Le Clerc cannot by any means be vindicated in confining his interpretation so entirely to this latter view.
the illustrious Person foretold under that title, and am intended for that glorious throne, around which the highest angels shall account it their honour to appear as humble attendants, when the whole world shall be convened before it.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. How cautiously should we guard against popular prejudices, 46 which possessed so honest a heart as that of Nathaniel, and led him to suspect that the blessed Jesus himself was an impostor, and that no good could be expected from him because he had been brought up at Nazareth! But his integrity prevailed over that foolish bias, and laid him open to the conviction of evidence, which a candid inquirer will always be glad to admit, even when it brings the most unexpected discovery.

How amiable is the character here given of Nathaniel! An 47 Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile! May the attainment of so excellent a character, and a resemblance to him in it, be the daily aim and emulation of all who have the honour to be called into the Israel of God!

48 A constant intercourse with God in secret devotion will be a happy expression of one branch of this sincerity, and an effectual means of promoting the rest. Let it therefore be our care that the eye of him that seeth in secret may often behold us in religious retirement, pouring out our souls before God, and humbly consecrating them to his service. The day will come when those scenes of duty which were most cautiously concealed shall be commemorated with public honour; and when he who now discerns them, and is a constant witness to the most private exercises of the closet, will reward them openly. (Matth. vi. 6.)

Happy were those who saw the miracles performed by the Son 51 of man while he was here on earth! and happy those favourite spirits of heaven which were ascending and descending as ministers of his to do his pleasure! But in some degree yet happier are they who, having not seen, have believed; John xx. 29. As their faith is peculiarly acceptable, it shall ere long be turned into sight. They shall behold much greater things than ever were seen below, and more extraordinary manifestations of his glory than they can now conceive; and, being brought with all his people to surround his throne, shall join in those nobler services which attendant angels render him above.
SECT. XXIII.

Christ attends a marriage feast at Cana in Galilee, and miraculously changes water into wine. John II. 1—11.

John II. 1.

NOW the third day after Christ's coming into Galilee, and discoursing there with Nathaniel in the manner we have related above, there was a marriage at Cana, a town in Galilee, a which originally belonged to the tribe of Asher (Josh. xix. 28,) and Mary the mother of Jesus was there; it being the marriage of a near relation or an intimate friend of hers. And Jesus, and those of his disciples that were with him, (namely the two disciples that had followed him from the banks of Jordan, with Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel,) being known to be in the neighbourhood, were invited to the marriage: and Jesus, not affecting the austerities which became the character and ministry of John the Baptist, freely accepted of the invitation, and favoured them with his instructive presence.

Now, as it was known that Jesus would be present at the feast, this, in conjunction with the events which had lately arisen, occasioned a greater resort of company than was expected; and when the wine provided for the entertainment of the guests fell short, the mother of Jesus, who either had seen some of his miracles in private, or received from him some hint of his intention now, thought proper to inform him of it,

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

—Cana, a town in Galilee.] It lay toward the southern part of the land of Asher (Josh. xix. 28.) and might be called Cana in Galilee, to distinguish it from another town of that name in Cesalonymia mentioned by Josephus. Antiq. Jud. lib. xv. cap. 5. (al. 6.) sect. 1. p. 751. Hovercamp.

b The mother of Jesus was there.] Some have supposed this marriage to be celebrated at the house of Cleopas or Alpheus, whose wife was sister to the mother of our Lord, (John xix. 25,) and one of whose sons was Simon the Canaanite, whom some have thought to be so called from his being an inhabitant of this Cana. (Mark iii. 18.) And this may be considered as the more probable, as Mary was not only present at the feast, but was concerned about supply ing them with wine; and when the feast was over, we are told at ver. 12. that Jesus was attended, at his leaving Cana, not only with his own disciples, but with his brethren, or his nearest kinsmen, who probably came thither as relations, to be present at the marriage. As Mary here is spoken of alone, it may be reasonable to conclude that Joseph was now dead, and that he lived not to the time when Jesus entered on his public ministry, especially as he is no where mentioned in the gospel afterwards. See Dr. Lightfoot's Harmonia, in loc.

c Either had seen some of his miracles in private, or received some hint, &c.] Without supposing the one or the other of these, one can hardly imagine why she should thus apply to him on this occasion. For she could scarce suppose he had money to buy any large quantity; nor would it have been so proper to have done it if he had, lest it should have been interpreted as an affront to the bridegroom. But the supply that she expected
His mother charges the servants to obey his orders.

sect. xxii.

John ii. 4.

it, and says unto him, Son, dost thou observe they have no wine to carry on the feast?

But Jesus, not approving it, that she should take upon her to direct him in the exercise of his miraculous power, says freely to her, with an air of serious rebuke, and in a plainness of language suited to the simplicity of those ages and countries, O woman, what hast thou to do with me?, thus to direct me how and when my miracles are to be wrought? Let me now say it once for all, this is a thing that does not lie within thy proper sphere; and in particular, for what is now proposed, my time of doing it is not yet come; but it is best to wait a little longer, and leave it to my conduct to determine when it will be the fittest and the most convenient season for me to interpose.

5 In this his mother readily acquiesced, as conscious to herself that she had been over hasty in the proposal; but yet, as she inferred from his answer that he intended them some extraordinary directed by her. And nothing is more-evident than that the phrase in other places has the meaning that our version gives it. See Matt. viii. 29. and Judges xi. 12, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. 1 Kings xvii. 18. 2 Kings iii. 13. and ix. 19. Septuag.

d O woman.] We have no reason to conclude that there was any rudeness in his addressing to his mother thus. For though indeed it is a manner of expression that is very unusual among us, to call a person woman, when we are speaking to her, if she be one to whom we think that any respect is due; yet some of the politest writers of antiquity make the most well-bred, and accomplished princes use it in their addressing unto ladies of the highest quality; and even servants too are sometimes represented as speaking to their mistresses in the same language. There are some instances of this referred to in Blackwell's Sacred Classics, Vol. i. p. 206, to which many more might easily be added.

e What hast thou to do with me?] Some have thought, ποιες τις εστις; might be rendered, What is that to me and thee? What does it signify to us, or what concern is it of ours, if they want wine? But Jesus was of so benevolent a temper, and Mary seems to be so far concerned as a relation, that it does not in this sense appear to be so proper a reply. It seems rather to be intended as a rebuke to Mary; and it was surely expedient she should know that Jesus was not upon such occasions to be directed by her. And nothing is more-evident than that the phrase in other places has the meaning that our version gives it. See Matt. viii. 29. and Judges xi. 12, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. 1 Kings xvii. 18. 2 Kings iii. 13. and ix. 19. Septuag.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 Was
Christ turns the water into wine.

6 And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

g Was grown to such a superstitious nicety. Besides the purifications that were appointed by the law of God, there was a multitude of others that were then practised in compliance with the tradition of the elders. Compare Mark vii. 3, 4, and see Godwin’s Moses and Aaron, lib. iii. cap. 11. § 4.

h Two or three measures. The measures of the ancients are so very uncertain, that it is hardly possible to determine the exact content of these vessels. Some have computed them to contain about two or three hogsheads; and it is rendered so in our translation as to make them contain above a hundred gallons. But it is hardly probable the vessels were so large; and as the word παρσύξης signifies no more than measures, it is much better we should leave it as we find it, unless the quantity could be determined with more certainty. It seems most probable that, as the Jewish bath is reckoned to contain four gallons and a half, the content of these vessels, if they are computed only at two measures each, will amount to no less than fifty-four gallons, which may be reckoned a sufficient quantity. See Dr. Lightfoot’s Harmony, in loc. and Godwin’s Moses and Aaron, lib. vi. cap. 9. ad fin.

i Chusing to make use of these. Jesus might rather chuse to make use of these large vessels, thus to add to the dignity of the miracle by the liberal quantity of wine produced; which we have no reason to believe was all drank that day. If the feast, as was usual, lasted several days (Gen. xxxix. 27, 28. and Judg. xiv. 12—17.) a considerable expence might by this means be saved, and an equivalent given for the additional charge of entertaining so many of his disciples. Not to say that this would prevent any suspicion that the tincture or taste of the wine might be derived from any remainder of wine in the vessels; for indited the goodness of the wine thus made would be sufficient to obviate such a thought.

VOL. VI.

k When
Christ turns the water into wine.

John 2. 1-7.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

This was the beginning of his public miracles, which Jesus wrought (as we have now related) in Cana of Galilee, and thereby manifested his glory; and that in such an illustrious manner that his disciples believed on him more stedfastly than before, as the fact was so certain and so remarkable.

When they have drank plentifully.] Though ἐπιποτισθαῖν often signifies to drink to excess, yet it would be very unjust and absurd to suppose that it implies here that these guests had already transgressed the rules of temperance. None can seriously imagine the evangelist so destitute of common sense as to represent Christ as displaying his glory by miraculously furnishing the company with wine to prolong a drunken revel. It is much more reasonable to conclude that it signifies here (as it does in Gen. xlii. 34. Cant. v. 1. and Hag. i. 6. Septuag.) only to drink so freely as innocently to exhilarate the spirits. And even this perhaps might only be the case of some of them, and particularly not of those who, drawn by a desire to converse with Jesus, might be but lately come in.

This beginning of his public miracles.] This interpretation seems much preferable to that of Grotius, who only supposes that this was the first miracle wrought at Cana, another being afterwards mentioned (John iv. 46. sect. 31), for it is plain there must have been a long series of miracles wrought here to justify such a manner of speaking, which doth not at all appear to have been the case. It rather seems to be here represented only as the first of his public miracles; for it seems probable that the necessities of the family might sometimes have engaged him to have done something miraculous for its relief in private. See note c, p. 131.
IMPROVEMENT.

We have here the first of Christ's public miracles, which we find was not wrought till about his thirtieth year. How much sooner could he have glorified himself, and amazèd the world by the display of his Divine power? But he waited his Father's call, and the delay added at length to the lustre of his works.

It was performed to grace a nuptial solemnity: and who doth Ver. not see that it was, in effect, a testimony borne to the honour and purity of that happy state on which so much of the comfort of the present generation and the existence of the future regularly depends?

How happy were these guests while Jesus was among them! and how condescending did he appear in making one on the occasion! His social and obliging temper should sweeten ours, and be a lesson to his followers that they avoid every thing sour and morose, and do not censure others for innocent liberties at proper seasons of festivity and joy.

If his mother met with so just a rebuke for attempting to direct his administrations in the days of his flesh, how absurd is it for any to address her as if she had a right to command him on the throne of his glory? And how indecent for us to direct his supreme wisdom as to the time and manner in which he shall appear for us in any of the exigencies of life?

Her submission and faith manifested on this occasion are truly amiable: and with this we have surely reason to admire the benignity and generosity of Christ in this miracle before us; who consulted the pleasure and entertainment as well as the necessity of his followers; and by this abundant supply amply repaid any extraordinary expence which he might have occasioned to the family.

How easily could he, who thus turned water into wine, have transformed every entertainment of a common table into the greatest delicacies, and have regaled himself daily with royal dainties? But, far superior to such animal gratifications, he chose the severities of a much plainer life. Blessed Jesus! who can say whether thou art greater in what thou didst or in what thou didst not do? May none of us thy followers be too intent on indulging our taste or any of our other senses; but, pursuing those intellectual and devotional pleasures which were thy meat and thy drink on earth, may we wait for that good wine which thou reservest for thy people to the last, and for those richer dainties with which thou wilt feast those who shall drink it with thee in thy Father's kingdom! (Mat. xxvi. 29.)
Jesus goes to keep the passover at Jerusalem,

SECT. XXIV.

Our Lord celebrates the first passover of his public ministry at Jerusalem: and vindicates the outer court of the temple from the profanation of those that bought and sold there. John ii. 12, to the end.

JOHN II. 12.

Now, after Jesus had attended at this marriage, where he miraculously turned the water into wine, he and his mother, and his brethren (or his near relations) and his disciples, who were now ready to attend him wheresoever he should go, went down from Cana to Capernaum, a city that lay near the north part of the sea of Galilee, on the south border of the land of Naphtali: and at this time the stay they made was but short, for they continued there not many days. And the reason of their leaving it so soon was that the passover of the Jews drew near, when it was ordered by the law of Moses that all the males should appear before the Lord (Exod. xxiii. 17, and Deut. xvi. 16.) and therefore Jesus, who maintained a religious regard to the ceremonial as well as the moral part of the law, went up to Jerusalem to worship at the temple.

14 And, at his coming thither, he found, in the outer court and cloysters of the temple, those that, under

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen,

a The passover of the Jews drew near.] As the evangelists have not expressly determined the number of passovers which happened between the baptism and death of Christ, or during the course of his public ministry, so it is well known that learned men have been much divided in their opinions about them. By far the greater part have supposed there were four; reckoning this the first; the feast mentioned, John v. 1, the second; the passover spoken of, John vi. 4, as the third; and that, at which Christ suffered, the fourth. But there are others of a different opinion. The celebrated Sir Isaac Newton reckons five; the first, this which is now before us; the second, according to him, happened four months after Christ's discourse with the woman of Samaria, John iv. 23. the third, a few days before the story of the disciples rubbing the ears of corn, Luke vi. 1, the fourth, a little after the feeding of the five thousand; and the last, at the time of our Lord's crucifixion. The reasons for this the reader will find at large in Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on Prop. Part i. chap. II., and the most considerable of them will be touched upon in their proper places.—Mr. Manne has with great learning and ingenuity attempted to revive a long exploded notion, that Christ's ministry continued but sixteen months; (see Manne's second Dissertation, p. 146, & seq.) and therefore Jesus, who appeared for two passovers during the whole course of it. Mr. Whiston's reasoning against this hypothesis, in the sixth of his late dissertations, appears to me unanswerable. For he there shews that, if this was true, Christ must have travelled on an average near ten miles a day during the course of his ministry. Besides, the transpositions in scripture which this would introduce, seem very unwarrantable and dangerous; and among other difficulties, it is none of the least that Mr. Manne is obliged to suppose that Christ only purged the temple at his last passover, and consequently that St. John has misplaced this story; though ver. 24, of this chapter, and ver. 22, 23, 24, of the next (sect. 27,) afford such strong arguments to the contrary. Compare note c and note m of this section.
And drives the traders there out of the temple.

John ii. 14.

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

under a pretence of accommodating such as came to worship there with proper sacrifices, sold oxen, and sheep and doves; and he also saw there the money-changers sitting at their tables, who, for a certain profit, changed any foreign coin into that which was current, and larger pieces of money into half shekels, which were on some occasions to be paid into the sacred treasury. (Exod. xxx. 15.) Now, at the sight of this, Jesus was moved with a just indignation to think that so sacred a place, honoured with such peculiar tokens of the Divine presence, should be profaned in this audacious manner, and so great an affront be put on the devout Gentiles, in whose court this market was kept; and therefore, having made a whip of the small cords (with which they were used to tie the beasts to some rings fixed in the pavement for that purpose) he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen, which they had brought into it; and he also poured out the money of the changers, and overthrew the tables at which they were sitting. And he said to them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. 16

15 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

b Sold oxen, and sheep, and doves.] There must have been a grand market for these animals at such times; for Josephus tells us that no less than 236,509 victims were offered at one passover; see Joseph, de Bell. Jud. lib. vi. cap. 9. (See also John xii. 23, with the note there, sect. 134.) And (2.) That though, in the circumstances that here attended it, there was an oblique intimation of something extraordinary, it might not be so dangerous now as afterwards; because our Lord not having opened the spiritual nature of his kingdom, or as yet rendered himself obnoxious to the Pharisees by such just incentives as he afterwards used, they who expected the Messiah to appear about this time and looked for his appearance, might be the more able for a while to wait the issue of Christ's pretensions, and so much the rather, as he now wrought some wonderful miracles. (Compare ver. 23, and chap. iii. 2.) Accordingly we find in the beginning of the next chapter one of the chief among the Pharisees comes privately to confer with Christ in a very respectable manner. It seems necessary to acquiesce in these solutions, because the conference which
Christ's saying of the temple of his body.

Sect. xxiv. John ii. 17.

Declaration of his Divine mission as could not but be greatly observed by the multitude. And his disciples, when they saw so meek a person in such an unusual transport of just displeasure, remembered that it was written of David, in words which well expressed the character of Christ on this occasion, (Psal. lix. 9.) "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;" as if it were said, A regard for the honour of thy sanctuary, like a secret flame glowing in my bosom, preyed upon my spirits and would have consumed me, had I not given it vent.

18 A fact so public and remarkable as this could not but immediately come to the knowledge of the priests and rulers of the Jews, whose supreme council sate in a magnificent chamber belonging to the temple: some of them therefore when they heard of it, answered and said unto him, By what authority dost thou thus take upon thee to reform what is amiss here, and what sign dost thou show us, seeing that thou dost these things, to prove thy having a Divine commission, since it is certain thou hast none from the government? Jesus answered and said unto them, You shall not want convincing evidence that I have an authority far superior to what man can give me; if you will demolish this temple, I promise and assure you I will raise it up again in three days. The Jews then said unto him, in proud derision and contempt of what they did not understand, This temple hath been no less which refers to the miracles wrought at this feast is expressly said to have been before John the Baptist was imprisoned. Compare John iii. 22-24. sect. 27.

d Remembered that it was written of David.] That these words were originally spoken of David, and not of Christ, is plain from the fifth verse of the lixth Psalm; O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee; which cannot be applied to Christ. Abundance of other scriptures are quoted, with such a beautiful accommodation as this.

e Rulers of the Jews.] It seems most probable that the Jews here mentioned were rulers, because we know that the great assembly of Jewish rulers (that is, the sanhedrim) sat in the temple, and that the chief of them often attended public worship there. This action of Christ (in driving out the buyers and sellers) must undoubtedly come to their knowledge; and as their office would seem to authorize them to call him to an account, we are sure their prejudices against him would incline them to do it.

f A magnificent chamber belonging to the temple.] This fine rotundus was called, from its beautiful pavement, Lishkeath-Haggazith, and stood on the wall of the temple, part of it within and part of it without its sacred precincts. See Cabot's Dictionary at the word Sanhedrim; Lightfoot's Description of the Temple, chap. 9. and Witsii Miscell. Sacr. lib. i. Diss. iii. § 66.

g Demolish this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.] It is most evident that Christ intended nothing more in these words than the paraphrase expresses, and did not mean to command them to demolish the temple; though his enemies indeed did, some years after, misrepresent this saying, as if he had intended a purpose of doing it himself. Compare Mark xiv. 58. sect. 185.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou dost these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in
in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body:

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said unto them: and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast

Less than six and forty years building, (for it is now so long since Herod began to repair it) and notwithstanding many thousand men have been employed upon it, it is not yet entirely finished; and wilt thou undertake to raise it up in three days? None certainly will be foolish enough to pull it down to try the experiment. But they were quite mistaken in the sense of what he said; for what they understood him to have spoken of the temple at Jerusalem, he spake of the much more sacred temple of his own body, in which the Deity dwelt in a far nobler manner than in their holy place (Col. ii. 9.) and he might give some intimation of it in the gesture that he used in speaking. When therefore he was risen from the dead, just on the third day after his crucifixion, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them; and they yet more firmly believed the scripture in all its prophecies concerning the Messiah's kingdom, and their faith in him was confirmed by the word which Jesus had spoken: for such a wonderful event as the resurrection of Christ, considered in its connection with this solemn prediction, justly appeared as the fullest conceivable proof of his Divine mission.

And while he was at the passover in Jerusalem, on the feast-day, many of the Jews who were then present there, seeing the miracles which he wrought,
Reflections on Christ's purging the temple, &c.

Sect. xxiv.

John ii. 24. wrought*, believed in him†, and were inwardly persuaded that he was the Messiah: But Jesus did not care to trust himself to them ‡, so far as to acknowledge it expressly that he was actually the promised Messiah; and, by confessing who he was, to put himself into their power, because he knew them all. And had no need that any one should testify or tell him any thing of the character of any man, though ever so much a stranger to him: for he himself, by an immediate and unerring penetration, knew what was in the heart of every man; and consequently knew that those people had such gross notions of the Messiah's kingdom, that there was no room for him to confide in them, or to expect them to be faithful to him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. How powerful is the love of this world, when it could engage 14 even the priests and the Pharisees to let out the temple itself for a market-place! though a professed zeal for the honour of it made so great a part of the righteousness of which they boasted before 15, 16 God. But our Lord beheld the scene with just indignation; as that displeasure is indeed just, which arises from a sense of dishonour done to God and contempt poured on the institutions of his worship. Happy shall we be in the warmest emotions of zeal which do not transport us beyond the rules of prudence and love, and make us forget those stations in life which require the same principles to shew themselves in widely different effects!

Methinks the state of the temple, when these traders had erected their seats and their stalls in it, and turned the courts of God's house into a market, is too just an emblem of the state of our hearts when we appear in the sanctuary distracted with worldly cares to the neglect of that one thing needful, which then demands our most attentive regards. Would to God that in this sense our Father's house were not often made a house of merchandize! Let us pray that Jesus, by his good Spirit, would assert it to himself, and drive out those intruders which break in upon our truest enjoyments, in proportion to that degree in which they intrench on our devotion!

k * Seeing the miracles which he wrought.] These words, as also those in John iii. 2. and iv. 45. plainly refer to some miracles wrought by Christ, the particulars of which are not transmitted to us.

† Believed in him.] It is in the original, believed in his name; a Hebraism, which it did not seem necessary to retain. Nothing is more common than to put the name of a person for the person himself. Compare John i. 12. xx. 31. Psal. lxv. 1. Acts i. 15. and Rev. iii. 4.

‡ Did not trust himself to them.] I look upon this as a demonstration that the passerer here spoken of was not that at which Christ suffered; for then there had been no need of such a precaution, and indeed no room for it.

a Said
After a thousand proofs of his Divine mission, the Jews were wicked and desperate enough, with sacrilegious hands to destroy the temple of Christ’s body; but let us be thankful for the undoubted evidence we have, that, as an everlasting monument of his power and truth, he raised it again in three days! Happy will it be for us if we cordially believe a gospel so glori­ously attested; but most vain will that belief be which doth not penetrate and influence the heart. Let us remember that we have to do with him, that formed our nature and is most intimately acquainted with all its recesses. He knows what is in man: may he see nothing in us which shall not be thoroughly agreeable to the profession we make of being his faithful disciples! To conclude; let us learn, from the caution which Jesus used, not rashly to put ourselves and our usefulness into the power of others; but to study a wise and happy medium between that universal prejudice and suspicion, which, while it wrongs the best and the most worthy characters, would deprive us of all the pleasures of an intimate friendship and that undistinguishing easiness and openness of temper which might make us the property of every hypocritical pretender to kindness and respect.

SECT. XXV.

The former part of our Lord’s conference with Nicodemus, in which he states the nature and necessity of regeneration. John III. 1—10.

John III. 1.

Now, while our Lord was thus attending at Jerusalem to keep the passover, there was a certain man of the sect of the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a magistrate of the Jews, and a member of the great sanhedrin, (John vii. 50,) who being alarmed, as many of his brethren were, and filled with wonder at the miracles that Jesus wrought, made him a visit in person, that he might more distinctly be informed of the nature of his doctrine and of the true intent and purpose of his coming. But, lest any offence should be taken at his conversing openly with him, he secretly came to Jesus by night, in order to a private conference with him at his own lodgings; and with the greatest reverence and respect, he said unto him, in his own name as well as in the name of several of his brethren, Rabbi, the

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him.

2 Said unto him, Rabbi.] This title cannot but appear very remarkable, as given by

vol. vi.
3 Jesus, knowing the prejudices he laboured under both as a Jew and a Pharisee, judged it necessary immediately to acquaint him with the absolute necessity of a thorough change, by Divine grace, both in heart and life; a change so great as might appear like coming into a new world, and would bring the greatest and most learned men to the simplicity of little children. (Compare Mat. xviii. 3.) He therefore answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, and declare it with the utmost solemnity as a truth of the highest importance,—That whatever great privileges any may inherit by his natural birth, or how exact and strict soever he may be in ceremonial observances, unless a man be born again he cannot possibly see the kingdom.

several life, made so low an appearance as our blessed Lord did.

b I am come to desire a more particular account, &c.] Our Lord's answer intimates that he either expressly made, or secretly intended such an inquiry; and it is impossible to enter into the beauty of this discourse without considering it in this view. Our Lord touches on the following grand points, in which it was of the utmost importance that Nicodemus and his brethren should be informed,—That no external profession, nor any ceremonial observances or privileges of birth, could entitle any to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom;—that an entire change of heart and life was necessary to that purpose;—that this must be accomplished by a Divine influence on the mind;—that mankind was in a state of condemnation and misery;—that the free mercy of God had given his Son to deliver them from it, and to raise them to a blessed immortality, which was the great design and purpose of his coming;—that all mankind, that is, Gentiles as well as Jews, were to share in the benefits of his undertaking;—that they were to be procured by his being lifted up on the cross, and to be received by faith in him;—but that if they rejected him there was no other remedy, and their eternal agitated condemnation would be the certain consequence of it.—Our Lord might enlarge more copiously on these heads: which it might be the more proper to do, as some of them were directly contrary to the notions commonly entertained by the Jews concerning the Messiah's kingdom.

c Unless a man be born again; καὶ τὴν ἀλοκίνησιν. Some would render ἀλοκίνησιν, from above; but it is plain that Nicodemus did not take it so; for he thought that, without entering a second time into his mother's womb, there was no being born in the manner Christ spoke of, ἀλοκίνησις, that is, again.—What is added at ver.
kingdom of God in such a manner as to secure an interest in its invaluable blessings.

Now, as this form of speech was figurative and concise, Nicodemus did not understand what it meant: and therefore says unto him, How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?

Then Jesus, to explain his former meaning, answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, and again repeat it, That unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; or, in plain terms, whosoever would become a regular member of it, he must not only be baptized, but as ever he desires to share in its spiritual and eternal blessings, he must experience the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit on his soul, to cleanse it from the power of corruption and to animate it to a Divine and spiritual life. For were it possible for a man to be born again, in the literal sense that you have mentioned, by entering a second time into his mother’s womb, such a second birth would do no more to qualify him for the kingdom of God than the first: for that which is born of the flesh, is only flesh; and what proceeds and is produced from parents that are sinful and corrupt, is sinful and corrupt as they are; but that which is born of the Spirit is formed to a resemblance of that blessed Spirit whose office it is to infuse a Divine life into the soul.

Wonder,
Nicodemus knows not how to conceive of it.

 sect.
 xxv.
 John
 iii. 7

 Wonder not, therefore, that I said unto thee, and have declared it as a truth that you are all concerned in, You that yourselves, even though you are Jews and Pharisees and rulers of the people, yet must be born again; since the degeneracy of the human nature is of so universal an extent as to be common to you all. Nor have you any cause to be surprised if there be some things in this doctrine of regeneration which are of an obscure and unsearchable nature; for even in the natural world, many things are so:

 8 The wind, for instance, bloweth where it will, sometimes one way and sometimes another and is not subject to the direction or command of man; and though thou hearest the sound thereof, and feelest its sensible and powerful effects, yet thou canst not exactly tell from whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; for whatever general principles may be laid down concerning it, when you come to account for its particular variations, the greatest philosophers often find themselves at a loss; and in like manner so it is with every one that is born of the Spirit: and you are so far from being capable of accounting for it, that it is easy to be seen there is a sovereign freedom in that Divine agency, which makes it oftentimes impossible to say why it is imparted to one rather than to another; and there is a secret in the manner of its operation on the mind, which it is neither necessary to know nor possible to explain.

 9 But Nicodemus, who had been accustomed to the pomp and ceremony of an external religion, answered and said unto him, How can these things be? for, after all this explication, I am still at a loss to understand what this being born of the Spirit means, and therefore cannot conceive how it should be so absolutely necessary.

 10 Jesus then answered and said unto him, How Nicodemus! art thou a teacher of Israel, of so distinguished a rank and character, and dost thou not know these things? when so much is every where

 -However it is strange to me that any should doubt whether proselytes were admitted into the Jewish church by baptism, that is, by washing; when it is plain from express passages in the Jewish law, that no Jew who had lived like a Gentile for one single day could be restored to the communion of their church without it. Compare Numb. xix. 19, 20, and many other precepts.

 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?
where said in the scripture of the purifying and
quickening operations of the Divine Spirit on
men's hearts? (Compare Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. and
Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.) It is high time thou
shouldest be better informed concerning them.

IMPROVEMENT.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear with attention what the
blessed Redeemer said on this great occasion. It is surely a
matter of universal concern: for who would not desire to enter into
the kingdom of God? to be an acceptable member of Christ's church
now, and an heir of glory beyond the grave?—But how is this
blessing to be expected and secured? Thus saith the Lord himself; Ver.

_Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God._—

Let us remember therefore that it is not enough that a new name
be given us, or that a new profession be assumed; it is not enough
that we are descended from the most pious ancestors, that we have
been externally devoted to God by the early seal of his covenant,
or that we openly have made a solemn and express profession of
our own faith and obedience, and have been born of baptismal
water in our riper years! There must be a new nature implanted,
a new creation formed in our souls by the almighty energy of the
eternal Spirit, or it had been better for us that we had never been
born at all.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and as we all proceed
from a corrupt original, we do not more evidently bear the image
of the earthly Adam in the infirmities of a mortal body than in the
degeneracy of a corrupt mind. Oh, let us earnestly entreat
that, being born of the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, we may
bear the image of the heavenly! And to these influences let us with
all humility and thankfulness be ready to yield up our souls, as
remembering that they are of a free and sovereign nature, like the
wind that bloweth where it will, and does not stay for the command
of the children of men.

Let none of us indulge a vain and useless curiosity with respect
to the manner of the Spirit's operations, or wonder that we meet
with some things that are secret and unknown in matters of a
spiritual nature, when we see daily there are so many things
unknown in the common appearances of the natural world, and
indeed so few that we can perfectly understand.

May the pride of a falsely pretended reason be subdued to the 10
authority of faith! And more especially, may such as are teachers
in

_precepts relating to ceremonial pollutions;_ by which the Jews were rendered incapable of appearing before God in the taber-
nacle or temple, till they were washed, either by bathing or sprinkling.
in Israel, or who are designed for that important office, take their instructions with all humility from this teacher sent from God! For it must surely be not only their calamity, but that too of the church in general, if its guides continue ignorant of those sublime and spiritual truths which Christ came down from heaven to reveal, or are so biased by the carnal reasonings of a depraved mind as to be indisposed and backward to receive them.

SECT. XXVI.

The latter part of our Lord's conference with Nicodemus, in which he opens the design of his coming into the world, and shews the absolute necessity of faith in him. John III. 11—21.

JESUS, pursuing his discourse with Nicodemus, said, I find that you are stumbled at this doctrine of regeneration which I have now been opening to you: but howsoever it may still appear to be obscure and strange, yet labour to subdue the prejudices that arise against it; for, verily, verily, I say unto thee, That in the doctrine we have now delivered we speak nothing but what we certainly know, and testify no other than that which we have seen, and can declare upon the surest grounds to be a most important truth, and to be perfectly agreeable to what we have received in commission from God himself; and yet the disposition of the Jewish rulers and people is generally such, that ye receive not our testimony, and are likely still to reject it: For these things which I have already told you are but the

12 If I have told you things which I have already told you are but the

a We speak what we know.] Some have supposed that, as Christ speaks here in the plural number, he may refer not only to the doctrine that was delivered by himself, but to the testimony that was given to the truth of it by John the Baptist, and to the preaching also of his own disciples, who all concurred in testifying the same things; the certainty of which they were assured of by the teachings of the Spirit, and by their own experience, while it was known to Christ by his omniscience, and by the intimate acquaintance that he had with all the councils of the Father.—And others have supposed that he includes here, with himself the Father and the Spirit, who are expressly spoken of in other passages as bearing witness to the truth of what he said, and as agreeing with him in the testimony that he gave. (Compare John viii. 18, xiv. 20—26, and 1 John v. 6—8.)—But there is no necessity we should suppose him to refer to any other than himself; since nothing is more useful than for a person of authority to speak of himself in the plural number, as Christ may be observed to have done elsewhere (Mark iv. 50.) and in the next verse he appears to have restrained it to himself, where he says only in the singular number, If I have told you earthly things, &c. See Lightfoot's Harmony in loc.

b And testify that which we have seen.] Christ seems here to allude to what was mentioned in the law as qualifying a man to be a witness, that he was able to declare of what he testified, that he had seen or known it. (Levit. v. 1.) And as he therefore had a clear perception, and a certain knowledge of the truth of what he said, there was the highest reason to receive his testimony, and to regard him as a true and faithful witness.
you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

This has been understood by some of the sublime and heavenly doctrines that were afterwards revealed.—of the eternal generation of the Son, and of the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily,—and of those other mysteries of godliness that are above the reach of human reason, and cannot be illustrated by earthly things; (see Lightfoot’s Harmony in loc.) Though it would rather seem that our Lord does more immediately refer to the doctrines which he mentions in the remaining part of his discourse to Nicodemus,—of his descent from heaven to instruct us in the things of God, and be united to the human nature as he was, while by his divine nature he still continued to be present above,—of the design for which he came into the world to be lifted up upon the cross, that he might save us from our sins;—of everlasting life and happiness to be obtained by faith in his death;—and of the condemnation of all those that should reject him: which may be counted as the deep things of God, which he reveals unto us by his Spirit, and which the natural man who disregards that Spirit, receiveth not, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; 1 Cor. ii. 10—14.

But the phrase of ascended into heaven is plainly used in this sense, Deut. xxxii. 12. Rom. x. 6, and Prov. xxx. 4.—As for the turn here given to the particle in πέρα, see the note on John xvii. 12. sect. clxxxvii.
only breaking off the yoke from the Jewish nation, but leading them on to conquer and destroy the Gentiles: but I must assure you that as Moses lifted up the brasen serpent on a pole in the wilderness, to heal those that were dying by the venom of the fiery serpents there (see Numb. xxii. 8, 9.) so also must the Son of man be first lifted up on a cross (compare John viii. 28, xii. 32, 34.) and then publicly exhibited in the preaching of the gospel, that sinners may by him receive a far more noble and important cure e:

15 Even that whoever believeth on him may not perish, as all in their natural state would otherwise do, but may obtain so perfect a recovery as certain tainly to have eternal life. For this is indeed the summary of that important message which I bring to the children of men, that God so loved the world, apostate and miserable as it was; yea, to such an amazing and unutterable degree did he love it that he gave even his only-begotten Son from his embraces, that whoever believeth on him, whatever be the nation he belongs to, or whatever his guilt be, he may not perish under the sentence of Divine justice, but may have everlasting life and glory. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, and to execute that vengeance upon them which their guilt might have taught them to fear; nor did he send him to destroy the Gentile nations, as your Jewish prejudices are ready to represent it; but that the world of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, might be saved by him, even all without exception who will listen to the overtures of his gospel. And therefore, on the one hand, he that believeth on him, how great soever

15 That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned:

A far more noble and important cure.] The grand point of similitude here is in the manner of performing the cure, that is, by believing regards to something lifted up for that purpose by a Divine appointment. It would be blasphemy to run a parallel between Christ and that which gave us the deadly wound: and to talk, as Grothus and Dr. Clarke here do, of the resemblance between him and the image of the serpent, as he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, seems in this connection to be foreign to the purpose.

As all in their natural state would otherwise do.] This is strongly implied here, and yet more strongly in ver. 18, where all that do not believe are said to be condemned already: and till men enter deeply into this important truth, the gospel may indeed be their amusement, but I see not how it is like to be their joy or their cure.

God so loved the world.] It is not only a very arbitrary criticism by which Erasmus makes these the words of the evangeliil rather than of Christ, but if it were admitted, it would destroy much of the beauty and energy of that awful admonition which our Lord gives to Nicodemus, and by him to his brethren, in this his first entrance on his ministry. No doubt, many of them attended him to learn the result of this conference, which to the best of his understanding we may conclude he honestly reported; and it is sad to think what an aggravation it was of the unbelief and impenitence of that grand council who afterwards treated Christ with so much contempt and malignity.
ever his sins may have been, and however unpardonable according to the tenor of the Mosaic law, yet shall not be finally condemned, but shall obtain a complete pardon: and on the other hand, he that believeth not, whatever his external profession and privileges may be, is condemned already, remaining under the sentence of his former guilt, yea, and subjecting himself by his refusal of the only remedy to greater and more aggravated woe; because he hath not believed in the illustrious name\(^1\) of the only-begotten Son of God, though expressly revealed to him on so glorious and important an occasion.

Now, through the great perverseness of man—19 kind, I certainly foresee that this will be the case with multitudes: for this is the great condemnation, the crime that fills up the measure of men’s iniquities and proves the surest cause of their final and speedy ruin, that a Divine light is come into the world, and yet men have loved darkness rather than light, and have chosen to remain ignorant rather than to submit themselves to the teachings of this heavenly revelation; and the reason is plainly this, because their deeds were evil, and they have not virtue enough to resolve on a thorough reformation. For every one who 20 is conscious to himself that he doeth evil, and will persist in his wickedness, hateth the light, as the cause of anguish and shame to his guilty mind; and he cometh not to the light, lest his actions should be reproved by it, and so his character exposed and his conscience disquieted, (Compare Eph. \textit{v. 13}) But he that practises truth \(^2\) and virtue, sincerely endeavouring to adjust his actions according to the eternal law of righteousness, or the nature and obligation of things, comes to the light with confidence and pleasure, and takes all opportunities of improving his knowledge, that his actions may be made manifest.

\(^1\) Believed in the illustrious name.] Though the name of a person be often put for the person himself, yet I think it is farther intimated in that expression, that the person spoken of is great and magnificent; and therefore it is generally used to express either God the Father or our Lord Jesus Christ.

\(^2\) He that practises truth: o πράπων της σεληνίας.] This phrase often occurs as the character of a good man: (compare Psal. cxix. 30. Isa. xxvi. 2. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 John i. 6. and 2 John, ver. 4.) And it is used with great propriety, since there is as really a truth or falsehood in actions as in words: as Mr. Wollaston in particulars has shewn at large; see \textit{Relig. of Nature, chap. i.} Of the same kind is the phrase \textit{πράπων της σεληνίας,} used more than once by St. John, perhaps in a beautiful opposition to this before us; and should it be rendered \textit{practiseth a lie,} that opposition would be more apparent; see Rev. xxii. 27. xxii. 15.
Reflections on the design of Christ’s coming.


fest as in open day; knowing it will appear that they are wrought in God, that is, that they are agreeable to the Divine nature and will, and the consequence of that union of soul with him, which is the highest dignity and happiness of a rational creature. Be it therefore known unto you all, that this gospel which I preach is the great touchstone of men’s true characters; and, as nothing but a corruption of heart can oppose it, so I faithfully warn you that, if you reject it, it is at the peril of your souls.

This was the purport of our Lord’s discourse with Nicodemus; and it appears by some following circumstances of the story, that it made a deep and lasting impression on his mind. See John vii. 50. and xix. 39.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 13 ever ascended up into heaven to learn the mysteries of Divine knowledge there, the only-begotten Son of God has been pleased to come down from thence that he might instruct us! He spake what he knew, and testified what he had seen: Oh that men were so wise as to receive his testimony, be the discoveries ever so new or the doctrines ever so sublime!

Let us with peculiar pleasure attend unto that abstract of the gospel which he exhibited in this profitable and comprehensive discourse with Nicodemus.—It presents to our view Christ, and him crucified. It opens the treasures of Divine beneficence and compassion, and shews us the Father of mercies so loving a world, which he might justly have abhorred and destroyed, as to give his only-begotten Son to be a ransom for it.

Let us behold him lifted up on the cross as the great attractive to whom all were to be drawn! In him shall we find the Divine cure for our souls, infected as they are with the poison of sin, if we behold him not merely with a curious but a believing eye. Whatever our wounds be, if in the exercise of faith we look to him, we shall not die of them; but it is owing to our own obstinacy and impenitence if we yet perish.

He might justly have appeared in a different form for the condemnation of sinners, rather than their salvation. The Son of God might

k That they are wrought in God: or ὧν οὐχ ἀνάγκαιον.] Grotius thinks that οὐχ is here used for δὲ, and that it only signifies agreeable to the Divine nature: this is certainly comprehended, but it is not all it expresses. His instance of the like use of the particle in 1 Cor. vii. 39, seems insufficient; for to marry υἱὸν Κυρίου in the Lord, signifies there the marrying one who is in Christ, that is a Christian.

At
might have come into an apostate world armed with thunderbolts of flaming vengeance to punish the violation of his Father’s law; but his hands are filled with eternal blessings.

As we love our own souls, let us apply to him in time for this salvation. Let us dread the aggravated condemnation of those who, when light is come into the world, prefer darkness to it, and obstinately shut their eyes against it, though it be the dawning of an eternal day.

May integrity and uprightness preserve us! (Psal. xxv. 21.) And, conscious of a real desire to govern ourselves according to the light we have, may we cheerfully lay ourselves in the way of more; that in the last awful day, when the sentence of Divine wrath shall be executed on all the servants of sin, and their character shall stand disclosed in the most odious colours, ours may shine out beautiful and fair, and the good deeds that we have done, being now wrought in God, may then not only be accepted and applauded, but through the grace of the Redeemer abundantly rewarded by him!

SECT. XXVII.

John the Baptist’s last testimony to Christ on occasion of a dispute concerning his baptism, and that administered by our Lord’s disciples. John III. 22, to the end.

John III. 22.

After these things, came Jesus and his disciples to the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized.

John III. 22.

After these things, Jesus and his disciples came from Jerusalem, where they had kept the passover together, into a part of the land of Judea, at some distance from the capital city; and there he continued with them, and by their ministry, though not in his own person, baptized. (See John iv. 2.)

And John was also at that time baptizing at Enon, which was a place near Salim, a town on the west side of Jordan; and he particularly chose that place because there was a great quantity of water there; which made it very convenient for his purpose: and they came from all parts,
John's disciples tell him that Jesus also baptized.

And there was about this time a warm dispute between [some] of the disciples of John and a [certain] Jew, who had been baptized by Christ, about this right of purifying, or baptism, which was administered in different parts by these two Divine teachers; for notwithstanding their commissions and administrations were so harmonious, yet some, through ignorance and weakness, were ready to oppose them to each other.

And such was the concern of John's disciples upon this occasion, that they came to John, and said unto him, Rabbi, we are solicitous for thy honour in the present conjuncture of affairs: for he that was lately with thee on the other side Jordan, and to whom thou gavest such an honourable testimony there, behold, he now baptizeth, and people from all parts, yea even such as have before received thy baptism, come unto him; which, as we fear, may cause thy baptism to be neglected and tend to the injury of thy character, since some are already making very invidious comparisons between him and thee.

But John replied to his disciples, with an humility and integrity agreeable to the rest of his character, and said, in order to convince them farther of the superior honours due to the blessed Jesus, Do not give way to such vain partiality and fondness for me: for a man can indeed receive, and therefore ought to assume nothing to himself, unless it be given him from heaven; but we are just what God is pleased to make us, and must stand in that rank which his infinite wisdom...
Ye yourselves hear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

I know that as to him he daily must increase, but I must decrease.

He that cometh from above, is above all: he that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh; and he that cometh from heaven is above all. He that is of the earth can judge of things that are earthly, but he that is of heaven judging of things above, and therefore their sentence is just. Jesus, in giving his witness to the Samaritans, said, "I am he that cometh from above, as Jesus did, is far above all the children of men, and so undoubtedly is above me; while, on the other hand, I am not the Christ; but that I am sent as a harbinger before him; and therefore am so far from being in any opposite and separate interest, that his success is my greatest joy. It is the bridegroom only that hath the bride; and it is his peculiar right to enjoy her as his own: but as for the intimate friend of the bridegroom, who standeth near him, and heareth him express his delight and complacency in her, he is so far from envying and repining at it, that, if he really deserves the name of a friend, he rather rejoices with exceeding great joy on account of the bridegroom's voice. Such therefore is the friendship and the regard I have for Jesus, that this that you have told me is my joy: which is so far from being at all impaired, that it is heightened and completed on this happy occasion, which you should rather have been ready to congratulate than to have made it matter of complaint.

You yourselves bear witness to me; and we know that the testimony of man is worthless; but by the words of the scripture are ye here. 

Heareth him express his delight and complacency in her. Some have supposed that this alludes to a peculiar ceremony attending the marriages among the Jews; which the reader may find in Dr. Hammond in loc. and Selles. Uxor. Heb. lib. ii. cap. 16. But perhaps it may be a more general reference to any of the natural expressions of joy on such an occasion. — I pretend not to determine how far Bishop Patrick may be right, in supposing "that this is an allusion to the cabalistic doctrine, that Tiphereth, the Great Adam, or the Messiah, is married to Malcuth, the congregation of Israel, as the terrestrial Adam was to Eve." See his Preface to Canticles, § 4.
He testifies his joy in Christ's success.

other hand, he that originally was of the earth, being born like me in a natural way, is still of the earth, mean and imperfect, and can never hope, by any refinements and improvements, to equal what is heavenly and Divine; but what he says will correspond with his original, and, being earthly in his rise, he speaketh of the earth; the subjects of his discourse are comparatively low, or howsoever noble and sublime they be, there is a mixture of infirmity and weakness in his way of treating them: whereas he who originally cometh from heaven, and who has shewn so wonderful a condescension in his visiting this lower world, is still, in the midst of all his voluntary abasement, incomparably above all that dwell upon earth, not only in the dignity and glory of his person, but in the spiritual and heavenly nature of his doctrine. And I declare it to you with the greatest confidence, that what he hath seen and heard, or what he knows to the utmost degree of certainty, that does he testify and publish to the world; and I exceedingly lament it, that, notwithstanding all that eagerness of curiosity with which the multitudes are flocking now about him, yet no man cordially receives his testimony; and among all that hear him there are very few who are duly affected with what he delivers, and yield as they ought to its Divine evidence and importance. But he who hath indeed received his testimony acts a most wise and happy part and hath, as it were, set his seal [to it] that God is true; acknowledging his hand in these credentials given to his Son, and his veracity in sending him thus furnished to fulfil his ancient promises to his people. For he whom God hath sent into the world as the promised Messiah, speaketh the words of God, and all that he reveals should be regarded as Divine oracles: for God giveth not the powers and the inspiration of his Spirit [to him] by measure, under such limitations and with such interruptions as he gives it to his other messengers; but it dwells in him by

speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven, is above all.

52 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth: and no man receiveth his testimony.

53 He that hath receiveth his testimony, hath set to his seal, that God is true.

54 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

*He that was of the earth.] To render ως τινς γεννημενον, thus, prevents the appearance of a tautology in the following words, εις τον γην ευρεθηναι, which would otherwise seem unavoidable.

* Under such limitations and with such interruptions as he gives it to his other messengers.] With what limitations and interruptions the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were given, even to the greatest of the children of men, we shall have repeated occasion to observe in the process of this work.
Reflections on the Baptist's joy in Christ's success.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

by a constant presence, and operates by a perpetual energy. For the Almighty Father loveth the Son incomparably beyond the most faithful of his servants; and hath not only established him as the great Teacher of his church, but hath given the government of all things into his hand, that he may be regarded as the universal Lord.

So that instead of repining at his growing glories, you should rather be solicitous to secure an interest in his favour: for this is the substance and this the end of my whole testimony, that he who believeth on the Son, hath a sure title to eternal life, and hath already the beginnings of it wrought in his soul; but he that is disobedient to the Son, and obstinately persists in his unbelief and impenitence, shall not see and enjoy that life; but, on the contrary, is so far from it, that the wrath of God, and the unpardoned aggravated guilt of all his sins, abideth even now upon him, and will quickly sink him into final condemnation and ruin.

Thus did that holy man John the Baptist conclude those testimonies to Christ which are recorded in the gospel, and was quickly after imprisoned by Herod the tetrarch; as the course of this history will presently shew.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is indeed too true that the spirit which naturally dwelleth Ver. in us all lusteth to envy (Jam. iv. 5.) and it is far from being 26 a low attainment in religion to look with complacency and thankfulness on the superior abilities and acceptance of others, especially of those who once appeared in an inferior rank. But for the cure of this unreasonable and restless passion, so contrary to the true spirit of the gospel, let us remember that a man can receive nothing at all except it be given him from heaven. It is God that makes one man to differ from another; and surely nothing can

1. This is the substance, and this the end of my whole testimony. Erasmus here destroys (as he had done before at ver. 16.) the beauty of this discourse by supposing that the latter part of it is to be considered as the reflection and attestation of the evangelist, upon occasion of the testimony that was given by the Baptist; though he seems himself at a loss to fix the clause at which this supposed change of the person speaking begins.

2. He that is disobedient to the Son. I think it is of great importance to preserve a difference in the translation, correspondent to that in the original, between οὐ πιστεύων κἀγαπάω, and οὐ πιστεύω κἀγαπάω; because the latter phrase explains the former, and shows that the faith which the promise of life is annexed is an effectual principle of sincere and unreserved obedience; and it is impossible to make one part of scripture consistent with another, unless this be taken into our idea of saving faith; as I have shewn at large in the first of my Sermons on Salvation by Grace through Faith.
John had reproved Herod for his marriage.

**SECT. XXVII.**

can be more unreasonable than that, when we ourselves have received all from his bounty, our eye should be evil because he is good.  

Ver. (Mat. xx. 15.)

29 If we are indeed the friends of Christ, we shall rejoice to see his interest advance, and especially to see souls espoused to him as the great Bridegroom of the church, whoever are the instruments of promoting so happy a work. Would to God that in this sense all the Lord's people were even as the greatest of the prophets, or as the very chief of the apostles! (Numb. xi. 29.)

30 But if indeed they were so, yet, like those brightest luminaries of the church, they must in time have their change and their wane. If God does not darken their glories by a sudden eclipse, yet they who are now, like the Baptist, burning and shining lights, must like him gradually decrease, while others are increasing about them; as they, in their turns, grew up amidst the decays of the former generation. Let us know how to set as well as to rise; and let it comfort our declining days to trace in those that are like to succeed us in our work the openings of yet greater usefulness. So shall we grow in our meetness for that world where all the righteous shall shine forth together, as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father, in a bright resemblance of him with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

33 As the surest means of guiding us to that happy world, let us make it our great care, by receiving the testimony of Christ, to set our seal to the truth of God, engaged in his cause.—With how much pleasure should we do it, and with what joy should we reflect that the Father so loveth the Son that he has not only given him the rich and unmeasurable communications of the Spirit, but has committed also into his hand the reins of government! Let his faithful servants remember it with joy, and cheerfully commit their concerns to him who is made head over all things for the benefit of his church, (Eph. i. 22.)

And to conclude; let it engage us to see the sincerity of our faith in him and subjection to him; since it is not a light matter, but our life, even the very life of our souls. May God awaken those on whom his wrath now abideth to a sense of their danger; and may he strengthen in each of our souls that faith which is the pledge of a happy immortality!

**SECT. XXVIII.**


**LUKE III. 19.**

Thus John went on to prosecute the great design of his appearance, and to prepare the way

**LUKE III. 19.** But Herod the traitor being reproved
proved by him, for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife; [Mark, for he had married her] and for all the evils which Herod had done. [Matt. xiv. 3. Mark vi. 17.]

For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him [and put him] in prison. [Mark vi. 17.]

20. Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

a On account of Herodias.—for he had married her.] Josephus gives us an account of this incestuous marriage, which proved the occasion of the Baptist's imprisonment and death, (Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 5. (al. 7.) § 1, 4, Hæricon,) from whence it appears that this Herodias was daughter to Aristobulus, one of the sons of Herod the Great, and consequently was niece both to Philip her former husband, and to Herod Antipas the tetrarch, her latter. By Philip, whom Josephus also calls Herod (as princes had often several names) she had one daughter whose name was Salome, (ibid. p. 385.) who probably was the young lady afterwards mentioned, sect. xxi. as instructed by her mother to ask the head of John the Baptist. And that historian informs us that Herod the tetrarch, to make way for his marriage, with Herodias, divorced his former wife, the daughter of Aretas; which made this commerce a kind of double adultery, and was the occasion of a war between those two princes in which Herod's forces were defeated. [In contempt of all laws human and divine.] The only case in which the law allowed of marrying one who had been a brother's wife was, when the brother died childless, (Lev. xviii. 16. xx. 21. and Deut. xxv. 5.) whereas in this instance Philip was yet living and had a daughter by Herodias. It was also in violation of all the rites of hospitality that Herod, while a guest in his brother's house, seduced his wife; as Josephus expressly observes, Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 5. § 1. p. 883.

b Though for the present he dismissed him.] Else there would have been no need for his sending to seize him, as we are presently told he did.

c Though for the present he dismissed him. [Herod himself.] There seems to be a peculiar emphasis in this expression, which probably may be designed to intimate that his seizing John was not merely the effect of Herodias's solicitations, but of his own resentment.—The place where he seized him might probably be Enon, where John had lately baptized, and where he again might return to his work; and if so, Enon must have been in Herod's jurisdiction. Compare note a on John iii. 25. p. 151.

d Bound him with chains.] It is plain from Matthew's manner of expressing this, that
He declines putting him to death, for fear of the people.

and put him in prison; though his confinement there was not so close but that his disciples were sometimes suffered to converse with him; (compare Mat. xi. 2, 4. and Luke vii. 19, 20. sect. xvi.)

18. And though he might assign other political reasons to excuse his conduct, as if his growing popularity rendered him dangerous to the state, yet the true reason for which he did it was this, that John had treated him with such a freedom as he knew not how to bear, and had told Herod to his very face, It is not lawful for thee that thou shouldest take upon thee as thou dost to have thy brother's wife, nor causeth thou ever have any solid peace of conscience while thou continuest to retain her. And for this cause Herodias also was yet more furiously incensed against him, and with an unrelenting cruelty still hung upon him; and not contented with what he suffered in his imprisonment, would fain have put him to death, but she could not immediately compass that design: For Herod, notwithstanding all his resentment, still revered John in his heart; knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, of which the fidelity of his reproofs was a very convincing evidence. And therefore calling him to frequent audiences, he heard him discourse with attention and pleasure; and was so far influenced by it that he did many things according to his exhortations.

But

that he bound him, and put him in prison, that chains were added to his confinement, as usual in such cases; (compare Acts xii. 6, and xxviii. 20.) so that those versions which consider even as an expletive lose part of the sense.

1 Dangerous to the state.] Josephus expressly says that Herod was afraid the authority of so great a man should occasion a revolt among his subjects; and that he thought it better to take him off, than to venture the danger of such a revolution as he might have occasioned; Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 5. § 2. p. 884. He there adds that he first confined him in the castle of Machæris.

2 Herodius hung upon him.] This seems to me the import of the phrase ἑτοίῳ ἐτοιῷ, which is with peculiar propriety applied to a dog's fastening his teeth into his prey, and holding it down. See De Div. in loc. and compare Luke xi. 53. There seems an opposition seldom remarked between this and ver. 17. Herod himself seized him, but Herodias went still farther.—Josephus gives a very bad character of this Herodias, and assures us that her ambitious and curious spirit was at last the cause of Herod's ruin and her own. Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 7. (al. 9.)

3 Reverenced John, εὐφαβεῖτα. The same word is justly so translated, Eph. v. 33. and there are many other passages where it has the same sense. See Luke xii. 5, and Rev. xi. 18, xiv. 7.

4 Heard him with attention.] So I choose to render εὖ χορηγεῖν εὐφαβεῖτα, rather than προσεχεῖν, or protected him, (compare Luke ii. 19. Gr.) though I know that the word sometimes signifies to preserve. (Mat. ix. 17.) Our English version of this passage appears to be improper; and I hope the little transposition I have made here will be forgiven, since it makes not the least alteration in the sense, and suits best with the genius of our language. Such little liberties elsewhere seem not so considerable as to need a more particular apology.

5 Did many things.] Grotius would have
But as John was still pressing him to dismiss Herodias, and telling him the insufficiency of any other reformation while he continued his infamous commerce with her; and she in the mean time wearied Herod with her importunity; when he at length was so far wrought upon that he would gladly have consented to put him to death, he was so apprehensive of the consequences of it that he durst not do it, since he feared the multitude; because he knew that they respected John, and looked upon him as a prophet; and he did not think it safe to provoke such a factions people by an action so extremely unpopular.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

**What** dangerous things are grandeur and power, if Divine grace does not secure the hearts of those who possess them! How unhappy are they whose fatal prerogative it is to be able to oppress with impunity, and to render it hazardous even to reprove them!

John well deserved the veneration and esteem of Herod when he thus took the freedom to perform this dangerous office of friendship, and to manifest a fidelity so seldom to be found in courts, and indeed so often wanting elsewhere. A wise prince would have courted his friendship, and sought his advice; but he is at length rewarded with imprisonment and death.

This good man was taken from his work, and laid aside in the midst of his days and his usefulness; but he calmly acquiesced in the disposals of Providence, and no doubt carried along with him to his prison incomparably more happiness than his persecutors could find on the throne.

In this confinement the prophet was not forgotten; but as if Herod had studied to increase his own torment, he must be sent for again and again to discourse before him. That he reverenced a man of such approved integrity, none can wonder: but while he would not be entirely reformed by his remonstrances, that he should hear him with pleasure, and do many things, is very surprising. Delusive pleasure! unprofitable reformation! while, whatsoever instances he gave of his regarding him, Herodias was yet retained. May divine grace preserve us from such fatal parti-

---

1 Looking upon him as a prophet.] According Josephus says (in the place quoted above in note?) that the Jews in general looked on the succeeding calamities of Herod's reign as a judgment from God for his injustice to this holy man. a More
The Pharisees are alarmed at Christ's success.

SECT. XXVIII.

partiality! since, did we keep the whole law, and offend allowedly but in one point, we should become guilty of all; Jam. ii. 10.

We cannot wonder if a reformation thus insincere and partial was but short lived, and was followed at length by a grosser apostacy. More bitter than death is the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands bands; (Eccles. vii. 26.) To what may not the artifices of such an abandoned creature work up the wretch that is entangled with her charms! Such was the influence of Herodias over him, that at her instigation, Herod is prevailed upon to seek the death of that righteous and holy man, whose virtues he revered, and whose preaching he had attended with pleasure.

Mat. XIV. 5.

But the fear of the people restrained him, though he was destitute of the fear of God, and had not any generous regard to men. Thus does God govern the world, and thus does he protect his church, by often making it the interest even of the worst of men to forbear those injuries and cruelties which the malignity of their natures might otherwise dictate. Let us courageously commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as firmly believing, that, whatever hazards we may be exposed to, the wrath of man shall on the whole be found to praise him, and the remainder of that wrath shall he restrain! Psal. lxxvi. 10.

SECT. XXIX.

Christ going from Judea to Galilee meets with a woman of Samaria, and enters into a conference with her, in which he discovers himself to her as the Messiah. John IV. 1—26.

JOHN IV. 1.

THE testimony which the Baptist had given to Christ, together with the miracles he himself had wrought at Jerusalem during the passover (see John ii. 23. and iii. 2.) impressed the minds of the people to such a degree, that, during his long abode in those parts, vast numbers were continually flocking around him; which gave great umbrage to the Jewish rulers. When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees, whose interest in the sanhedrim was so considerable, had heard with great concern what began to be so much talked of abroad, that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John the Baptist himself had done; (Though indeed Jesus himself, for

2 (Though Jesus

3 More disciples than John the Baptist himself had done.] I am not certain whether this happened before John's imprisonment or after; but if I had been sure it hap-
Jesus leaves Judea to return to Galilee.

for wise reasons, did _not_ choose to baptize any with his own hands, but left some of his disciples to do it in the name of a Messiah shortly to be manifested;) In order to avoid both their envy and their curiosity, he left Judea, after having continued there about eight months and departed again into Galilee, his former abode, where the influence and power of the council were not so great.

Now, unless he would have taken such a circuit through Judea and the neighbouring parts as in his present circumstances was very inconvenient, he was obliged to go through the country of Samaria. He cometh therefore, in his way, to a city of Samaria, originally called Sichem, but now, especially by the Jews, Suachar; which name they used as a term of reproach, intimating thereby that it was the seat of drunkards (see Isa. xxviii. 1.) and it was near that piece of ground which Jacob (having purchased it of the children of Hamor, Gen. xxxiii. 19.) by a particular grant gave to Joseph his beloved Son; (compare Gen. xlvi. 22. and Josh. xxiv. 32.) And there was a well belonging to it, called Jacob's well; it having been used by him and his family while they dwelt in these parts; (see Gen. xxxiii. 18. xxxv. 4.) Now Jesus, being weary with his journey, sate down immediately

happened before, I should still have thought it proper to add the account of that event (as I have done in the preceding section) immediately after his last testimony, though some other facts might possibly intervene: but if (which seems most probable) Mat. iv. 12. and Mark i. 14. (sect. xxvi. init.) refer to this journey, they both in plain words assert it was after John's imprisonment.—I cannot forbear saying it is astonishing that a person of Mr. Whitson's learning and sagacity should place all these events before the baptism and temptation of Christ. Were his arguments to confirm his eighth proposition far more specious than they are, they would never solve or balance the flagrant absurdity of making John declare (John i. 32, 33) that he saw the Spirit descending on Christ above a year before it did so descend; yet this ingenious writer has forgotten himself so far as to represent the matter in this contradictory view; (see Whitson's Harmony, p. 135—159, and p. 227 compared with p. 242.) The interpretation given above of Mat. iii. 14. and Luke iii. 21. (p. 168, 169) may solve some of the chief arguments on which he builds this singular hypothesis.  

b Jesus himself _did_ choose to baptize any with his own hands.] This might be partly to avoid importunate inquiries whether he was the Messiah, and partly to prevent those prejudices which might have arisen against the more perfect form of baptism afterwards instituted, if any had received this less perfect baptism from Christ himself.  

e After having continued there about eight months.] This appears from ver. 35, for harvest began quickly after the passover; Lev. xxiii. 10, 15. Christ therefore said in Judea from one passover till within four months of the other; that is near eight months; so that this journey into Galilee must be made near the middle of winter, probably about the beginning of our December. See Sir Isaac Newton on Prophecy, p. 147, 148.  

d A term of reproach.] It is remarkable as Mr. L'Enfant observes, that Sichar in the Syrac language signifies a drumhord and a liar.
In his way discourses with a woman of Samaria.


7 And at this very juncture of time there comes a certain woman of Samaria to draw water: and Jesus (on purpose to introduce a discourse by which he graciously intended her conversion and salvation) says unto her, I desire you would give me [some water] to drink. For his disciples were not near to assist him, but were gone to the neighbouring city to buy food.

9 Then says the woman of Samaria to him, How is it that thou who art, as appears by thy habit and dialect, a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria? for the reader must observe that the Jews have no friendly intercourse with the Samaritans, nor so much as care to receive any favour from them, looking upon them as an impure and accursed nation.

10 Jesus, to convince her that he was not under the power of such common prejudices, and to awaken her farther inquiries, answered and said unto her, If thou hadst known the great gift of God which he is now bestowing upon the children of men by his Son, and who it is that says unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest not only have complied with his request, but wouldest ere this time surely have asked him, and he, without ob-

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, Give me drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it, that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

—

James 26²

Hebrews 12:28

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, Give me drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it, that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

—

James 26²

Hebrews 12:28

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, Give me drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it, that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

—

James 26²

Hebrews 12:28

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, Give me drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it, that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

—

James 26²

Hebrews 12:28

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, Give me drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it, that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

—

James 26²

Hebrews 12:28

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, Give me drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it, that thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.
Having asked for drink, he offers her living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob which gave us the well, and drank thereof, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall give him shall be in him a common sense, of fresh spring water, says to him with greater respect than before (as being struck both with the piety and kindness of his former reply), Sir, thou hast no bucket, nor any thing else to draw with, and the well before thee, which is the only spring hereabouts, is very deep; whence hast thou then this living water of which thou speakest? or what is the extraordinary supply which thou declarest may have had from thee? Art thou greater and wiser than our father Jacob who gave us this well, leaving it to his descendants as a legacy of importance; and while he lived, he drank of it himself, with his children and his cattle, as the best water in these parts?

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water, how much soever it may be esteemed, though it refresh the body for a little while, will quickly thirst again: But he that drinketh of the water which I shall give him, will find it so reviving to the soul that he will never thirst, or be in danger any more of perishing for want; but the water which I shall give answers the Greek αὐτὸν better than any single English word I recollect. And we find afterwards, upon the woman’s returning in haste to the city, that she left her water-pot or pail behind her, ver. 29, which was the vessel she had brought to draw with. — Mr. Maundrell tells us that the well now shown as Jacob’s is thirty-five yards deep.


1 Will never thirst.] Some would render αὐτὸν τοῦ ποταμοῦ, shall not thirst for ever; but not to urge how much this spoils the antithesis, the expression used John vi. 35. αὐτὸν τοῦ ποταμοῦ, is not liable to any such ambiguity. The force and truth of our Lord’s assertion seems to lie in this, that the most impatient and restless desires of the soul being satisfied, when it is fixed on God as its supreme happiness, other thirst was not worth being mentioned; see John viii. 51. sect. 105. John xi. 26. sect. 140. with the notes on those places; and John xiii. 10. sect. clxix.
He conceives her of his being a prophet.

**John IV. 14.**

15 **The woman**, still ignorant of his spiritual meaning, and understanding him only of natural water, says unto him, Sir, I claim thy promise, and desire thou wouldest give me this extraordinary water, that I may not thirst any more, nor have the trouble to come hither daily to draw it, as I now do.

16 Jesus perceiving her ignorance, and willing to discover himself to her in a manner that might more immediately touch her conscience, says unto her, Go home, and call thy husband to me, and then come hither again. The woman, sensible of the way in which she lived, and thinking to conceal her shame, answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus says to her, Thou hast answered well, in that thou hast said, I have no husband: For I know that thou hast had five husbands, and that he whom thou hast now with thee, as thou hast never been lawfully married to him, is not thy husband: in this respect thou hast spoken truly and properly.

19 **The woman**, surprised at such an extraordinary instance of his knowledge, (yet desirous at the same time to turn off the discourse from a subject so much to her confusion,) says to him, Sir, I perceive, by thy discovering the circumstances of my life so truly, though I am a perfect stranger to thee, that thou art a prophet; and therefore I would gladly take this opportunity of being informed concerning that great question which divides the Jewish and Samaritan nations.

---

*m Is not thy husband.* This can imply no less than that she was not married to the man she lived with now at all; for Christ seems to allow the other five to have been husbands, though her separation from some of the former, and her marriage with the rest, had been unlawful; which quite overthrows that argument which Jerom would draw from hence against the lawfulness of marrying more than once. See Heinsius in loc.

*n That great question which divides the Jewish and Samaritan nations.* It is well known, and necessary to be recollected here, that Sanballat, by the permission of Alexander the Great, had built a temple upon mount Gerizim for Manassch his son-in-law, who, for marrying Sanballat’s daughter, was expelled from the priesthood, and from Jerusalem; (see Neh. xin. 23. and Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 8.) This was the place where the Samaritans used to worship in opposition to Jerusalem; and it was so near Sichem, the scene of this story.
It is well known from the Mosaic writings that our fathers worshipped on this mountain, which we think a circumstance of considerable weight in our favour; whereas you Jews say that the temple at Jerusalem is the great place where we should all present our sacrifices unto God, and ought to attend upon the duties of his worship, and whither all the tribes are to resort three times a year. I would beg therefore to be informed by thee in this important case, which of the two I should believe, and which is really the place most acceptable unto God.

In answer to this case of conscience, Jesus says 21 to her, Woman, believe me, and attend to what I say, The hour is now coming, when this controversy shall be entirely over, and neither on this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father in the same manner as you now do; for God is going now to introduce such a pure and spiritual dispensation as will remove all manner of distinctions as to the place in which he would be worshipped, and supersede the ceremonies practised here or there. But as to this dispute 22 which has so long been carried on between the Jews and you, it is apparent, on the principles of the Mosaic religion, that you Samaritans are in a gross mistake; and with respect not only to the place, but in a great measure to the object also, and the manner of your services, you worship you know not what: whereas we Jews are much better instructed in these things, and know whom, and on what authority, we worship; for truly the salvation God has promised to his people is to arise from the Jews, and the way of obtaining it is with the greatest advantage to be learnt among them. Nevertheless, as I said before, I assure 23 you again, the hour approaches, and now is just arrived, when the true and acceptable worshippers shall worship the great Father of all, not with these external rites on which you lay so much stress,

story, that a man's voice might be heard from the one to the other; Judg. ix. 7.

The Samaritans pretended to deduce their genealogy from Jacob, so it is evident that this refers to Abraham and to Jacob, who erected altars in this place, (Gen. xii. 6, 7, and xxxiii. 18, 19.) and possibly to the whole congregation, who were directed, when they came into the land of Canaan, to put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, Deut. xiv. 29. And though Hyrcanus, the son of Simon, who succeeded his father as high priest and prince of the Jews, had long ago destroyed the temple which Sanballat built here, (Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. cap. 9, [al. 17-§ 4.] yet it is plain that the Samaritans still resorted thither, having, no doubt, rebuilt it, though probably in a manner different from the Mosaic.

Vol. vi. 165
Jesus expressly tells her, he is the Messiah.

**Improve**

John IV. 23. *I acknowledge thee, in truth, to be the Son of God*. And in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that the Messiah, who is called Christ, is coming, and will soon appear; [and] when he is actually come, he will undoubtedly teach us all these sublime truths at which you have been hinting, and whatever other things it is necessary for us to know.

26 Upon her mentioning this, as Jesus was not apprehensive of those inconveniencies here which might have attended such an open acknowledgment among the Jews, he plainly and directly tells her in so many words, I that am now speaking to thee, am he: a declaration which, no doubt, she heard with great amazement; but before she could answer him, the disciples appeared, which for the present put an end to the conference.

---

Worship the Father in spirit and in truth. This is elsewhere opposed to types and ceremonies, John i. 14, 17. Heb. viii. 2. ix. 24. This important sentiment, as likewise what is said in ver. 24, is well illustrated by many fine quotations from ancient writers by Grains in loc. And all that know any thing of that learned commentator, know that he has a thousand rich collections of this kind which do a great honour to scripture by illustrating its superior beauties; but it would be quite foreign to the design of this work either to transcribe such collections, or to attempt any supplement to them.

Teach us all things it is necessary for us to know. This (as well as ver. 29, 42) plainly proves both that the Samaritans expected the Messiah, and that they concluded he would be a prophet.

Not apprehensive of those inconveniencies here which might have attended such an open acknowledgment among the Jews. That Christ was very cautious of acknowledging himself to be the promised Messiah, in his conversing with the Jews, is very apparent (compare Matt. xvi. 20. Mark viii. 29, 30. Luke xxii. 67. and John x. 46.) and the reason was, that the Jews had such notions of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, that they would have construed an open declaration of himself under that character as a claim to the throne of David; in consequence of which many would have taken up arms in the cause (John vi. 15.) and others would have accused him to the Roman governor as a rebel against Caesar (Luke xx. 49.) as they afterwards did, Luke xxiii. 2. This Mr. Locke has stated at large in his Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 59—77. Yet I think there was a nicety in Christ's conduct beyond what is there represented: for our Lord in effect declared the thing while he declined that particular title; and in a multitude of places represents himself as the Son of man, and the Son of God, which were both equivalent phrases, and generally understood.
His disciples return, and the woman goes to the city.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

**Condescending and compassionate Redeemer!** who would thus graciously converse with a Samaritan, with a woman of an infamous reputation too, from whom, on various accounts, a Ver. haughty Pharisee would have turned away in proud disdain! and 6, 9 could forget his thirst, pressing as that appetite is, that he might instruct and lead her to the waters of life!

Gracious gift of God to the children of men! how noble and 10 how lasting a delight does it administer! Let it be our language, Lord, evermore give us this living water! Oh, pour out this en-15 livening spirit on us, which alone can allay the thirst of our souls, and give us that lasting satisfaction which we in vain would seek 13 from these broken cisterns, from these precarious streams; till at length the fountain springs up in Paradise, and flows on to life 14 everlasting!

May this good spirit anticipate those immortal delights to our souls by leading us into that spirituality of worship which the 23 nature of God demands, and which the gospel dispensation is so eminently calculated to promote! Let it be inscribed on our hearts that God is a Spirit; and let it teach us to worship him in 24 spirit and in truth. Such worshippers the Father seeks; such may he ever find in us!

May all intemperate zeal for matters of doubtful disputation, all sentiments of bigotry and severity against our brethren, be hap-20, 21 pily swallowed up in this infinitely greater concern! and while others contend about places and forms of worship, may we pour out our hearts before him, and feel the love of God and man shed abroad in them by his Spirit given unto us! (Rom. v. 5.)

**SECT. XXX.**

Christ’s discourse with his disciples at Jacob’s well: his visit to the Samaritans, and their regards to him. John IV. 27—42.

**John IV. 27.**

And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman; yet **THUS** expressly did Jesus declare to the woman of Samaria that he was the Messiah; and immediately upon this, his disciples (who, as was said before, were gone into the city to buy food) came to this well, where Jesus had appointed

understood by the Jews, though a Roman would not so easily have entered into the force of them. Accordingly we find this interpretation was in fact given to them. John vii. 31—41, and ix. 22.
pointed them to meet him; and they wondered
that he was thus talking in so friendly a man-
er with the woman, whom they knew to be
one of that nation so peculiarly obnoxious to the
Jews. But though it gave them some uneasiness, yet they had such a reverence for him, that
none of them said, What dost thou seek from this
Samaritan? or why dost thou talk with her?
28 Then the woman, seeing other company com-
ing up to interrupt the discourse, immediately
left her water-pot, or pail, behind her, as her
thoughts were taken up with matters of far
greater importance; and went away in haste to
the neighbouring city, and says to the men of her
acquaintance there, Come directly to Jacob's
well, and you may there see a wonderful man,
who has told me in a manner all that ever I did,
even some of the most secret circumstances of
my past life: is not this the expected Messiah?
I assure you it seems exceeding probable to me
that he is; and he himself has told me so in so
many words.
30 They therefore, struck with so great a name,
in concurrence with so strange an event, went
in great numbers out of the city, and came to him,
who still continued where the woman left him.
31 In the mean time the disciples intreated him
to refresh himself, saying, Rabbi, eat of the
provisions we have brought thee. But he,
referring to the conversation he had lately had
with the woman, and to the preparation making
for the conversion of the Samaritans, said unto
them with an air of great satisfaction, I have
meat to eat that ye know not of, which gives me a
much better entertainment than you can bring
me. The disciples therefore, not understanding
his
yet no man said, What
sekest thou? or, Why
talkest thou with her?
28 The woman then
left her water-pot, and
went her way into the
city, and said to the
men,
29 Come, see a man
which told me all
things that ever I did:
is not this the Christ?
30 Then they went
out of the city, and
came unto him.
31 In the mean
while his disciples
prayed him, saying,
Master, eat.
32 But he said un-
to them, I have meat
to eat that ye know
not of.
33 Therefore said
the

a With the woman, מזא ווואא. ] As
the article is wanting, the Prussian
Treatise, and many others, render it with a
woman; and Dr. Lightfoot, in his note on
this place, has produced a great many un-
accountable, and, some of them, very stupid
passages from the Talmud and other Rab-
binical writers, to prove that it was reck-
oned scandalous for a man of distinction
to talk publicly with a woman; (see Light-
foot’s Hor. Heb. in loc.) But the disciples
surely knew that Jacob and Moses and
others of their greatest and holiest prophets
had done it; and some of them in cir-
cumstances remarkably resembling this, in
which the woman came to draw water;
compare Gen. xxix. 9—12. Exod. ii. 15
—17. (See also 1 Sam. ix. 11—14.) It
is plain the wonder here was that he talked
with a Samaritan.—As for the omission of
the article, see note b on John i. 1. p. 24,
and the end of note d in this section, on John
iv. 36.
b Eat of the provisions we have brought
thee.] Their bringing back the provisions
to him here makes it probable that he did
not intend, had it not been on this occa-
sion, to have gone into the town; and so
(as was said in the paraphrase, ver. 27.)
ordered his disciples to meet him at this
place, which was undoubtedly well known
to travellers.

c There
The joy and advantage of the spiritual harvest.

the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that his words in that spiritual sense in which he intended them, said one to another with some surprise, considering where he was, Has any one been with him in our absence, and brought him IV. 33, any [food] to eat here? Jesus, who knew the loss they were at to understand his meaning, says, to explain it to them, My most refreshing and delightful food is to do the will of him that sent me into the world, and to finish his work as fast as possible, in the conversion of souls and in the propagation of his kingdom; and I with pleasure can assure you, that it is now going on successfully. Do not you say, that there are yet four months, and harvest cometh? Nay but behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes even now, and survey the fields round about you; for they are already laden with a plentiful crop, and appear white unto the harvest: alluding to the disposition of the people in general, and more particularly to the multitude of Samaritans, who, struck with the report of the woman, were coming to inquire after him as the Messiah; and unto whom he pointed and directed them to look, as being then within their view.

And he yet farther added, It is your happiness to be employed in such a work as this; for he that faithfully reaps the harvest of which I now speak, receiveth far more valuable wages than men can give, and has the great additional satisfaction of thinking that he gathers in the fruit unto eternal life: so that, on this account, both he

There are yet four months, and harvest cometh.) Dr. Whitby and Grotius, and many others, understand this as if our Lord had said, “It is a proverbial expression, for the encouragement of husbandmen, that there are but four months between seed-time and harvest.” And the author of the late English translation therefore renders it, (in his paraphrastic manner) You commonly say, “Other four months, and the harvest will come.” But I cannot acquiesce in this interpretation: (1.) Because none of the learned writers mentioned above, nor Dr. Lightfoot, who is large on this text, could produce any such proverb. (2.) Because indeed there could be no foundation for it, since the distance between seed-time and harvest must differ according to the different kinds of grain in question. And (3.) Because if there had been such a proverb, it would have been improper to apply it here; since our Lord was not speaking of the period of time between the prophets’ sowing and the apostles’ reaping (to which four months has no analogy); but only means to tell them, that though they reckoned yet four months to the earthly harvest, the spiritual harvest was now ripe. So that I chuse, as Sir Isaac Newton does, to take the words in their plainest sense, as an intimation that it was then four months to the beginning of harvest; see note e on ver. 3. p. 161. And I take this passage to be of very great importance for settling the chronology of Christ's ministry.

gathers in the fruit unto eternal life.] I apprehend our Lord’s thought here to have been more comprehensive than commentaries have been aware of. He seems to compare the ease of a Christian minister to that of a considerate reaper, who is supported in his fatigue, not only by a regard to his own wages, but to the advantage which the public receives by the harvest he gathers in. This the expression...
Many of the Samaritans believe in Christ.

That soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together; and those souls to whose salvation they have in different ways contributed, will be to both a crown of honour and objects of everlasting complacency and delight.

37 For in this sense it may be justly said, that herein is that proverbial saying remarkably true, One soweth and another reapeth; for after he has sown his field, it often happens that a man dies before he gathers in the harvest, and so leaves it to another who enjoys the advantage of his pains.

38 And thus it is that I have sent you forth to reap the fruit of that on which you have not laboured either to till or sow the ground; the prophets, and other holy men of former ages, having toiled as it were to cultivate the field, and thereby made your work a great deal easier than it would otherwise have been. So that the success of my preaching this day in your absence is an emblem of what God has wisely ordered in the course of his Providence: others have labour'd, and you are entered into the field on which their labour has been carefully employed. Let this engage you therefore to apply yourselves in earnest to your work with a becoming spirit and a ready cheerfulness.

39 Now when the woman had informed the people of the discourse which she had had with Jesus, many of the Samaritans from that city believed on him, as some extraordinary person, by reason of that saying of the woman, who testified concerning him, He told me all that ever I did.

40 When therefore the Samaritans had heard the wonderful account the woman gave of Jesus, and were come with her to the well to see him, they were so taken with the manner of his deportment and the strain of his discourses, that they entreated him to tarry with them for some time, as being desirous of a farther acquaintance with him and of receiving farther benefit from his instructions: and, ready to lay hold of every opportunity of doing good, he went with them to their city, and continued there two days. And there were many more that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men labour'd, and ye are entered into their labours.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abide there two days.

41 And many more believed.

κατανύω is; κατανύναι seems plainly to import, and so is nearly parallel to Jam. v. 20, and suggests a most forcible consideration to diligence and zeal.—Κατανύω here seems to be put for την κατανύων, the fruit, that is, the souls he gathers in.

* The field on which their labour has been employed.] This seems the signification of κατανύω here, as Grotius well proves. Compare 2 Cor. x. 15.

1 Continued there two days.] This was a proper medium between entirely neglecting them and giving them so much of his time and company as would have broken in upon the design of his journey into Galilee, or might have given umbrage to the Jews.
more who in this time believed on him, on account of his own discourse, which they might also see confirmed by some extraordinary works. And they said to the woman, Now we believe, and that is not merely nor yet chiefly on account of what thou hast spoken of him; for we ourselves have heard him teach, and have examined his credentials; and, by the most convincing evidence, we know that this is really the Christ, the Saviour of the world, even the expected Messiah, and are determined to regard him as such.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us behold with pleasure the glorious example of our blessed Redeemer, and learn to imitate his zeal. It was his meat and drink to pursue his Father's work, to glorify God, and to do good to souls: and ought it not to be ours? Let us bless God for every opportunity of applying to it and every field of service, which Providence opens to us.

Let gospel ministers especially be thankful for all that hath been done to introduce their services, not only by the ministrations of the prophets under the Old Testament, but the apostles also under the New, and by succeeding servants of Christ in every age of the church. In this sense, with regard to us, is that proverb true, One soweth and another reapeth. We have entered into the labours of others: may others in time enter into ours! May the work be delivered over from one faithful hand to another and be carried on by each with growing zeal and success! Blessed time, when all the workmen shall meet and join their songs; and each of the souls gathered into eternal life shall be, to all concerned in their conversion or edification, an ornament of glory and a source of pleasure!

Surely, if we know Christ ourselves, we shall, like this woman of Samaria, be solicitous to communicate the knowledge to others, and shall sometimes forget our little worldly interests to attend to this

---

[Many more believed on him.] This was more extraordinary, as they not only had a national prejudice against him as a Jew, but, living near Mount Gerizim, had a particular interest in maintaining the usual worship there, which must be very advantageous to the neighbourhood. Perhaps on this they would no longer worship there, which might irritate the rest of the Samaritans, and might in part provoke the ill usage that Christ afterwards met with in this country. Luke ix. 52, 53.

[h The Saviour of the world.] They might probably collect from what was prophesied by Jacob of the Messiah, Gen xlix. 10. To him shall the gathering of the people be, that the Gentile nations were to receive some benefit by the Messiah's coming, and one way or another to be subjected to him; and Christ's discourse might confirm that apprehension: but there is no reason at all to believe they perfectly understood the doctrine of the calling of the idolatrous Gentiles, which was so long a mystery even to the apostles themselves.

[2 After]
Jesus goes to Galilee, after John's imprisonment.

sect. xxx.

This vast superior care. May we believe in him, not merely on the report and testimony of others, but on our own experience; that having tasted that the Lord is gracious, we may bear a more lively and effectual testimony to him!

Let us watchfully observe the leadings of Providence, and whatever our own schemes may have been, let us still adjust our conduct by the intimations of present duty; and, especially where we have reason to believe that God is by his Spirit beginning to work on men's hearts, let us be ambitious of being workers together with him. A word spoken in such a season is remarkably good, and it is a great part of Christian and ministerial prudence to observe and improve those tender times.

sect. XXXI.

Christ comes from Samaria into Galilee; and while at Cana, cures a nobleman's son, who lay at the point of death in Capernaum.


Mark I. 14.

NOW after John was cast into prison, and Jesus had heard [of it] in Judea, where he then was, he withdrew from thence [and] came into Galilee a (as was said before, John iv. 3. sect. 29,) being willing to take the advantage of those impressions which the ministry of John might have made on the minds of the people there, who had so signal an esteem for him; an esteem which would be heightened rather than abated by the injurious things which they saw him suffer. Jesus came therefore into that country b, preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, which was speedily to be erected by the Messiah, whom God had appointed to raise and govern it: And saying, Behold the time fixed by the ancient prophets is now fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near; see to it therefore, that you cordially repent of all your sins and believe the

a After John was cast into prison, Jesus withdrew and came into Galilee.] It is strange that Mr. Whiston and some others should represent it as an argument against the order we have followed here, that it would have been imprudent and inconvenient for Christ to have gone immediately into Herod's territories, just after he had seized John; when two of the evangelists assured us this was the very reason of his journey. The cause of John's imprisonment was particular; and the reasons assigned in the paraphrase seem considerable, besides that already mentioned, John iv. 1–3 See note a, p. 160.

b Jesus came therefore into that country.] Mr. Le Clerc supposes (in his Harmony, p. 75,) that Jesus went from Sichar directly to Nazareth, and that this visit which he made to Cana (at ver. 46) was some time after he was expelled from Nazareth, and had dwelt at Capernaum. But that he took a circuit elsewhere before he went to Nazareth, is certain from John iv. 43, 44, compared with Luke iv. 14–16. And though we cannot positively say whether
Christ comes from Samaria into Galilee.

**John IV. 43.**

Now after two days he departed thence, [that is, from Sichar,] and went into Galilee.

And having been prevailed upon (as we have seen before) to stop at Sichar in his way, after he had continued there two days with the Samaritans, he departed from thence, and went (as has been just now said) into Galilee. And he chose to make a journey through a considerable part of it before he returned to Nazareth, that the reputation he gained elsewhere might be some balance to those prejudices which the inhabitants of that place would naturally entertain against him: for Jesus himself testified, that a prophet has no honour in his own country; where those that knew him in his childhood and youth can hardly be persuaded to look upon him with the reverence due to a messenger from God.

When therefore he came into Galilee, the Galileans received and entertained him with a great deal of pleasure (compare Luke iv. 14, 15,) for many of them had been witnesses to his surprising miracles having seen all the wonderful things that he did at Jerusalem during the feast of the passover (for they also came to the feast,) and they had now an expectation of seeing some of them renewed. Jesus, therefore, encouraged by this readiness of theirs to attend his ministry, pursued his journey till he came again to Cana of Galilee, which was the place where he before had made the water wine.

And while he stayed at Cana, there was a certain nobleman belonging to king Herod's court, whose son was dangerously ill at Capernaum;

When

whether the visit to Cana was made in this first journey, or in the other, which is mentioned afterwards, (Luke iv. 44, Mat. iv. 23, and Mark i. 38, 39, sect. 36,) yet I have introduced it here, because John mentions it immediately after his coming from Sichar; and it has been a maxim with me in this work to take all the stories and discourses in the order they lie, if there be not (from other evangelists) a plain reason for transposing them.

For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country. There is no manner of occasion here to render γας, although; for it is plain that this is spoken as the reason why he rather chose to travel into those parts of Galilee, and not to go directly to Nazareth; which is particularly called his own country, in distinction from Galilee, and even from Capernaum, Luke iv. 23.

A certain nobleman belonging to king Herod's court.] Though Herod was only tyrarch of Galilee, yet was he commonly distinguished by the title of king (see Mat. xiv. 9, and Mark vi. 14, sect. 77,) and as Capernaum lay in his dominions, it is probable that this was one belonging to his court, who was a nobleman of some distinction. For this is properly the specification of βηθσακατοικον, which the Syrian and Arabic versions render a minister, or servant of the king; and many have conjectured that the person who is here spoken of was Chazuza, Herod's steward, whose wife is thought to have been converted on this occasion, and became afterwards an attendant on Christ. Luke viii. 3.
Jesus cures a nobleman's son.

[Who] when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, went in person at least a day's journey across the country to him, and earnestly entreated him that he would come down to Capernaum and cure his son, for he was given over by the physicians, and seemed just ready to die. Jesus said therefore unto him and then that were about him, I perceive that, though the Samaritans shewed so great a regard to my word and the report of my miracles, unless you see with your own eyes some remarkable and repeated signs and wonders, you will not believe; thereby justly reproving him and then for that mixture of suspicion and slowness of faith which he discerned in their minds. The nobleman, weak as his faith was, determined nevertheless to urge the matter to the utmost; and therefore, without any explication or apology on that head, says to him, Sir, I beseech thee to come down before my child die; for the case is so extreme that a delay may be attended with the most fatal consequences. Upon which, Jesus, to shew that it was not necessary for him to go in person to accomplish the cure, says to him, Go thy way home, for I assure thee that thy son is living, and at this instant, while I am speaking to thee, is recovered from his illness. And the man, though he had never seen or heard of a parallel case, believed the word that Jesus spoke unto him, and went away without any farther impatience.

Now the day after he had taken his leave of Jesus, as he was going down to Capernaum, some of his servants met him on the road, eager to bring him such acceptable news, and told [him,] saying, Thy son who was so dangerously ill is now recovered. And therefore, to compare it with the account that Jesus gave, he presently inquired:

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him and besought him, that he would come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe,

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend:

47 At least a day's journey.] This may be very fairly inferred from ver. 52, as well as from the accounts the best geographers give of the situation of Cana and Capernaum.

48 Reproofing him and them for that mixture of suspicion, &c.] It is necessary to suppose some such reference to illustrate the justice of this reproof; for in the general it was very reasonable to expect that Christ should work miracles in proof of his Divine mission, as he himself does plainly intimate elsewhere; see John xv. 24. Who can tell but the very person now applying to him might have made some such declaration, that he would never believe such things till he saw them with his own eyes? Christ might mean by this reflection to humble him, and to shew him a specimen of his extraordinary knowledge as well as power.

50 Though he had never seen or heard of a parallel case.] It is plain he had heard of Christ's miracles, but this is the first recorded, in which he cured the patient at a distance, and probably was hitherto, in this respect, unequalled.
mend: and they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This is again the second miracle that Jesus did when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

Improvement.

How unreasonable are the passions and prejudices of mankind, and this in particular, that a prophet should have no honour in his own country! One would have imagined that Jesus at least, free as he was from all the follies of childhood and youth, should have been an exception; nay, indeed, that he should have been peculiarly honoured there, where his early wisdom and piety could not but be observed.

Our Lord however intended them a visit, even at Nazareth; and it is the duty of his ministers to bear their testimony, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. Yet should they learn of their Great Master to study as much as they can to obviate those prejudices, which might prevent their usefulness, and should use the most prudent and gentle methods to vanquish them.

Such was this beneficial miracle of our Lord; which may afford us many particulars worthy of our notice. With what affection and zeal does this tender parent apply to Christ on the sickness of his child! Let us not be less importunate when soliciting spiritual blessings in behalf of our dear offspring: and so much the rather as their lives are so precarious, and we know not how soon these lovely flowers may be cut down, and all farther petitions for them be for ever superseded.

Our Lord, while at a distance from the patient, wrought and John had before said of the many miracles which Christ had already wrought elsewhere; see John ii. 24, and iii. 2.

b A circumstance in which it agreed with the former. Compare John i. 43 and ii. 1. That the words must be taken with such a limitation, evidently appears from what.
perfected the cure. And has he not still the same Divine power, though he does not exert it in the same miraculous way? Let not his bodily absence abate our faith, while praying for others or for ourselves.

53 *Salvation now came to this house, and blessings infinitely more valuable, than noble blood, or ample possessions, or royal favour, or recovered health could give; for the cure wrought on the body of one was a means of producing faith in the hearts of all.* Blessed Jesus! thy power was no less employed in the latter than in the former. Oh may that power work in such a manner on our souls as that we all may be disposed cordially to receive thee and cheerfully to venture our eternal all upon thee! May we and our houses concur in so wise and happy a resolution: and not insisting upon evidence beyond what thy gracious wisdom has thought fit to give us, may we candidly receive the light we have, and faithfully improve it so as to be at length entitled to the blessedness of those who have not seen and yet have believed! (John xx. 29.)

SECTION XXXII.

Christ preaching at Nazareth is at first admired, but immediately after rejected: the people there making an attempt upon his life, he leaves them and comes to Capernaum. Luke IV. 14—30.

Luke IV. 14. 15 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

16 And having thus prepared his way, he came at Nazareth,

3 In the power of the Spirit.] It seems very wild thought of Mr. Fleming's that this intimates, Christ was transported through the air hither, after his temptation in the wilderness; see Flem. Christol. Vol. II. p. 315.

b With universal applause, εξαγοραζότας. [Our translation, which has rendered it being glorified in all, is indeed more literal: but to glorify a preacher is an uncommon phrase in English; and that I have used, is so plainly equivalent to the other in signification, that I hope it may be allowed as very just. c Being
Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias: And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

at length to Nazareth, where it has been observed before, Mat. ii. 23, and Luke ii. 51, that he was educated; and according to his custom, which he constantly observed there and elsewhere, he entered into the synagogue on the sabbath-day: and out of regard to the high reputation he had lately gained, being desired by the ruler of it to officiate, he stood up to read the scriptures, which made a constant part of their public worship; see (Acts xv. 21.)

And the book of Isaiah the prophet was delivered to him, a paragraph of the law having been read before; and unrolling the volume of the book, he found that place of it (Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3.) where it was written to this effect; "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me in an abundant degree, for the important purpose to which he hath anointed me, and solemnly set me apart; and important indeed it is, [for] he hath sent me to preach good news to the poor and afflicted, to heal those whose hearts are broken with sorrow, to proclaim free discharge to wretched captives, even the recovery of sight to them that are blind in prison; [and] to set those at liberty who are bruised with the heavy load of their fetters."

In a word, to proclaim, as by many learned critics, with Grotius, to suppose it added from the Hebrew; but one would rather conclude that Christ read the passage as it was, and that these words might accidentally be dropped by some early transcriber.

For the purpose to which he hath anointed me: n wpywv wpyv eisv. It is very difficult to explain the connection of the two clauses in this passage, if we render εἰς ἑαυτόν either because, or therefore; and I cannot collect that it ever signifies because. But the translation I propose seems to remove the difficulty; see Acts xix. 32.

Poor and afflicted.] Grotius well observes that it is probable some copies might read ἦλαθηνίμ, the poor, instead of ἤλαθηνίμ, the meek, which is the word made use of in Isaiah. And as to that clause of restoring sight to the blind, which is omitted in Isaiah, I am not able to determine whether our Lord in his discourse borrowed this clause from Isa. xiii. 7, by way of illustration; or whether (as Dr. Prideaux supposes in his Connection, Vol II. p. 347.) it was taken from some Chaldee Targum which is now lost.

Sight to them that are blind, and to set those at liberty who are bruised.] It is beautifully
He shows that passage to be now fulfilled in him.

by the sound of a trumpet, that welcome year of the Lord, which the year of jubilee, pleasing and grateful as it is, can but imperfectly represent, though debts are then forgiven and slaves released and inheritances restored to their original owners."

20 And having rolled up the book, which was a long scroll of parchment, he delivered it to the servant of the synagogue whose proper office it was to take care of it; and then, according to the custom of the Jewish rabbis, sat down to preach (see Mat. v. 1. xxiii. 2, 3. xxvi. 55. and John viii 2,) and the eyes of all in the synagogue were attentively fixed upon him, as they were very curious to know what he would say on a scripture which seemed so plainly to refer to the Messiah. k

21 And he began to speak at large from this excellent and suitable passage; and the main tendency and purport of his discourse was to say to them, To-day this scripture I have now been reading is remarkably fulfilled in your hearing; for I am the person foretold under this character, and sent with such ample powers to fulfil these purposes of the Divine mercy.

22 And, strong as their prejudices were against him, they all (by their very countenances (see Job xxix. 11) bore their testimony to him as a most excellent preacher, and were astonished at those graceful as well as comfortable words which

pro-

tifully observed by the judicious Mr. Cradock in his excellent book on the Evangelists, that the former clause seems an allusion to the wretched state of those prisoners who, according to the inhuman custom still retained in the eastern countries, had their eyes put out; and with regard to such as these, this Great Deliverer is represented as restoring them, a work far beyond all human power. See Cradock's Harm. p. 69. I take them to be the same with those who are spoken of in the next clause as bruised with the weight of their fetters; for it is plain that even blind captives were sometimes loaded with them; as was the case with Samson, Judges xvi. 21. and with Zedekiah, 2 Kings xxv. 7.

1 That welcome year of the Lord.] It is strange that any ancient or modern writers should argue from hence that Christ's ministry, lasted but one year, or a little more. One might as well plead, from 2 Cor. vi. 2. that the day of salvation included but one natural day.—Here is a plain allusion to the Jubilee; compare Lev. xxv. 9, 10. and Psal. lxxix. 15.

k A scripture which seemed so plainly to refer to the Messiah.] Though many commentators of note apply Isa. lxi. 1. to the good news of the dispensation of the Jews from Babylon, I refer it to the impartial reader to judge, whether it be not much more probable that ver. 4, 5, 6. (where the prophet speaks of repairing the waste cities, planting vineyards, &c.) may be either meant in a spiritual sense, or literally predict the temporal prosperity of the church after the conversion of the Jews, than that Christ should mistake the true sense of the text, or build his argument on a mere allusion; see Dr. Sykes's Vindication of Christinity, p. 259. and Jeffery's True Grounds, p. 120.

2 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? 20. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down; and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.
He is rejected by his own countrymen.

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself; whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily, I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 And I tell you, a truth, Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months

the matter of it: and as they could notbut take notice of the majesty and grace with which he spoke, so it must naturally fill them with astonishment, considering the meanness of his birth and education; see Elsner, in loc.

m At Capernaum, and elsewhere.] It is strange that Dr. Clarke and many others should lay so much stress as they do on this, as an argument to prove that this visit to Nazareth was made after that to Capernaum, in which those miracles were wrought which are recorded, Mark i. 21—34, and Luke iv. 33—41. (sect. xxxv. xxxvi.) when Luke himself so plainly says that he came down from Nazareth to Capernaum, and then gives an account of those miracles (Luke iv. 35, & seq.) and Matthew also introduces the history of them with saying (Mat. iv. 13.) that leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt at Capernaum.

—We are expressly told by John that Jesus after the miracle which he wrought at Cana in Galilee, went with his mother and his brethren and disciples to Capernaum, and continued some time, though not very long there (John ii. 12. sect. xxvii.) and it is very possible he might visit it again in his passing through Galilee (John iv. 43, 44. sect. xxxii.) which if he did after the cure wrought on the nobleman's son there, (which undoubtedly preceded this visit to Nazareth,) he would certainly meet with some extraordinary regard, as the cure was performed at a distance, and many other miracles might then be wrought there: so that this passage may refer to these and other miracles not particularly recorded by Luke; as we have seen before that John refers to others (John ii. 23. and iii. 2.) which neither he himself had mentioned, nor indeed any of the rest of the evangelists.

—If it be asked why Christ did not perform such miracles here as elsewhere? we answer—that this whole discourse is intended to prove that God might dispense these extraordinary favours as he pleased;—and they do not appear too have brought the sick to him, and seem to have suspected his power (compare Mat. viii. 58, and Mark vi. 5. sect. lxviii.) a suspicion, the unreasonableness of which was greatly aggravated by the credible report of what he had done in the neighbourhood, and by the knowledge they had of his early piety and exemplary behaviour.
He miraculously escapes from their fury.

For this I tell you as a certain truth, which well deserves your consideration, That there were many poor widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was, as it were, shut up for three years and six months, so that there was no rain, and a great famine prevailed in all the land: And yet Elijah was sent to none of them with a miraculous supply of meal and oil, but to a widow woman at Sarepta, [a city] of the Gentiles, in the country of Sidon. (1 Kings xvii. 9.) And there were also many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; yet none of them was miraculously cleansed, but that singular favour was bestowed on Naaman the Syrian, a Gentile, and one of a hostile nation. (2 Kings v. 14.)

Presume not therefore on your being my countrymen and neighbours, so as on that account to reject my message, lest you provoke God to send those blessings to strangers, and even to Gentiles, of which such infidelity and ingratitude would render you unworthy.

Nothing could be more disagreeable to them than such an intimation and all that were in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with the most outrageous fury: And rising up at once, in a tumultuous manner, without any reverence to the place or day, or any sense of justice or common humanity, they violently cast him out of the synagogue, and out of the city too; and brought him to the very brow of the mountain on which their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong, and dash him to pieces. But Jesus, when he had permitted their madness to go thus far, confounded their sight in such a miraculous manner, that he passed through the midst of them unknown, and went away.

n The heaven was shut up for three years and six months.] This is again asserted by the apostle James (chap. v. 17.) either as grounded on our Lord's authority here, or as a circumstance established by tradition; for in both places it is spoken of as a thing well known; nor can we doubt but the account is very exact, though the particular time is not determined in the Old Testament, nor is it certainly deducible from it. — Lightfoot and others have observed that there is somewhat here remarkable in this circumstance of time, as it agrees with the continuance of Christ's public ministry; that as Elijah shut up heaven by his prayers, so that it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months, so from the baptism to the death of Christ the heavens were opened for the like space of time, and his doctrine dropped as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew. (Deut. xxxii. 2.) See Lightfoot's Harmony, and Gravisius, in loc.

o None of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian.] Of the force of the particle ut non here, and in some other remarkable places, see the note on John xvii. 12. sec. clxxix.

P Passed through the midst of them, unknown.] Whether the miracle lay in rendering himself entirely invisible, or in putting on some other form, or in affecting their eyes or minds in such a manner that they should not know him, we cannot certainly determine; but it seems evident that there was something miraculous in the case. Compare John viii. 59. Luke xxiv. 16. and 2 Kings vi. 18—20.
Reflections on his treatment at Nazareth.

away to the neighbouring city of Capernaum, where he abode for some time.

IMPROVEMENT.

We see that it was the custom of our blessed Saviour to frequent the synagogues every sabbath-day: how well therefore does it become his servants to be constant in their attendance on public ordinances, especially since those of the gospel are in many respects so much nobler than any which the Mosaic institution would admit!

In the synagogues the scriptures were constantly read; and it is matter of pleasing reflection that, in all ages of the Christian church, the reading them hath usually been made a part of the service in most of its solemn assemblies. Let it still be so with us for this reason, among others, that so glorious a testimony to the genuineness of scripture may not be impaired in our hands, but transmitted to those that shall arise after us.

And surely the Old Testament, as well as the New, deserves our attentive perusal; in which, if we are not strangely negligent, or strangely prejudiced, we must often meet with remarkable prophecies of Christ shining with a pleasing lustre, like lights in a Ver. dark place, (2 Pct. i. 19.) How amiable a view of him is given in that which he now opened! Let us seriously attend to it. It is a moving representation that is here made of the deplorable state in which the gospel finds us! The helpless prisoners of Divine justice, the wretched captives of Satan, stripped and wounded, the eyes of our understanding blinded, and the powers of our souls enfeebled; and, as it were, bruised with those chains which prejudice and vice have fastened upon them! But in these miserable circumstances Jesus appears to open the doors of our prison, to strike off our fetters, and even to restore our sight. He comes to enrich our impoverished souls, and to preach a far better jubilee than Moses could proclaim; the free forgiveness of all our sins and the recovery of an inheritance of eternal glory. Surely it should be to us a most acceptable time. Blessed are the people that know this joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance! (Psal. lxxxix. 15.)

In some sense this instructive and comfortable scripture is this day fulfilled in our ears likewise. Let us also bear our testimony to the gracious words of this welcome messenger whom God hath anointed for such happy purposes!

One would have imagined that while the eyes of his auditors were fixed upon him, their souls should have drank in his doctrine as the thirsty earth sucks up the rain, and that every heart should have
On leaving Nazareth, Christ goes to Capernaum,

have been open to embrace him. But, O blessed Jesus, while thou art preaching these glad tidings of great joy, what a return dost thou find! Thou art ungratefully rejected, thou art im-
piously assaulted; and had their rage and malice been able to pre-
val, the joyful sound would have died into empty air as soon as it
began, and this thy first sermon at Nazareth had been thy last.

Thus disdainfully art thou still rejected by multitudes who still
hear the same message echoing from thy word. And is there
not a malignity in the hearts of sinners which might lead those
of our own days to the outrageous wickedness of these Nazarenes,
were their opportunities the same, rather than they would bow
their stubborn hearts to the obedience of faith? But while they are
crucifying thee afresh by their sins, and putting thee to open shame,
may we honour thee as the Son of God, the Saviour of men; and
labour by the ardour of our love and the steadiness of our obedi-
ence, in some measure to balance the ingratitude of those who,
while they are opposing thee, are destroying themselves!

SECT. XXXIII.

Christ goes to Capernaum, and teaches in the synagogue there with
great acceptance; and calls Peter and Andrew, and James and
John, to a more stated attendance upon him. Mat. IV. 13—22.

MAT. IV. 13.

AND Jesus leaving Nazareth, from whence
he was expelled and driven out in the un-
grateful manner that was before described, came
and dwelt for a while at Capernaum, which was
a considerable city of Galilee, that lay on the sea-
coast, even on the northern shore of the lake of
Gennesareth, in the confines of Zebulon and Nap-
tali; and from thence he made several small ex-
cursions to visit the neighbouring places. And
this was ordered by a special Divine Providence,
that what was said by the prophet Isaiah (chap.
IX. 1, 2.) might be fulfilled 1. When speaking
of the land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali,
by the way of the sea, and the country about
those parts of Jordan 2, which is called by the
general

1 That what was said by the prophet Isaiah
might be fulfilled.] The common transla-
tion is word for word correspondent to the
original: but the sense, as it stands here, is
so entirely the same, that I was unwilling
to spoil the structure of the paraphrase by
crowding in the word saying; nor do I
think such an exactness necessary in order to
render a version perfectly faithful.

2 About those parts of Jordan.] That
sometimes has this signification will
appear by comparing Josh. xii. 1, 7, and

a Galilee
Where they are much enlightened by his preaching.

16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

e Galilee of the Gentiles.] The learned Drusius has given a large account of the reason of this name, and concludes it was the upper Galilee in the land of Naphthali, whereas the lower lay in Zebulon, and Canaan was situated on the confines of both. Grotius traces the name up to Gen. xiv. 1. but most commentators refer it to 1 Kings xi. 11—13, supposing that Solomon's giving a tract of land here to Hiram occasioned it to be filled with foreigners, and to be peopled with a mixture of Phoenicians, Egyptians and Arabsians; according to the account that Strabo gives, Geogroph. lib. xvi. p. 523.

d Though God had made them vile, yet he would hereafter render them glorious.] I follow Mr. Mede's just and beautiful version and interpretation of Isa. ix. 1. See Mede's Works, p. 101, 102. and Jeffery's Review, p. 125, 126, where that interpretation is both vindicated and improved: and I see no reason to doubt that it is originally meant of the illumination and honour those afflicted countries should receive by the presence and preaching of Christ.

f Light has sprung up.] The Heathen writers represented the arrival of some great public benefactor in a place as a new light sprung up in the midst of darkness; see Eikner, Observ. Vol. I. p. 19.

1 From that time of his departure into Galilee.] It is but just before that Matthew speaks of Christ's departure into Galilee (ver. 12.) and it is much more probable that he refers in general to this, than to the time of his leaving Nazareth (which he has mentioned in ver. 13.), as it is evident from Luke iv. 14, 15, and John iv. 43-45, that Christ began to preach in the synagogues of Galilee before he went to Nazareth. And thus I might have introduced this text as parallel to Mark i. 15. but that I would avoid as much as possible breaking the thread of the narration; compare notes a and c in sect. xxxii. p. 172, 173. The attentive reader will easily perceive that I suppose our Lord made only one tour about Galilee in the four or five last months preceding his second passover, of which Matthew gives a general account below, Mat. iv. 23—25. sect. xxxvii. Nor can I see that Sir Isaac Newton had any just reason to conclude it a second circuit quite distinct from the former. It is true indeed that our Lord is said, Mat. iv. 13, after leaving Nazareth, to have come and dwelt at Capernaum; but if this should be allowed to imply his making this the place of his more stated residence so as to call it his home, it is evidently intimated that he did not stay long in it at first; and shortly after it is spoken of as one of the cities in which he was sent to preach, Mark i. 38. Nor can I find that, after he began to preach, he ever continued long in any one place.
The kingdom of heaven is at hand. And this was the doctrine which he was teaching them during the time of his abode at Capernaum, and this he made the subject of his preaching in their synagogue on the sabbath days; not being discouraged by the ill usage that he met with at Nazareth upon his preaching of the same doctrine there. And they were powerfully struck and very much affected with his doctrine; for his word was attended with an air of authority and majesty, which incomparably exceeded that low and servile manner of preaching which the Scribes and Pharisees commonly used in retailing their precarious traditions and insipid comments to the people.

And it was about this time that, as Jesus was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, that have been already mentioned, Simon, who was also called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for by their occupation they were fishers. And after some circumstances, an account of which will presently be given (sect. xxxiv.) Jesus said to them, Come after me, and from henceforth attend me constantly in the course of my ministry, and I will make you to become fishers of men, and give you such abundant success in your ministry, that the number of souls converted by you shall be greater than that of the fish you have been used 18 to catch. And they, being struck with a very wonderful miracle, the particulars of which will dismiss his disciples for a time, till he himself had gone about from place to place to preach the gospel, and had informed the people more particularly of the character of his person and the nature of his doctrine; or possibly they might leave him at the time when the Samaritans prevailed upon him to go with them to their city. (John iv. 40, sect. xxx.) for after this we read no more of his disciples being with him, till he now found them at the sea of Galilee. For they no sooner were gone home but they returned again to their old employment, and continued in it till they were now taken off from any further regard to their worldly business, and were particularly called by Christ to a constant and stated attendance upon him: see Lightfoot’s Harmony on Luke v. 5.

Being struck with a very wonderful miracle.] The account of this miracle (which is recorded by Luke, chap. v. 1—11.) I shall consider in the next section, and
they forsook their nets and followed him.—

**[MAT. iv. 20.]**

19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw [other two brethren] James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship [with Zebedee their father] mending their nets. **[MAT. iv. 21.]**

20 And straightway he called them: and they [immediately] left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him. **[MAT. iv. 21, 22.]**

will presently be related, immediately forsook their nets, though the fishing trade was all they had to depend upon in life, and followed him.

And going a little way from thence he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; and they were in a ship by the sea side, with Zebedee their father, employed in mending their nets, which had been broken by the vast draught of fishes they had taken just before. And he immediately applied to them as he had done before to Peter and Andrew, and called them to follow him: and they no sooner had received his orders, but presently they left their father Zebedee with the hired servants in the ship; and, in consequence of the secret energy which attended that call, they joined with Peter and Andrew, and with the greatest cheerfulness and readiness went after him, being determined to continue with him as his stated attendants: and they were all afterwards honoured with extraordinary favours from their Master; especially John, who was his bosom friend and came to be called, by way of eminence, The disciple whom Jesus loved.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Such was the zeal and courage of our blessed Redeemer, that he no sooner had been persecuted and assaulted at Nazareth, but he went and preached in the synagogue at Capernaum. Thus may all the opposition that we meet with in the course of our duty, animate, rather than overbear, our resolution in performing it!

How

and shall there give my reasons, in note a, for supposing it happened at this time, and was not, as Mr. Whiston would have it, the occasion of another call to these disciples. But I would here observe, that besides him, some who agree with me in this particular, yet, out of regard to the supposed regularity of St. Luke's narration, place this call of the four disciples after the ejection of the devil, and the cure of Peter's mother-in-law at Capernaum, and Christ's travels through Galilee, which are recorded, Mat. viii. 14, 15. iv. 25—25. and Mark i. 21—29. (Sect. xxxv. xxxvi.) See Crudock, Le Clerc, Wells, Clarke and L'Enfant, in their Harmonies. But they seem to have forgot that St. Mark expressly asserts (chap. i. 21.) that after the calling of these four disciples they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the ensuing sabbath he entered into the synagogue, and there cast out the devil, &c. and then (ver. 29.) forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John, and Simon's mother was cured.—Now it seems one of the most important rules for settling the harmony of the evangelists, that where any one of them has expressly asserted that he follows the order of time, we should, in regard to him, transpose others who do not assert equal exactness in that particular; (see Jones's Indication of Matthew, p. 111, 112.) This is the case here; and therefore I have here transposed not only Luke, but also Matthew, who uses notes of time much more frequently, and seems to me in the main more exact in the series of his story than Luke.
Christ comes to the lake of Gennesareth,

How happy was the land of Zebulon and Naphtali in the visits of such a guest! And may we not add too, how happy is our own land in being visited by the everlasting gospel, which is now much more clearly discovered to us than it was to these coasts while Christ began to open his ministry among their inhabitants.

In us is this prophecy of Isaiah eminently fulfilled: We but a few ages ago sat in darkness; and behold we see a great light. Our country, amidst all the advantages of its soil and situation, was, in a spiritual sense, the region and the shadow of death; but the Sun of Righteousness is risen upon us, nor do we only behold his rising beams, but his meridian lustre. May we not be so ungrateful as obstinately to shut our eyes against it, lest the valley of vision and Emanuel's land, should on the whole prove to us the land of destruction and the valley of death itself!

That this may never be our case, let us diligently attend to this Divine Teacher, who speaks with such authority, and whose words are so weighty and powerful. May we feel the energy and authority of them! May they call us off from every undue attachment to the business or the pleasures of life! And if he should ever see fit to try us, as he did these his servants, with a command to forsake our nearest relations and our earthly all, for his service, let us do it with pleasure; remembering on the one hand, that he who loves father or mother, wife or children, houses or lands, more than Christ, is not worthy of him; and on the other hand, that he who abandons these engagements for his sake, shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, and, in the world to come, life everlasting. (Mat. x. 37, and Mark x. 29, 30.)

SECT. XXXIV.

St. Luke gives a more particular account of a miraculous draught of fishes, by which Peter and his three partners were prevailed upon statedly to follow Christ. Luke V. 1.—11.

AND it came to pass, that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesareth,

THE calling of those four celebrated apostles, Peter and Andrew and James and John, was briefly related above; but considering the important part which most of them bear in the following history, we shall here give a more particular account of it. a Now it came to pass, that while

a We shall here give a more particular account of it.] Mr. Whiston (in his Harmony, p. 251 and 254) supposes, with some others, that this is a distinct story from that of the calling of these disciples, which we have in the preceding section, and that they were then called only to an occasional, but now to a stated attendance on Christ. But I could not acquiesce in this for the following reasons: (1) There are many leading circumstances the same in the narrations of both; as, for instance,
And teacheth the people out of a ship.

while Jesus continued to reside at Capernaum, when the multitude pressed upon him with eagerness to hear the word of God; as he stood by the lake of Gennesareth, on the banks of which he had been walking, (Mark i. 16, sect. xxxiii.) He saw two little vessels standing by the side of the lake, but with no person in them; for the fishermen, after the labour of a very unsuccessful night, were gone out of them, and were washing their nets in the sea as they stood on the shore. And entering into one of the vessels, which belonged to Simon Peter, with whom as well as with his brother Andrew; we have already seen that he had formed some acquaintance on the banks of Jordan, while John was baptizing there, (John i. 37—42. sect. xxi.) he desired him that he would put out a little way from land, that he might thus avoid the crowd, and at the same time be more conveniently heard; and at a proper distance he sat down, and taught the multitude out of the vessel.

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land; and he sat down and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left
And when he had made an end of speaking to the people, he said to Simon, Put out yet farther into the deep water, and then let down your nets into the lake for a draught of fishes. And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, we have been labouring all night and have caught nothing, nevertheless I will let down the net, and make another trial at thy word, both in obedience to it, and in dependance on it. And accordingly 6 when they had done it, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; so that their net brake in several places as they were drawing them up. And they beckoned to their partners James and John who were at some distance from them in the other vessel, to come and assist them; and they came and filled both the vessels, so that they were overladen, and drew so much water that they seemed ready to sink.

Now Simon Peter seeing [this] fell down before the knees of Jesus in amazement, and, covered with confusion, said, Lord, what am I, that thou shouldest come into my vessel to me? let me entreat thee now to go out from me; for I am such a sinful man, O Lord, that I am utterly unworthy to receive and entertain thee, nor dare I to continue in the presence of so great and holy a prophet. For this amazing proof that Jesus had now given of his power was such that astonishment seized him and all that were with him on account of the vast draught of fishes which they had taken: And in like manner also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners in the trade with Simon, were struck with wonder and amazement at the sight of this surprising miracle. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not fear; for, instead of doing thee any harm, I from this time design to employ thee in much nobler work, in which I will give thee such happy success that thou shalt captivate men, in greater left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake.

And they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

* Go out from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*] Peter could not but conclude there was some peculiar presence of God with a person who could perform such a miracle: and a consciousness of sin made him afraid to appear in the presence of such a one; lest some infamy or offence should expose him to some more than ordinary punishment. Compare Jud. vi. 22. xiii. 22, and 1 Kings xvii. 18. — It is also well known that the ancients thought it improper and unsafe (where it could be avoided) for good men to be in the same ship with persons of an infamous character; nor would the heathens sometimes permit the very images of their deities to be carried in the vessel with such, or even with those concerning whom there was any strong suspicion. See Euseb. Hist. Eccl., p. 292, 293.

# Thou shalt captivate men.] This is the exact English of ἑξάλαμνε, which is so translated, 2 Tim. ii. 26. To catch implies something more of artifice than the word carries in it, or the occasion seems to require.
And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him.

And when they had brought their vessels to land, they, (that is, first, Peter and Andrew, and presently after them, James and John, who were mending their broken nets with Zebedee their father) upon Christ's repeating the call, left their vessels and nets, with the fish they had taken, even all they had in the world, and followed him; being now determined to attend statelyly upon his ministry, that they might thus be fitted for the great work in which he intended to employ them.

**Improvement.**

How wonderful a choice does Jesus make of those who were to be the chief ministers in his kingdom! Surely the same Divine power which prevailed on these honest fishermen to leave their little all, to follow him, could with equal ease have subdued the hearts of the greatest and wisest of the nation, and have engaged them to have attended him in all his progress through the country, with the exactest observance and the humblest reverence: but he chose rather to preserve the humble form in which he at first appeared, that thus he might answer the schemes of Providence, and by the weak things of the world confound them that are mighty,(1 Cor. i. 27.)

Yet we may observe that he does not go to call them that stood all the day idle; but, on the contrary, confers this honour upon honest industry; on them that had been toiling all the night in the proper duties of their station and profession in life. Let us pursue our business with vigilance and resolution; assuring ourselves that, however mean it be, Christ will graciously accept us in it; and let us fix our dependance on his blessing, as absolutely necessary to our success.

These pious fishermen let down their nets at Christ's word, and it was not in vain. How vast was that power which brought such a multitude of fishes into it! but how much greater and more apparently Divine was the energy which, by the ministration of one of these illiterate men, converted at once a much greater number of souls, and turned the despisers and murderers of Christ into his adorers! (See Acts ii. 41.)

Blessed Jesus, we would humbly bow ourselves before thee as the Lord of nature and of grace; and instead of saying with Peter, Depart from us, for we are sinful men, we would rather say, "Lord, for that very reason, while we own ourselves most unworthy of thy presence, we most importantly entreat it: Come unto me, O Lord,
Christ preaches at Capernaum on the sabbath-day.

**SECT. XXXV.**


**MARK I. 21.**

When our Lord had thus called Peter and Andrew, and James and John, they all left the side of the lake, and entered with him into the city of Capernaum; and immediately on the sabbath-day, going, according to his custom, into the synagogue, he taught [them] the important truths which he was in so extraordinary a manner commissioned to vindicate, or to reveal.

And they were again struck with amazement at the sublimity and excellency of his doctrine, for he was continually teaching them in such a manner as one who had an immediate authority from God to dictate to them; and not as the scribes, their established teachers, who dealt in precarious traditions and fanciful allegories; the amusement of light minds, but utterly unfi

---

a And immediately on the sabbath-day. It is in the original τοις οἰκήσισιν, in the plural number; and it is frequently expressed in the same manner where it is plainly to be understood of a particular day, as Mat. xii. 1. xxviii. 1. Acts xiii. 14. and elsewhere. There is no doubt, but it is spoken here of the next sabbath, and probably of the very next day after his coming back with his disciples to Capernaum; see note k on Mark i. 18, p. 184.

b They were again struck with amazement. It has already been observed that they were thus amazed at his first coming to preach among them (Luke iv. 32, sect. xxxiii.) and there seems also to have been something in the discourses, as well as in the miracles of this last sabbath that he spent among them at this time, which raised their wonder, and affected them in a peculiar manner; as appears from the multitude of sick people which were brought to him that evening; see Mark i. 32, 33. Luke iv. 40. and Mat. viii. 16, in the next section.

c The
And publicly casts out a devil in the synagogue.

Luke IV. 33. And in [their] synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean demon; and cried out with a loud voice, [Mark I. 23.]

34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. [Mark I. 24.]

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, [and torn him] he [cried with a loud voice, and] came out of him, and hurt him not. [Mark I. 25, 26.]

The spirit of an unclean demon.] It is well known that a late learned and ingenious writer hath revived the notion long since maintained by Mr. Joseph Mede and Dr. Beza, that these supposed demoniacs were only lunatics or epileptics: but on the most impartial perusal of what has passed between him and his learned antagonists, I am fully convinced that there is no sufficient reason for departing from the received interpretation; and I should think this story alone a convincing proof on the side of it. It is most incredible that an evangelist should have been left to ascribe this man's disorder to the spirit of an unclean demon, if it were only lunacy or the falling sickness; or that a physician of common sense should speak of it as a memorable circumstance that such a distemper did not hurt a man by leaving him: see ver. 35. —I retain the word demon, as the epithet unclean seems to have little force when joined with devil, being necessarily implied in it.

Having terribly convulsed him.] This seems to be the proper meaning of the word συναγωνίας that is used by Mark here, which signifies to shake or move with violence; and to this purpose Grotius has observed that συναγωνίας is sometimes used to signify a convulsion. And it is much more natural to understand it thus than to suppose the devil to have torn him, (according to the common translation) which leads the reader to imagine that he grievously wounded him, when Luke expressly says that he hurt him not.

Did him no farther harm.] This is probably the sense of ἐπέδρα αὐτῷ; for while the convulsion continued it must have given some pain, and might have been attended with lasting disorder, had not the restraining and healing power of Christ prevented.

Y 2

1 Kept
And they were all exceedingly amazed at so miraculous a cure, so that they inquired of each other, and said, What an extraordinary event is this? [and] what a new and unexampled doctrine is this? for behold, he does not only distinguish himself by his incomparable manner of teaching, but with majestic authority, and efficacious power, he commanded even the unclean spirits, and they instantly obey him, and come out of the possessed, shewing thereby that they are subject to him. And his fame was so raised by this signal miracle, that it went forth immediately through all the region of Galilee, and made way for his reception in the progress he afterwards took into every place of the neighbouring country.

29 And presently after this miraculous cure, Jesus going out of the synagogue with his disciples, they came, with James and John in their company, into the house of Simon and Andrew, who being brothers, did then live together: And Simon's wife's mother was dangerously ill, and kept her bed, of a violent fever; and having seen the miracle which he had wrought but just before in the synagogue, they presently tell him of her, and entreated him that he would be pleased to interpose for her recovery. And coming into the room where she lay, and standing near her, he took her by the hand, and raised her up in her bed; and with an air of majesty rebuked the fever, and immediately the fever left her at once; and she was instantly restored to such a degree of strength that she arose and waited upon them; being so far from needing the assistance of others, as she had done before, that she became capable of taking her part in the business of the family.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark i. 27. And they were all amazed, inso- much that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority [and power] commanded he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him [and come out.]

28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee, [into every place of the country round about.] [Luke iv. 37.] 29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a [great] fever, and anon they tell him of her, [and besought him for her.] [Luke iv. 38.] 31 And he came [and stood over her,] and took her by the hand, and lifted her up, [and rebuked the fever:] and immediately the fever left her, and she [arose, and] ministered unto them.

[Mark viii. 14, 15.]

Justly may we join our astonishment with that of the inhabitants of Capernaum, and say, What manner of teaching is this? and with what regard should it be received, when the devils themselves, and the most desperate diseases, are thus apparently subject to him who uses it?

f Kept her bed.] This seems the proper meaning of the word ὑπάλληλον.

g Rebutted the fever.] There could be no inconvenience in the evangelist's using this phrase, more than in saying, he rebuked the wind and sea (see Mat. viii. 26,) for it is hardly to be thought the Jews would imagine the fever a real person; but it was quite otherwise as to their notion of demons.
We see the malice of Satan in possessing and tormenting the bodies of men. God then permitted it, to render Christ's triumph over him so much the more illustrious, and the appearance of that great Deliverer so much the more welcome. Such diabolical operations as these are now restrained; and it is matter of great thankfulness that they are. But would to God that malignant enemy did not, in a yet more fatal manner, possess the souls of men and work in the children of disobedience! Yet there can the power of Jesus prevail, to bind the strong man and spoil his goods.

Wisely did Christ silence the suspicious praises of an unclean spirit; and vain is all the hope which men build merely on those orthodox professions of the most important truths, in which Satan himself could vie with them.

Christ, returning from the synagogue, finds the mother-in-law of Peter detained from the solemn assemblies, a prisoner at home under an afflictive providence, which that circumstance of confinement probably rendered yet more afflictive to her. But the mercy which the evening brought with it was a rich equivalent for all the sorrows of the day. Jesus, their welcome guest, appears as the great Physician both of soul and body; a touch of his hand assuages the tumult in her veins, and at his voice the disorder leaves her. Surely, as the great Lord in the kingdom of Providence, he performs those cures which are now wrought by natural means, and is to be owned in them. Must not each of us

*The appearance of that great Deliverer so much the more welcome. It would be very foolish to imagine that God suffered these unhappy persons to be possessed merely that Christ might have the honour of curing them: but it is to be considered that the view under which Christ is most frequently represented is as the great antagonist to the prince of darkness, and the gospel has its foundation in the victory which Satan has gained over mankind; compare Gen. iii. 15. Mat. xii. 28, 29. I John iii. 5. Heb. ii. 14. and Rom. xvi. 20. (See also Mat. vi. 1.) John xvii. 13. Eph. vi. 16. and 1 John ii. 13, 14. iii. 12. v. 18, 19. in all which places αἰματος seems to signify the wicked one, that is, the devil, whose powerful influence over men is intended or expressed in each of them;) and it appears from Wird. ii. 24, that the Jews before Christ's time had some notion of this thing, and considered the wicked in general as taking part with the devil; the words are, Through envy of the devil came death into the world, and they that do hold of his side do find it. The inspired texts above show that the expression is just; and it was certainly on this account a most wise and gracious dispensation to permit the devil about this time to give some unusual proofs of his existence, power and malice, in thus attacking men's bodies; which would naturally convince them what a dangerous enemy he was to their souls, and what need they had of the patronage of Christ; as the sensible victory of Christ in these dispossessions would be a proof and specimen of that illustrious and complete triumph over him and his confederate powers in which our Lord's mediatorial kingdom is to end. No kind of miracles therefore could be more fit to attest his mission, and to promote his interest among men; and hence it is that hardly any are more frequently and circumstantially described.—This seems a sufficient answer to the difficulty proposed by Mr. Mede (see his Works, p. 28), and a clear proof that we shall do no service to Christianity by endeavouring to disprove the reality of these possessions, or by dropping the mention of the infernal powers in our preaching; how fashionable soever such omissions may grow.
Many cures are wrought in the evening.

us thankfully acknowledge how often he hath rebuked fevers and other distempers by the skill of physicians, and the efficacy of medicines; so that they have departed from us perhaps when we esteemed them desperate, and had received the sentence of death in ourselves.

Let us learn to imitate the pious gratitude of this good woman, who, when recovered, immediately arose and ministered unto Christ. Thus let it be our care that those lives which are spared by his goodness, and that strength which is renewed by his power, may be faithfully and affectionately devoted to his service.

SECT. XXXVI.

Christ having performed several cures on the evening of the sabbath-day, retires early the next morning to his devotions; and declining a longer abode at Capernaum, takes a circuit about Galilee, preaching and working miracles. Mark I. 32—39. Luke IV. 40. to the end. Mat. VIII. 16, 17. and IV. 23. to the end.

MARK I. 32.

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and many that were possessed with devils. [MAT. VIII. 16.—LUKE IV. 40.]

Luke IV. 40. All they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him: and he cast out the [evil] spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick, without the use of any means, how inveterate and desperate soever their distemper was: That thus it might appear to be accomplished in some measure which was spoken of him in a more noble and important sense by the prophet Isaiah; saying (chap. liii. 4), “He himself

a When the sabbath was ended.] It is well known that the Jews reckoned their day from evening to evening, and that the sabbath began and ended at sun-set. See Lev. xxiii. 32.

b Which they scraped before to carry.] We have a memorable instance of this scrape in John v. 10—16. sect. xvi.

c In a more noble and important sense by the prophet Isaiah.] It seems evident that Isaiah, in the place here referred to speaks of the sufferings which Christ endured for us on account of which only could he be esteemed (as it is added in the end of the verse) steeled, smitten of God, and afflicted. So that the evangelist has only

introduced
self graciously took our infirmities upon him, and with incredible labour, self-denial and compassion, bore [away] the burden of our diseases, and happily delivered us from those miseries which our corruption and depravity had introduced." And this occasioned such a concourse of people, that in a manner the whole city of Capernaum, was gathered together at the door of the house in which Jesus was; some coming as humble petitioners for themselves or their friends, and others as curious spectators of the surprising miracles he wrought.

And there were devils also that came out of many, crying out with great violence (as that before had done which had been cast out by him in the synagogue, and saying, as that other did, We know thee who thou art, the promised Messiah and the Son of God. But he severely chid them, and did not suffer them to speak these things so frequently and largely as they would otherwise have done: for they well knew that he was the Messiah; but as wise reasons made him, in his own discourses, often to decline the opportunities he had of expressly avowing that title and character, so they engaged him in a much stronger manner to be more particularly cautious with respect to evil spirits, of receiving it from them.

Thus was it that the day was spent in preaching and the evening in working miracles: and after all this labour and fatigue, Jesus allowed himself but a very short repose; for in the morning introduced it as an allusion to those words, as being capable of the sense here given in themselves; though we are certainly to understand them in a more exalted sense when we consider them in their connection. Or if they should be understood by any as if it had been said, "Though he miraculously cured our diseases, yet he was thus ungratefully censured;" it must be then allowed on this less natural interpretation, that Peter uses them allusively when he applies them to the crucifixion of Christ, as he evidently does, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Such instances are frequent in the sacred writers; and they are elegancies and beauties rather than imperfections. Had it been argued from this text that the Messiah must have healed the sick, there had been then indeed some room for an objection.

d Bare away the burden of our diseases.] Grutius has well observed the emphasis of the word εἰρήνευσεν which signifies to carry a heavy load, (Rom. xv. 1. Gal. vi. 2.) and so does well express the indefatigable labours of Christ, spending the evening in healing the sick, probably with many intermingled discourses, after he had employed the day in preaching. I have endeavoured to suggest this idea in the paraphrase.

e Cautious of receiving it from them.] It is probable that if it was not by mere constraint that these evil spirits made this confession, it was (as was hinted before on Luke iv. 33, p. 191,) with an artful design to bring our Lord into suspicion as acting in confederacy with them: and the perverse Pharisees might perhaps by hold of this occasion of fixing on Christ that impious and senseless calumny, that he did not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils, Mat. xii. 24.

phet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Mark i. 53. And all the city was gathered together at the door.

Luke iv. 41. And devils also came out, of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak; for they knew that he was Christ. [Mark i. 34.]

Mark i. 35. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day [when it was day] he

Sect. xxxxi.
Christ expresses his intention of preaching in other cities.

MARK I. 35. 36.

And when the day was something advanced and crowds of people came to inquire after him, Simon Peter, and they that were with him, (who have been already mentioned as his partners and companions,) guessing where Jesus was, went out and followed after him. And when they had found him at his private devotions, they said unto him, Master, the providence of God calls thee now to more public service; for all the people of the city are assembled yonder and are seeking after thee.

LukEx. 42. And what they said was immediately confirmed; for the multitudes sought after him with so much diligence, that they traced the steps of Peter and his companions, and, while they were speaking, came even to the place in which they had found him; and they would fain have detained him awhile, and pleaded in a very importunate manner that he should not depart from them.

But they could not prevail: and he said to them that were his constant attendants, Let us go directly into the neighbouring towns, that I may preach there also, without returning back to Capernaum at present; for, though we have many friends and well-wishers there, I must by all means preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; as for that purpose I am sent into the world he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.—[LukEx. 42.]

36 And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.

LukEx. 42. And the people sought him and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

MARK I. 38. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for [I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent] therefore came I forth. [LukEx. 43.]

\[\text{In the morning—before it was light: τῷ ἐν τῷ ὕποτερ ἀναίρον. This does sufficiently express the sense of the original: for εὐέργες does properly signify, when the night was very far advanced, or when it was yet deep night; and either of these interpretations, in this connection, implies that the drawing of the day was near at hand. And thus it may be easily reconciled with Luke; for γενέσθαι γενέσθαι, which the common translation, renders, when it was day, might as well have been rendered as the day was coming on; for γενέσθαι may be understood (as Grotius has observed) not only as expressive of the time that is already come, but as implying what is near at hand, or what is forming now, and ready to approach; (compare John xiii. 2, and the note there, sect. clix.)—Some have indeed maintained that different facts are referred to in the texts of Mark and Luke before us; the former referring to Christ’s rising, the latter to his going out: but it seems that Mark connects his going out so immediately with his rising, that no stress can be laid on such a distinction.}

8 All the people are seeking after thee] It is very likely that Peter, and they that were with him, warm as they were with the expectations of a temporal kingdom, might think this a very favourable opportunity of increasing Christ’s popularity, on which those hopes were built.\]

1. Con-
world by my Father, with the most extensive designs of usefulness, [and] therefore I came forth from his more immediate presence.

And thus Jesus took a circuit with his disciples through all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, wherever he had an opportunity; and preaching the good news of the kingdom which God was about to erect; and he confirmed and illustrated what he said, by casting out devils, and healing every disease, and every malady of the people among whom he came.

And his fame went through all the neighbouring country of Syria; and they brought to him from thence, as well as from nearer places, all, that is, great numbers of sick people, that were seized with a variety of distempers and most tormenting and incurable pains, even demoniacs, lunatics, and paralytics; and he healed them, not excepting those whose cases were the most deplorable and helpless. And these miraculous cures, together with his excellent manner of preaching, rendered him so popular, that great multitudes of people followed him from all the towns of Galilee, and from the region of Decapolis, and even from Jerusalem, and the rest of Judea, and all [the country] about Jordan, both on its eastern and western banks.

CONFIRMED AND ILLUSTRATED WHAT HE SAID.

It is justly and beautifully observed by the author of a late Discourse on the Miracles of Christ, that they were not only a proof, but a specimen of the power he claimed as the Messiah. Thus his giving sight to the blind illustrated his power of enlightening the prejudiced minds of men; his healing their bodies showed how able he was to heal their souls, and was a specimen of his authority to forgive sin, as it was in part an actual removal of its punishment; his casting out devils, was an emblem of his final victory over Satan; and his raising particular persons from the dead was a convincing display of his power to accomplish a general resurrection.

Improve the text by making it more readable and concise.
Reflections on the diligence of Christ in his work.

How delightfully were the sabbaths of Christ spent in the midst of all his fatigues! How pleasantly did the sun go down upon him, when he had been imitating that heavenly luminary in his steady and constant course; scattering a brighter light and more beneficial influences upon all about him.

And when the sabbath had been spent in these labours of piety and love, how happily were the fruits of it carried into the ensuing week? The first morning of it, that it might be most pleasantly and most profitably begun, Jesus rose before it was light, that he might enjoy God and himself in religious retirement. It surely becomes us sometimes willingly to deny ourselves the gratifications of sleep, that we may have the better opportunity for devotion. And it should be the peculiar care of those who are employed in God's public service, to cultivate communion with him in private; lest while they keep the vineyard of others, their own be neglected and impoverished. (Cant. i. 6.)

Our Lord's retirement is interrupted by the people, who came to inquire after him and desired to have detained him longer among them: and who that has ever known the pleasure of conversing with him, would not desire that it might be longer continued and frequently renewed? But in this instance, their request must be denied; the great purposes of his ministry required his presence elsewhere, and he breaks through all that importunity which would have broken in upon his schemes of usefulness: a resolution which we must learn in some cases to imitate if we would prosecute the business of life with vigour and success.

Let us often reflect wherefore we are sent; and judge by that where God would have us to be; that by the intimations of his pleasure every motion may be regulated, and every abode determined.

Wherever Christ removes, he still goes about doing good, publishing the gospel and confirming it by the most amazing works of power and of mercy. How well were these miracles suited to awaken men's attention, and to convince their consciences of his Divine mission! Well might his fame go over the whole country: may it extend itself now to the remotest regions, that all the ends of the earth may look unto him and be saved, (Is. xlv. 22,) while he displays a healing power over their spirits proportionable to that which he here exerted on their bodies!

maxims. I rather choose to add an appendix representing the order in which the sections are to be read according to him; which will, to the more curious part of my readers, be sufficient, and will excuse me from the necessity of swelling these notes in such a manner as I must otherwise have done.

[About Jordan] See note b at Mat. iv. 15, p. 192.
**SECT. XXXVII.**

Christ begins his sermons on the mount with the beatitudes and general exhortations to exemplary piety. Mat. V. 1—16.

**MAT. V. 1.**

\[\text{AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:}\]

\[\text{2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,}\]

\[\text{AND [Jesus], in his circuit through Galilee, seeing the vast multitudes which flocked around him from all parts, thought it proper to inform them more largely than he had hitherto done concerning the nature of his doctrine and the design of his appearance; that he might correct those false notions of the Messiah's kingdom which so generally prevailed, and which would prove so pernicious to those who were governed by them. He therefore went up to a mountain, that he might be the better heard by the crowds which surrounded him; and when, according to the custom of the Jewish rabbis in their sermons, he was set down to teach them, they that were already his disciples, and others that were disposed to receive information, came near to him. And opening his mouth, with an air of great solemnity, to intimate the importance of what he was going to deliver, he taught them the most suitable and excellent lessons. And as happiness was the great end to which the wisest philosophers...}\]

---

2 That he might correct those false notions of the Messiah's kingdom.] In order to enter into the beauty of this discourse it is necessary to consider it as addressed not merely to the apostles (who are not yet chosen under that character), but to his disciples in general, and to vast numbers of people who, affected with the sight of fame of his miracles, were now assembled around him; probably expecting that he would immediately declare them-if the Messiah, and full of those false notions of his kingdom which so generally prevailed. Mr. Blair, in his excellent discourses on this chapter, has shewn (I think beyond all others) how directly the beginning of this sermon is levelled against these prejudices. He has also observed (as it is very necessary to do) what a beautiful correspondence there is between the characters described in these beatitudes, and the blessings connected with them.

b Went up to a mountain.] It does not appear in what part of Galilee this mountain was situated; and (if the care of the leper, which Christ performed at his descending from it, was wrought in the confines of some other city, and not of Capernaum) there is no reason to suppose, as most expositors do, that it was in the neighbourhood of Capernaum; (see Mat. viii. 1, 2; and note b on Luke v. 12; sect. xlv.) Mr. Maunder says, what is now called The Mount of the Beatitudes is a little to the north of Mount Tabor, (Trav. p. 115); and if this be its true situation it must be at some considerable distance from Capernaum.-I shall Elsewhere give some hints of the reasons which have led me to conclude that this discourse was different from, and previous to, that which Luke has given us in the sixth chapter of his gospel, ver. 20: & seq. though many of the sentiments and expressions are the same; (see note a on Luke vi. 20, sect. iii.)

\[\text{c Opening his mouth.} \] I do not take the expression of opening his mouth to be always a periphrasis; the manner in which it is used elsewhere may sufficiently prove the contrary; compare Judg xi, 35, 36. Job iii. 1, xxxiii. 2, and Acts viii. 33. x. 34. And thus the ancient Greek and Roman writers used it, as Elsemer proves, Observ. Vol. I. p. 20, 21.

\[\text{\textit{d Happy}}\]
Happy are the poor in spirit, the penitent and the meek.

3. Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

5. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

\[\text{Happy,} \] I have here used the word happy rather than blessed, as more exactly answering to μακάριος, as the other does to σάκαρσις; and I rather chose to render it thus because our Lord seems to intimate by it, not only that the dispositions here recommended would be the way to future blessedness, but that they would immediately be attended with the sweetest happiness, and the most noble pleasures.

\[\text{The poor in spirit.} \] Though I cannot think, with Mr. Joseph Mede (p. 25), that this chiefly refers to a disposition to part with their possessions for charitable purposes; or confine it, with Grotius and Baxter, to a disposition to bear poverty with resolution, submission and cheerfulness; yet I doubt not but the latter of these is comprehended in that humility which is here expressed by poverty of spirit; which is a temper that indeed is absolutely necessary in order to our being cordially reconciled to the gospel method of salvation.

\[\text{That} \]

\[\text{poor in spirit;} \] for they cannot...
Happy are the righteous, the merciful and the pure in heart.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

6 That hunger and thirst after righteousness.] The very pious and judicious writer I mentioned above, in note 8, has taken a great deal of pains to prove that these words are chiefly designed to recommend a love of justice towards our fellow-creatures; and is for rendering χρηστός ἀθωής, they shall be fed to the full, while those who are violent and rapacious as young lions, may lack and suffer hunger, Psal. xxxiv. 10. But the phrase of hungering and thirsting after righteousness must surely be expressive of much more than merely a steady care to treat all mankind equitably, and to avoid what would be injurious and oppressive; and we may rather understand it as a just and beautiful description of a holy ardour of soul, in pursuit of the most eminent attainments in universal goodness, which will end in complete satisfaction, as the necessary consequence of perfect holiness in a future state.—These different views of the future blessedness sufficiently vindicate our Lord from the charge of tautology, though we should suppose (as, after all that Mr. Blair has said to the contrary, I think we must) that our Lord leads the minds of his disciples upwards in almost each of these beatitudes.

7 Happy are the merciful and compassionate, that feel the sorrows of others as their own, and with tender sympathy hasten to relieve them; for they shall obtain that mercy from God which the best and happiest of mankind need, and on which they continually and entirely depend.

Indulge not a thought of those licentious gratifications which are often mingled with victory and are accounted as the pleasures of the great: happy are the men that not only abstain from these gross enormities, but are concerned that they may be pure in heart too, avoiding every irregular desire and mortifying every unruly passion: this resolute self-denial shall be the source...
source of nobler and more lasting pleasure; for they shall see God; and thus purified and refined shall enjoy him in his ordinances now, and dwell with him for ever in heaven.

9 I come not, as you may fondly suppose, to lead you forward to the field of battle or to teach you to propagate religion by the sword; but, on the contrary, I declare unto you, Happy are the peace-makers, who not only avoid contention but labour to extinguish it wherever it prevails; for though mistaken men may ascribe such a gentle disposition to cowardice and meanness of spirit, they shall have the honour to be called the children of the God of peace, and be owned by him in that dear relation, as they resemble him in the benevolence of their characters.

10. Instead of these pompoms and pleasures, these victories and triumphs (in expectation of which you may now be crowding around me) my followers must prepare themselves for the severity of suffering: but happy are they that are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, and courageously endure the greatest extremities for the testimony of their consciences: their richest treasure is beyond the reach of their most inveterate enemies; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, and they shall reign with God in everlasting glory.

11 And, on these principles, happy are ye, my sincere disciples and faithful friends, when men shall injuriously reproach you and persecute you, and shall falsely say every thing that is evil and scandalous of you for my sake, and because of your professed relation to me. Be not discouraged under all this load of infamy and oppression; but rather rejoice, and triumphantly exult: because your reward in heaven will be proportionably great and distinguished: for this has in all ages been the portion and the proof of the most eminent saints; and you particularly know

[k The children of the God of peace.] Elsdon has illustrated this text by shewing, that the Pagans thought a good man might see their deities in some circumstances, when to the wicked they were invisible. (Elst. Observ. Vol. i. p. 22, 23.) But this, in their theology, might be intended to subserve some fraudulent views from which the nature of Christianity is most abhorrent. The remark, however, may in some degree shew how natural the thought is in the words before us.
Christ's disciples are the salt of the earth and light of the world.

know from the sacred records, that it was thus they persecuted the prophets of their own nation, who were long before you the ambassadors from God to them; and as you now share in the tribulation of those holy men, you shall ere long share in their glory.

Let it be, in the mean time, your care to imitate their piety and zeal, as remembering that you, my disciples, are to be as it were the salt of the earth, the means of preventing or curing the growth of that corruption which prevails in it, and of seasoning men's minds with wisdom and grace: but it would be most unhappy for yourselves, as well as for them, if you should be destitute of those blessed principles; for if the salt be grown insipid, with what can it possibly be seasoned? It is no farther of any avail or significance at all: but, as an useless thing, is left to be thrown out of doors and to be trampled on by men as the common dirt of the streets: thus worthless and contemptible will you, my disciples, be, even in the most eminent stations, if you lose your character for real and vital religion.

And therefore, that this may not be the case with you, consider the distinguished circumstances in which you are placed: you are, like the sun, to be the light of the world; and how conspicuous and bright should you appear under that character! Even a city that, like yonder town, is situated on a mountain, cannot be hid, but will attract men's eyes from a considerable distance.

m Thus they persecuted the prophets of their own nation.] This is abundantly evident from the known histories of Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, &c. See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. Mat. xxiii. 29-33. Acts. vii. 51, 52. and Heb. xi. 36, 37.

n If the salt be grown insipid.] Mr. Le Clerc sinks the meaning of this noble passage very low, when he supposes our Lord only intends to compare his disciples to salt ashes used in manuring the ground, (see Luke viii. 54, 55.) That passage, in which Livy calls Greece Sal Gramatica, the salt of all the nations, on account of those intellectual improvements they learned from thence, might easily have suggested a much nobler sense, which the paraphrase expresses. The word מַעֲשַׂה (mashah) has a peculiar beauty and strength here, and might literally be rendered, if it be infatuated, or grown foolish, alluding to the common figure in which sense and spirit are expressed by salt; but I thought the metaphor too strong to be literally retained in the version, and therefore contented myself with a distant imitation, as we call a flat lifeless discourse insipid. Compare Job vi. 6, and Col. iv. 6.

3 A city that, like yonder town, is situated on a mountain.] Mr. Maundrell tells us that there is a city called Saphet, supposed to be the ancient Bethulia, which, standing on a high hill, might easily be seen from the mountain on which Christ made this discourse; and probably supposes he might point to that here, as afterwards he did to the birds and the lilies: Mat. vi. 26-28. Maundr. Travels. p. 115.) Many writers have justly observed, that our Lord, like Socrates, takes his similes from the most obvious things, familiarly known to his hearers, and often before their eyes, even while he was speaking; a thought most largely illustrated by Sir Isaac Newton on the Prophecies, p. 148, 149.
Neither do men light so much as a common lamp, and put it under a bushel, and conceal it there; but they rather set it on a stand, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. How much less will it become you, whom I have compared to the sun, to hide or suppress your rays? On the contrary, let it be your care that your light may so shine before men, that they may continually see your good works in every circumstance and relation of life, and may thereby be engaged to glorify your Father who is in heaven; not only praising him for sending such a religion into the world, but also themselves embracing your faith and imitating your holy example.

IMPROVEMENT.

1, 2 What abundant reason have we to bless God that this large and edifying discourse of our blessed Redeemer is thus particularly recorded by the sacred historian. Let every one that hath ears to hear attend to it; for surely never man spake as our Lord here doth. Let us fix our souls in a posture of humble attention, that we may receive the law from his mouth.

He opened it with blessings, repeated and most important blessings. But on whom are they pronounced? and whom are we taught to think the happiest of mankind? The meek and the humble, the penitent and the merciful, the peaceful and the pure, those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, those that labour, but faint not under persecution! Blessed Jesus! how different are thy maxims from those of the children of this world! They call the proud happy, and admire the gay, the rich, the powerful and the victorious. But let a vain world take its gaudy trusses, and dress up the foolish creatures that pursue them. May our souls share in that happiness which the Son of God came to recommend and to procure! May we obtain mercy of the Lord; may we be owned as his children; may we see his face; and may we inherit his kingdom! With these enjoyments, and these hopes, we will cheerfully welcome the lowest or the most painful circumstances.

Let us awaken and stir up our souls to the cultivation of those amiable virtues which are here recommended to our pursuit; this humility and meekness, this penitent sense of sin, this ardent desire after righteousness, this compassion and purity, this peacefulness and fortitude of soul, and, in a word, this universal goodness, which becomes

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel; but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

\[\text{P How much less will it become you, whom I have compared to the sun, \textit{etc.}}\]

That this is the sense and spirit of this beautiful passage Mr. Pierce has well shown in his fourth Dissertation.
comes us as we sustain the character of the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Is not there reason to lament it, that we answer the character no more? Is there not reason to cry out, with a good man in former times, "Blessed Jesus! either these are not thy words, or we are not Christians!" Oh, season our hearts more effectually with thy grace! Pour forth that Divine oil on our lamps! Then shall the flame be bright; then shall the ancient honours of thy religion be revived; and multitudes be awakened and animated by the lustre of it to glorify our Father in heaven. Amen.

* Linacre.

SECT. XXXVIII.

Our Lord declares his purpose of establishing and vindicating the moral law, and enters on his divine exposition of it. Mat. V. 17—26.

Mat. V. 17.

THAT the great design of our Lord's appearance might be more fully understood by the multitudes that were now assembled around him, he proceeded in his discourse and said, Suppose not that I am come to dissolve that goodly fabric of holy precepts contained in the sacred writings of the laws, or the prophets; for I solemnly assure you, That I am not come to dissolve but rather to vindicate and illustrate, to complete and adorn [them], both by my example and discourses, as well as to answer the highest ends of the ceremonial institutions. For verily I say unto you, That as their original is Divine, their honours shall be perpetual; so that till heaven and earth pass away, and the whole visible frame of nature be disjointed, not one jot or one tittle shall pass

a To vindicate and illustrate, to complete and adorn them.] I was willing to take the word παντασία in its most extensive sense, as comprehending what Christ has done to answer the end of the ceremonial law, as well as to vindicate and enforce the moral; yet by the connection it seems that the latter was chiefly intended; and this phrase, the law and the prophets, is used in this sense, Mat. xxii. 40. It is strange that any should have questioned whether the precepts of Moses required such spirituality of obedience as Christ here demands. That great command of loving the Lord God with all

Vol. VI.

A A

Mat. V. 17.

the heart, &c. and our neighbour as ourselves, (Mat. xxii. 37) must surely comprehend all this. I shall only add, that Vitringa's interpretation of παντασία, who supposes it here to answer to the Chaldee גמור, which signifies to paraphrase, illustrate, open, or explain, seems to me worthy of consideration. (Compare Rom. xv. 19. παντασίαν τον υποδίδωσι, I have fully explained the gospel; and Col. iv. 12. παντασίαν τον υποδίδωσι, the whole, completely instructed in the will of God.) See Vitring. Observ. Sacr. lib. i. dissert iii. cap. 5. § 3.

b One
pass or perish from the law, till all things which it requires or foretells shall be effected. Whoever therefore shall himself transgress or violate one of the least of these commandments which are contained therein; and especially, whoever shall teach other men so to do, whether by his licentious principles or irregular example, he shall be accounted [one of] the least and unwor-thiest members in the kingdom of heaven; and shall soon be entirely cut off from it as unfit for so holy a society: but whosoever shall do them, and teach [them] with that advantage which nothing but the authority of a good example can give, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven and be treated with distinguished honour and favour in proportion to his zeal in so good a cause. Let this therefore be the care of all that hear me this day: for I say unto you, with all the solemnity that so important an affair requires, That unless your righteousness abound far more than [that] which is apparent in the lives, or even required in the precepts of the scribes and Pharisees, as highly as they are generally esteemed, ye shall be so far from making any illustrious figure, that ye shall not by any means enter into the kingdom of heaven, or be owned by the Son of man as truly his subjects.

To illustrate this, I will now proceed to explain some of those precepts of the law which these Pharisaical teachers have, by their perverse glosses,
Christ's exposition of the sixth commandment.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment:

glosses, enervated and dishonoured; and I will begin with the sixth commandment. You have heard that it was said to the ancients[1], and particularly to your fathers at mount Sinai, Thou shalt not kill: and you have been taught that the only design of it was to restrain men from actual murder; and accordingly it has been added, That whosoever shall unlawfully kill another, shall be obnoxious to the judgment[2], and be capitaly punished in the common courts of judicature. But I say unto you, That it was the design of God in this precept to prohibit extravagant passions and abusive language, as well as the most fatal effects of them in destroying the lives of each other: so that whosoever shall, without just cause[3], be angry with his brother, so as secretly to wish him evil, shall be obnoxious to the judgment, or shall be liable to a worse punishment from God than any that your common courts of judicature can inflict[4], and whosoever to his secret anger shall add opprobrious and contemptuous words; or, for instance, shall say to his brother, Raca, that is, Thou worthless empty fellow[5], shall be exposed to yet more terrible effects of the Divine resentment, and be obnoxious to a yet severer punishment, that will as far exceed the former as that inflicted by the sanhedrim, which extends to

---

[1] You have heard that it was said to the ancients.] Thus are the words τοις πατέροις κατὰ τὸν Πορτομαίον, to be rendered; see Grotius and Whitby in loc.

[2] Thou shalt not kill.] I might have rendered, ov κατακείμενος, Thou shalt not commit murder, as Dr. Scott has very properly done; but I chose to retain the words of the commandments as they are usually expressed among us, that it might at first hearing be more apparent to every reader, that what follows each, is our Lord's commentary upon it.

[3] Shall be obnoxious to the judgment.] To understand this and the following verse, it is necessary to observe, that the Jews had a common court of twenty-three men, wherein capital sentences might be passed, on which a malefactor might be strangled or beheaded; this was called the judgment: but the sanhedrim, or council, was the supreme Jewish court, consisting of seventy-two, in which the highest crimes were tried, which they, and they alone, punished with stoning, which was thought a more terrible death than the former. See Grotius's excellent note on

[4] This text, of which the best commentaries upon it since him are little more than transcripts. (See Bishop Hopkins's Works, p. 65, 66.) As murder was undoubtedly a capital crime, Dr. Lightfoot, and after him, Dr. Whitby must be mistaken in supposing that judgment here signifies punishment from the immediate hand of God, as in a case which human laws would not reach. See Lightf. Hor. Heb. and Whitby, on Mai. v. 22.

[5] Without just cause.] Though now, without cause, be wanting in some old versions and manuscripts, the sense plainly implies it. See Dr. Whitby in loc.

[6] To a worse punishment from God. &c.] That judgment must here signify punishment from God, is plain, because this careless anger might be so concealed in the heart, as not to admit of conviction before men.

[7] Raca, that is, thou worthless empty fellow.] Drusius gives the most learned and accurate account of the etymology and import of this word, which seems pretty exactly to answer to coxcomb in our language.
The punishment of causeless anger and reproach.

Sect. xxxviii.
Mat. V. 22.

to stoning, does that which follows on the judgment of the inferior courts, which only have the power of the sword, but whoever, in his unreasonable passion, shall presume to say unto his brother, Thou fool, that is, Thou graceless wicked villain, thereby impeaching his moral character, as well as reflecting on his intellectual, shall be obnoxious to the fire of hell, or to a future punishment more dreadful even than that of being burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom, from whence you borrow the name of those infernal regions.

23 Remember therefore to lay aside all your animosities, and to live in peace and love, as ever you would escape God's wrath and secure his favour. Without this your most expensive sacrifices would be so vain, that I must inculcate it on every one of you as a most necessary caution, If thou art bringing thy gift, however costly and free, even to the altar, and there recollectest that thy brother has any just cause of complaint against thee, do not content thyself with a secret, and it may be a treacherous purpose, that thou wilt hereafter accommodate the affair, but bring it to an immediate issue; and, leaving thy gift there, in the hand of those that are ministering before the altar, go away, and ever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be

m Thou fool, that is, thou graceless wicked villain.] Mr. Blair thinks that m.poy, thou fool, answers to bæbhh; but that being only applied to a defaulter, seems too contracted. Wicked men are so often called fools in the Old Testament, especially in the writings of David and Solomon, that the appellation in the Jewish language, signifies not so much a weak thoughtful creature, as a man deliberately guilty of some licentious crime, or, in one word, a villain. On this account I cannot but think it wrong that everfa Luke xxiv. 25, or apswo, 1 Cor. xv. 36, should, by so harsh a translation as ours, have been confounded with such an infamous word as this.

n Burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom.] Though it is so well known to the learned, I must beg leave to remind my English reader that the valley of Hinnom or Tophet had been the scene of those detestable sacrifices in which children were burnt alive to Molech (compare 2 Kings xxii. 10. 2 Chron. xxvii. 3. and Jer. xix. 2—5; xxxii. 35.) and was afterwards defiled by Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 10. and made a receptacle for the filth of the city, where fires were kept continually burning to consume it: and it is probable that if any criminals were executed on the statute, Lev. xx. 14. or xxii. 9. this accursed and horrible place might be the spot of ground on which they were consumed. However that were, it seemed, both with regard to its former and latter state, a fit emblem of hell itself (see Isa xxx. 33. and Jer. xix. 11—13.) which, in the Syrian language, takes its name from thence, and was commonly called Gehenna by the Jews; (see Lightf. Hor. Heb. in loc. and Preface to his Hist. of the New Test.)—It must here signify a degree of future punishment, as much more dreadful than that incurred in the former case, as burning alive was more terrible than stoning; for I apprehend the punishment of each degree of anger and fury here mentioned is to be referred to the invisible world or else our Lord's words would not be generally true.

ο If thou art bringing thy gift, however costly and free.] ἄφενς, a gift, implies that it was a free-will offering; which adds great strength to the sentence, beyond what it would have had if the word had been ἱλαρός, sacrifice.
Reflections on the strict regard due to the law.

23 Agree with thine adversary quickly whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

And it will be prudence as well as humanity to apply this advice to suits at law, if you are so unhappy as to be engaged in them: my counsel then to each of you is, That thou shouldst make it thine endeavour to come to a friendly agreement with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way going with him to a magistrate; lest the adversary should deliver thee to be tried before the judge; and the judge deciding the cause against thee, deliver thee to the officer of the court, to keep thee in custody till payment be made; and thou not having enough by thee to discharge an account inflamed with so many additional articles of expense, shouldst be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thy antagonist, when he has got thee at such an advantage, will be more rigorous in his demands than before; and thou shalt not by any means come out thence, till thou hast discharged the very last farthing of thy debt. And surely, if by impotent viciousness thou makest thyself the prisoner of the Divine justice, thy case will be yet more deplorable and hopeless.

Improvement.

Let us seriously consider and often recollect the purposes of Ver. Christ's appearance: he came not to destroy the law and the prophets, 17 or

p First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.] It is observable that Philo (de Sacerd. p. 844.) explaining the law of the trespass-offering, tells us, "That when a man had injured his brother, and repenting of his fault, voluntarily acknowledged it (in which case both restitution and sacrifice were required), he was first to make restitution, and then to come into the temple presenting his sacrifice, and asking pardon." This is a very just and a natural account of the matter, and adds a great illustration to this text, especially when it is considered that our Lord supposes in this case not a trespass-offering but a voluntary gift presented before the altar; and yet declares that this will not be accepted while there is a consciousness of having wronged a brother and not made him reparition.

q Come to a friendly agreement with thine adversary.] The word αὐθεντάρω, properly signifies a person who is going to law with another. I have rendered with authority, come to a friendly agreement, because the original seems to imply not only peace but benevolence.

r If thou makest thyself the prisoner of the Divine justice.] This thought is a natural reflection on what was said before; but it is rather intimated than expressed in our Lord's words, which so naturally lead to the sense given in the paraphrase, that to those who are unacquainted with the Popish manner of managing controversies, it might seem surprising they should ever be urged in favour of purgatory. The vanity and inconsistency of it is well exposed by Bishop Burnet on the Articles, p. 169, and Limborch, Theol. lib. vi. cap. 10. § 22.
or to dissolve men’s obligation to observe them: but rather to
enforce as well as to fulfil them. How fatally shall we pervert
the purposes of his coming, if we regard him as the minister of
sin? How ungratefully shall we abuse the merciful constitution
of his gospel should we take encouragement from thence to violate
his law? Dangerous as well as ungrateful abuse indeed! For
God’s eye will be watchful over its honours, and his hand exerted
18 to maintain them; so that heaven and earth shall pass away
before it shall fail of its accomplishment in being either obeyed
or avenged on the impenitent sinner. May it be our constant
care to keep it ourselves, and to teach others to observe it! May
19 we teach it by our lives as well as our lips; and let our daily
conversation demonstrate how practicable and how amiable its
precepts are! So shall we be great in the kingdom of heaven, in
the pursuit of which we may give full scope to the noblest
ambition of which human nature is capable.

20 Let our hearts own and feel the spiritual sense of God’s law,
that we may rise to a more sincere and more extensive righteousness
than that of the scribes and Pharisees. May we delight in it after
the inward man, and learn to regulate our thoughts and our passions,
as well as our external behaviour, by it!

21, 22 Especially let us avoid all the malignant and ill-natured passions,
all thoughts of rash and immoderate anger, all words of contumely
and reproach. If we would maintain communion with the God of
23 love, let love govern in our hearts; and when we come to present
our devotions to him, let us lift up holy hands without wrath, as
well as without doubting (1 Tim. ii. 8.) so may we promise
ourselves a gracious welcome; so shall we carry away the most
valuable blessings!

But are none of us strangers to this blessed state? Are none of
us obnoxious to the Divine displeasure? If we are so, with what a
holy solicitude of soul should we labour, to make up the contro-
versy and come to an agreement, while we are yet in the way with
this awful adversary! lest we be immediately hurried before the
25 tribunal of the righteous Judge of all the world, and be delivered
into the hands of justice, to be reserved in everlasting chains beyond
the possibility of redemption.

26 Lord, we were all the debtors, and, in one sense, the prisoners
of thy justice; and of ourselves we are most incapable, not only of
paying the uttermost farthing, but even of discharging the least
part of the debt! We bless thee for that generous Surety who
has undertaken and discharged it for us; and by the price of
whose atoning blood we are delivered from the chains of darkness,
and are translated into the glorious liberty of thy children.
Christ's exposition of the seventh commandment.

SECT. XXXIX.

Our Lord proceeds in his exposition of the law, strictly prohibiting uncleanness, divorce, contention, and revenge; and urging the contrary virtues. Mat. V. 27, to the end.

MAT. V. 27. Jesus proceeded in his sermon to the seventh commandment, and observed, You have often heard that it was said to the ancients, Thou shalt not commit adultery; and that law has been explained as if it related only to the grossest acts of uncleanness: But I say unto you, That it extends not only to unchaste actions and words, but even to looks and the very thoughts of the heart; for whosoever shall gaze on a woman to lust after her, have already committed adultery with her already in his heart.

MAT. V. 27. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

2 Whosoever shall gaze on a woman:

There are several other places where the word γυναῖκα signifies to look on an object with great attention, or to look at it. See Mat. vii. 3. xviii. 28. Luke vii. 36. viii. 13. Acts i. 9. iii. 4. 1 Cor. iii. 10. x. 12. Phil. iii. 2. and Rev. xviii. 8.

b Committed adultery with her in his heart.] In the first edition I had rendered it debauched her, because it is plain παρακολουθεῖν must extend to single as well as married persons; but, on the animadversion of a learned friend, I am convinced that the spirit of our Lord's meaning is best expressed by retaining the word used in the seventh commandment, and giving the passage such a turn as I have now given it in the paraphrase, which does not at all limit the sense. But to render γυναῖκα a married woman, would be a limitation, I think, not to be justified.

c Offend or ensnare thee.] It is well known that this is the force of the word σκέδασθαι, which most literally signifies to be a stumbling-block in a person's way, or an occasion of his fall; and so implies much more than merely to displease. I mention this remark, obvious as it is, because the sense of so many texts depends on attending to it. See Rom. xi. 9. xiv. 13. 21. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. viii. 13. Gal. v. 11. and Rev. ii. 14.
Divorces only lawful in the case of whoredom.

sect. xxxix.

Mat. v. 30.

thrown into hell; which yet must be the fatal consequence of indulging the most favourite lust. Yea, if thy right hand offend thee, thou shalt pluck it and cast it from thee; for I say unto thee, That it is highly advantageous to thee, that any one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body should be thrown into hell, to be the companion of thy guilty soul there in everlasting horror and misery.

31 It has been said, (Deut. xxiv. 1.) Whoever would dismiss his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce: and this precept, which was indeed intended to prevent the frequency of such dismissions, by making it so solemn and irrevocable a thing, has perversely been interpreted as a warrant for having recourse to it upon every trifling occasion. But such a practice is directly contrary to the original design of marriage, and highly injurious to the common good of mankind: I therefore think it necessary to restrain so dangerous a liberty, and say unto you, That whoever shall dismiss his wife, except it be on the account of whoredom, causeth her, by a second marriage, to commit adultery, or at least exposeth her to great danger of doing it; and whoever shall marry her that is thus unlawfully dismissed, commiteth adultery, since the bond of the former marriage does in the account of God remain undissolved.

32 But I say unto you, That whichever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whichever shall marry her that is divorced, commiteth adultery.

33 Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, (Lev. xix. 12. Deut. xxiii. 21.) Thou shalt not put away forswear thyself, but shalt diligently perform unto the Lord thine oaths and vows: and this has been expounded as extending.

If thy right hand offend or ensnare thee.] The greatest part of Christ's auditors were poor people who lived by their daily labour; and to these the loss of a right hand would be a much greater calamity than that of a right eye: so that there is a gradation and force in this passage beyond what has generally been observed.

Rather than thy whole body should be thrown into hell.] This plainly implied the doctrine of a resurrection, though Christ had not yet expressly taught it.

On the account of whoredom.] It is very evident that παρθένον, as here used, must have a more ambiguous and larger sense than the English word fornication, which generally answers to it; and must be understood here of adultery.

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31 It hath been said, Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, commiteth adultery.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.
Common swearing must be carefully avoided.

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne;

35 Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King:

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.

h Swear not at all in your common discourse with each other.] The opposition between this verse and the 37th limits the prohibition to this sense; and, waving that, it would be necessary to interpret it as a restrictive rather than an universal precept, and to consider it as more particularly levelled at the common practice of the Jews, who reckoned swearing by the creatures to be far more excusable than swearing by the name of God, and made but little scruple of the frequent use of it. For that all swearing is not here condemned as a thing absolutely evil, is fully evident from other passages of scripture, and of necessity must be allowed to vindicate the conduct of Christ and his apostles. Compare Mark viii. 12. Mat. xxvi. 63. Rom. i. 9. ix. 1. Gal. i. 20. 2 Cor. i. 18. and Heb. vi. 16.

i Either by heaven.] Though I allow, with the learned Heinsius, that the words "or thereby" may be rendered By no means swear, either by heaven, earth, or the like; yet it will not follow that the words only forbid swearing by creatures, since ver. 37. forbids whatever is more than you or nay. So that it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to some other solution of this prohibition, as well as of that in Jam. v. 12. where any other oath is forbidden; and nothing is more natural and easy than to understand it in both places as a prohibition of the use of oaths in common conversation.

k Cometh from the evil one.] Ex 20: 4. 5swear. will properly bear this version; and some copies read μακενος. cometh from the devil. I would observe that whether this version or the common one be admitted, the clause before us contains a demonstration that ver. 34. is to be explained with the limitation proposed: for it is evident that oaths were in some cases not only allowed, but required by the Mosaic law; (see Exod. xxvii. 11. Lev. v. 1. Numb. v. 19—21. and Deut. xxvii. 2—13.) So that if Christ's prohibition here referred to swear in solemn and judicial cases, he would in these words have charged the Divine law with establishing an immutability, which it is most absurd to suppose; and I cannot but wonder that so obvious and decisive a thought should not have been more insisted upon in this controversy.

Vol. vi.
Injuries to be endured without revenge.

Do not set yourselves against the injurious person. [1] So the phrase ἀνέφυγεν τὰ ἁμαρτήματα may exactly be rendered (compare 2 Tim. iii. 8.) Had our Lord meant to intimate that we should rather suffer ourselves to be murdered, and our families to be ruined, than resist the villain that attempts it, he would have laid down so strange a precept in the strongest terms; and it is very unreasonable to infer from it this passage, which speaks of so trifling an injury as a slap on the face, or suing a man for the value of a waistcoat or cloak— if it be asked whether we are universally forbidden to resist on these occasions? I answer we are; unless we be in our consciences convinced, that in present circumstances, to stand on our defence will be more for the public good; and in those cases this particular precept is superseded by the general law of universal benevolence. But I apprehend these expressions intimate that, on the whole, it will generally be for the best to waive rigorous prosecutions on such slight occasions.

1 Do not set yourselves against the injurious person.] This is a proverbial phrase, to express a meek submission to injuries and affronts. See Isa. l. 6. and Lam. iii. 50.

m Turn the other to him also.] This is a proverbial phrase, to express a meek submission to injuries and affronts. See Isa. l. 6. and Lam. iii. 50.

n Thy mantle too.] Vest and mantle more exactly answer to χίλαρα and σπαθίς than coat and cloak (compare John xix. 23. and see Cassonius in loc.) and are parts of dress, under different names still retained in Barbary, Egypt and the Levant. See Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 289-292. The mantle being much larger than the vest, must probably be more valuable; and as it would be natural for a robber on the highway to take the outer garment first, I look on this manner of expressing it as a good argument for retaining our translation of χίλαρα, and rendering it sue thee at law, rather than take it in a more general way as signifying to strike or contend; though I know it has sometimes this last signification, as Lord Cepheus urges.

o Press thee to go with him, &c.] The word press seems best to answer the original ἄφησον, which is well known to be
The gospel teaches us to love our enemies.

42 Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

45 You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

be derived from the name of those officers who were commissioned for this purpose by the Persian emperors when Judea was one of their provinces. See Drusius in loc. (Compare Mat. xxvii. 33.) Among the Jews the disciples of their wise men were excused from such services; but Christ advises his disciples not to insist on that exemption. See Lightf. Hor. Heb. in loc.

p Give to him that asketh thee thy charity, τω αἰτήτω σοι εὐεργείαν.] Mr. Blair would refer this to εὐεργείαν, in ver. 39, and render it, Give to the injurious person what he asketh thee; and has a very beautiful discourse upon it in that view; but it is plainly unnecessary to limit it; and I think that, on this interpretation, it would much coincide with verse 44. In whatever sense it be taken, it must admit of some exceptions, or it will not only be inconsistent with such precepts as require us to take care of our families, (as 1 Tim. v. 8.) but with natural justice and common sense. It is amazing, therefore, that any who do not think themselves obliged by the literal sense of this precept, to give or lend to every idle importunate creature whatever he asks, should insist on a rigorous interpretation of the preceding passage, from ver. 34 to 41.

q Do not turn away him that would borrow of thee.] Ἐξακούσας ἂν αὐτοῦ ἄρειμακα τούτοις, is thus most literally rendered.

r The precepts for destroying the Canaanites have been abused, &c.] These precepts were of a peculiar nature; and that in particular, Deut. xxii. 6. Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever, relates to avoiding throughout all generations any association with the Moabites; which was an everlasting brand of infamy set upon them for the alfront, which, in the matter of Por, they had offered to God himself, under whose conduct the Israelites were. But though it forbids any national alliance with them, it seems that the settlement of Ruth in Israel when she embraced the Jewish religion (Ruth i. 16.) and the permission given to the Moabites to live as tributaries under David after the conquest of their country, (2 Sam. vii. 2.) were not at all inconsistent with this law.
welfare of their persons; bless them that in the bitterest manner curse you (whether by profane execrations in their common discourse, or by un-
just anathemas in their ecclesiastical assemblies) be ready to do good to them that hate you; and 
pray for the conversion of them that insult you, 
45 and persecute you: That you may thus ap-
prove yourselves to be the children of your 
heavenly Father; for, with the most diffusive 
kindness and beneficence, he causeth his sun to 
arise on the evil and on the good. and showereth 
down rain on the just and the unjust; so that 
his enemies share in his providential bounties 
and subsist on his daily care.

46 Let it be therefore your concern to imitate 
this extensive goodness: for if you only love them 
that love you, what reward have ye? or what 
extraordinary praise can ye expect? Do not even 
the most infamous and scandalous sinners, such 
as the very publicans, do the same? And if 
ye salute and embrace your brethren only, or 
those of the same sect, party and interest with 
yourselves, what extraordinary thing do you 
practise more than the rest of mankind, though 
your advantages are so much greater than theirs? 
Do not even the heathens and publicans do so?

And will not common humanity teach even the 
very worst of men civility to those that treat 
them with respect and excite them to some 
sentiments of gratitude to their friends and 
benefactors?

48 You, who stand in so near a relation to God 
as my professed disciples, should far exceed them: 
Be ye therefore, in these instances of undeserved 
and forfeited goodness, as, and, in all other respects, 
curse you, do good to them that hate you, 
and pray for them which despitefully use 
you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be 
the children of your 
Father which is in hea-
ven; for he maketh 
his sun to rise on the 
evil and on the good, 
and sendeth rain on 
the just and the unjust.

46 For if ye love 
them which love you, 
what reward have ye? 
Do not even the publi-
cans the same?

47 And if ye salute 
your brethren only, 
what do ye more than 
others? Do not even 
the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore 
perfect.

8 That insult you; οὐτα ἔχειν ὑμῖν.] As this word, according to the judgment 
of Erasmus, Beza and several other able 
critics, it is derived from ἑχειν, the name of 
Mars, it may perhaps strictly answer to 
dragooning in our modern language: but as 
it is plainly used by St. Peter to express 
abusive language (1 Pet iii. 16.) I chose to 
render it insult, which may be applied either 
to injurious words or actions. To induce does 
by no means express the force of the idea. 
Nor can I think, with the learned Elsner 
(Vol. i. p. 30, 31.) that this clause is to 
be interpreted chiefly of malicious prose-
cutions in judicial courts, though that be 
as sort of insult and persecution, undoubtedly 
comprehended among many others, and 
often expressed by the Greek words here 
used.

9 If ye salute and embrace your brethren only.] The word 
exhetaimai alludes to the 
custom of saluting by embracing. And when 
Christ cautions against confining their 
regards to brethren, he may perhaps obliquely 
glance at those prejudices which different 
sects had against each other, and intimate 
that he would not have his followers imbibe 
that narrow spirit. Would to God the hint 
had been more attended to among the unhappy 
subdivisions into which his church has been 
crumbled; and that we might at least ad-
vance so far as cordially to embrace our 
brother in Christ, of whatever party or 
denomination they are!

a In these instances of undeserved and 
forfeited goodness.] The love to friends, 
enjoyed by the scribes and Pharisees, was very
perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven is perfect.

as far as frail mortality will admit, perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect; whose name you will most effectually honour, and whose favour you will most happily secure by a care to imitate him to the utmost in all the moral perfections of his nature. (Compare Eph. iv. 31, 32. v. 1.)

IMPROVEMENT.

Alas! how may we blush to call God our Father, while we resemble him so little! And what reason is there, on a survey of these directions of our Lord, to acknowledge our deficiencies and our faults! Let us review the many advantages we enjoy, as Christians, and the engagements we are under in the particular circumstances in which Divine Providence has placed us; and blush to think that we do so little more than others, perhaps in many instances falling short even of the virtues of heathens.

Let us particularly be instructed by these lessons of our Divine Master to recompense good for evil: lessons which come with peculiar grace from his mouth, as he was himself the kindest friend to his most inveterate enemies, and bore and forgave more than any but himself could possibly do.

Let us, who are his disciples, abhor contention and revenge. Let us not prosecute every little injury to the utmost, nor govern ourselves by those false maxims of prudence and honour, which pride and self-love have introduced on the ruins of real Christianity. Let us not, even in the most legal methods, seek the punishment of those who have wronged us, except in circumstances in which we are in our conscience persuaded it will, on the whole, be greater very imperfect: we are to labour after a more complete resemblance to God, in losing enemies. Our Lord therefore afterwards expressed it in a parallel discourse, by saying, Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful, Luke vi. 36. but it is probable he used a greater latitude of expression here, to remind us of our obligations to imitate the Divine Being in all his moral perfections.

Perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.] Many authorities are produced by Elmer, in his note on this text, to prove not only that the heathens gave the epithet of περφες, or perfect, to many of their gods, especially the chief; but that some of their writers describe clementy and goodness to enemies, as a virtue by which mortals make the nearest approach to Divine perfection. These words conclude Christ’s excellent vindication of the law from the corrupt glosses of the Jewish teachers. I know it has been objected to it, that, considering the many figurative expressions used in it, we might as easily trace out the duties recommended by the light of reason alone, as adjust the sense of such obscure and hyperbolical precepts. But if it were really so (which I cannot grant), it is to be remembered, that the chief design of the gospel is not to inform us what is justice, humanity, and charity, in particular cases (which a view of present circumstances can alone discover) but to awaken a regard to the known, though neglected dictates of natural religion on these heads; and this may be most effectually done by such animated and sprightly exhortations as these, especially when considered as coming from a Person whose authority and love concur to demand our attention and obedience.

a Practice
greater charity to animadvert on the offence than to pass it by; and even then let us act in a calm and dispassionate manner, pitying and loving the persons of the injurious, even while, for the sake of society, we prosecute their crimes.

46 If this be our duty towards our enemies, how inexcusable are we if we are cold and insensible to our friends! And how much worse than publicans themselves, if we do not love them that love us, and do good to those from whom we have received it. Happy is that Christian to whom the God of nature hath given a heart so turned to sentiments of benevolence that, in all these instances, love is a law unto itself!

Yet let us remember, that the whole of our duty is not comprehended in these social regards. The great Author of our being, who hath endowed us with rational faculties, justly requires that we assert their empire over the meaner powers of appetite and passion. We see that he forbids not only gross enormities, as adultery (which, though so unaccountably spared by the laws of many Christian countries, the heathens themselves have condemned as a capital crime, and which some of the most barbarous nations have esteemed infamous,) but the unchastity of the eye and of the heart. Let us then earnestly pray that God would create in us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us (Psal. li. 10.) and let us maintain a most resolute guard over our senses and our thoughts, remembering that there is no other alternative, but that the dearest of our lusts must be mortified and subdued, or our whole persons be cast into hell.

30 Elevate our affections, O Lord, to nobler objects than those which are suited merely to animal nature! Teach us to keep under the body, and bring it into subjection (1 Cor. ix. 27.) that we may not finally be cast away from thy presence, and fall into that dreadful state where every drop of sinful pleasure will be recompensed with full vials of misery and despair!

SECT. XL.

Our Lord having thus vindicated the Mosaic law, proceeds, in his divine discourse on the mount, to caution his disciples against vain-glory in alms-deeds, prayer and fasting. Mat. VI. 1—18.

Our Lord proceeding in his discourse to caution them against vain-glory, said unto them, Take heed in general, that you practise not your righteousness, or perform not any religious

a Practise not your righteousness.] As read δικαιοσύνην. rightousness, instead of some copies, and very ancient versions, alms-deeds; and several of the fathers

Mistakes
Christ cautions his disciples against vain-glory.

before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men: verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

fathers quote it so, I chuse, with Beza, to follow that reading; because it prevents the appearance of a tautology in the following words, and makes this verse a general and very proper introduction to the remaining part of the section, in which the caution is branched out into the particular heads of alms, prayer, and fasting. (See Dr. Mill. in loc.)—Nevertheless I by no means insist on the change; but if it be admitted, I cannot acquiesce in the criticism of a learned friend, who would explain righteousness as here signifying charity, or liberality; because, though I am well aware it has that signification sometimes (I think not so often as some have supposed,) yet admitting it here would destroy that beautiful variety between this and the following verse, which I have endeavoured to illustrate in the paraphrase, and which makes it so proper an introduction to this part of our Lord’s sermon.

b In the public assemblies ] It is certain that the word ερναξη may be taken in this extent; and though it is most probable it may even here refer to religious assemblies, yet we may recollect on this occasion that it is a known custom in the eastern nations to distribute alms when they are going to enter on public councils.—The phrase of sounding a trumpet before them seems only a figurative expression to represent their doing it in a noisy ostentatious way; as it is certain that to do a thing with the sound of a trumpet is sometimes used proverbially to express a public ostentation. See Elsner in loc.

c Acting their part as on an open theatre.] Erasmus and Beza very justly observe that ἔρωμαι in the verse before is a theatrical word; and ἐφημεριστής is well known to signify players disguised (as the Grecian actors used to be) in masks; not to say that the sounding of a trumpet may allude to the music of the stage. I have endeavoured to express this in the phrases here used in the paraphrase.

d They have their reward.] Sir Nortom Knatchbull earnestly contends that περιτοίχια εἰς Δαυίδ ἀνάγεται ought to be rendered they fall short of these rewards: but the word ανάγεσθαι is plainly used in the sense in which our translators take it, Luke vi. 21. Philip. iv. 18. and Philenom. ver. 15. and it is with peculiar propriety that humane applause is here called their reward, as being that which they chuse and seek. See Beza’s elegant note on the words.

e Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand is doing.] It is said that the poor’s chest stood on the right hand as they entered the synagogues, to which some suppose the words to allude. It is plainly a proverbial expression of strict care to conceal an action.

f Conybeare
He directs them to be secret in prayer.

sects.

Mat. xli.

VI. 4.

poses; and far from publishing it with vain affection, conceal it, as far as may be, from thy nearest friends: That thine alms may be performed in secret; and thy Father who sees in secret, and knows every circumstance of your most retired actions, will himself be ready to honour and reward thee another day, and, that openly, before the assembled world.

5 And, again, when thou prayest (as, if thou art my disciple indeed, thou often wilt,) thou shalt not be as the hypocrites, who discover on all occasions the vanity of their hearts; for even when performing their particular, and those that ought to be their secret devotions, they love to pray standing in the public assemblies in sight of numbers of people, and fixing them exactly to one constant hour, contrive to be caught, as it were, just at that sacred time; not only in the common places of resort, but in the streets, where several ways meet; that they may thus be sure of being viewed by a great number of beholders: but howsoever, upon this account, they may indeed be admired of men, as persons of singular piety, yet verily I say unto you, That in this admiration of those that observe them they have all their reward. But thou, O my disciple, whoever thou art, when thou prayest, and dost not intend it as a social exercise of devotion, withdraw from the sight and intercourse of men, and enter into thy closet, or any other retired apartment; and having shut thy door, to prevent interruption, and exclude spectators, pray with a holy freedom of soul to thy Father who is with thee in secret; and thy Father, who always sees in secret as distinctly as in the most open scene of action will regard these addresses with peculiar pleasure, as the emotions of a pious and sincere heart; and will another

4 That thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men: verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

[f Contrive to be caught at that sacred time.] Thus the late pious and eloquent Mr. Grove explains and finely illustrates this text in his Discourse on Secret Prayer, p. 3, 4. It is plain this custom still prevails among the Mahometans; as Pfeiffer has observed, Theol. Mohammed. Oper. p. 848—974. and Bohacins in his Turkish Liturgy, § 1. See a remarkable illustration of it in Mr. Addison’s Freeholder, No. 59.

v Enter into thy closet, or any other retired apartment.] Tarkiun signifies closet, chamber, wardrobe, warehouse, or any other separate place; and Mr. Blair piously conjectures that Christ might use a word of such latitude that none might omit secret prayer for want of so convenient an apartment as they could wish to retire into. It will, I hope, be observed that many remarks of this kind proceed on a supposition that the Spirit of God directed the apostles in their writings to choose such Greek words as most exactly corresponded to those in the Jewish language which Christ used.
And cautions them against vain repetitions.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye:

Thus therefore pray ye, or to this effect at least, and in this plain, concise and humble manner, if not in these very words: "Our Father, who art seated on a throne of glory in the highest heaven; while we bow before thine awful presence with the humblest reverence, we would nevertheless approach thee with filial confidence, as our bountiful and compassionate Parent; uniting our supplications to thee with hearts full of brotherly love, and asking for each other the blessings we seek for ourselves. We would so remember our relation to thee as to be above all things concerned for thy glory; and therefore make it our first petition, May thy illustrious name be sanctified! May the whole race of mankind, yea, the whole world of intelligent creatures pay their dutiful veneration to thy Divine Majesty which thy matchless perfections so justly require! And for this purpose,

10 Thy kingdom come;

b Do not use a vain multiplicity of words, ὑπὲρ ἀπαθειαγός.] Beza has well explained the etymology of the word; and Dr. Hammond shews how applicable it was to the devotion of the Gentiles. (Compare 1 Kings xviii. 26. and Acts xix. 34.) It is plain that the Jews were running into the same fault, if we may judge by their oldest Liturgies. (See Le Clerc, in loc. and Selden, de Syned. lib. i. cap. xii. p. 467, & seq.) And Dr. Wotton has illustrated the text so well, if it be considered as referring to them, that one could wish he had produced some better authorities than he has done for reading ὑπακοής rather than ἀπαθειαγός. See Wotton, Misc. Vol. I. p. 186—188.

i That dutiful veneration to thy Divine Majesty.] The name of God seems a phrase nearly answering to that of majesty when applied to an earthly sovereign; as Mr. Blair has justly observed. Serm. Vol. IV. p. 42.
pose, may that thy kingdom, which thou art now introducing among men, more perfectly come; may it be established with greater efficacy, be more clearly discovered, and more resolutely pursued! May thy will, always wise and always gracious, be done, as in heaven, so likewise upon earth; and may we mortals be taught to regard it with a resignation, acquiescence and obedience, resembling that of the heavenly spirits! And as for ourselves, O Lord, we would not seek the great things of life, we would not be anxious about its distant futurities, but humbly entreat thou wouldest open that bountiful hand on which we continually depend, and wouldest give us this day our daily bread, providing a competent supply for our present necessities, and teaching us to refer the rest to thy continual paternal care! And though we have in many respects been disobedient and ungrateful children, yet we beseech thee, O most compassionate Father, to forgive us our offences, whereby we stand chargeable, as it were, in thy book, with debts which we can never clear: yet do thou freely forgive them all, as we also desire to forgive our debtors, even all that have in any respect offended and injured us: yea, such pardon may we receive from thee, our God, as we are willing to impart to them! And do not bring us into circumstances of pressing temptation, lest our virtue should be vanquished and our
come: thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven:

11 Give us this day our daily bread:

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for

k More perfectly come.] It is reasonable to believe this petition had a sense peculiar to the period in which it was prescribed, and that we under this perfect revelation of the gospel cannot properly use it precisely with the same meaning: but so extensive a phrase may justly admit of other senses, at least by accommodation, as the Assembly's Catechism, with great propriety, illustrates it; and I believe there are few who decline the use of this prayer on this account, who do not often use scripture phrases with a much greater latitude.

l Resignation, acquiescence and obedience.] I have here joined their several expressions because I am not able certainly to determine which was most directly intended. There is a great deal of beauty and spirit in the interpretation which Mr. Addison gives of this petition: Spectat. Vol. III. No. 207.

m Our daily bread; τῷ ἀρνίῳ τῷ προπαιδ. I can see no reason for changing our received translation; and cannot but acquiesce in Mr. Mede's remark that προπαιδ signifies what is sufficient for our present support and subsistence, as προπαιδ signifies abundant: so that this petition is nearly parallel to that of Agur, Prov. xxx. 8. (See Mede's Works, p. 125.) This is a most excellent lesson to teach us, on the one hand, moderation in our desires, and, on the other, a humble dependence on Divine Providence for the most necessary supplies, be our possessions or our abilities ever so great.

n Such pardon—as we are willing to impart to them.] It is hardly possible to imagine a more effectual expedient to promote the forgiveness of injuries than this, of making it a part of our daily prayer to ask such pardon from God as we impart to our offending brother. For in this circumstance every malicious purpose against him would turn this petition into an imprecation, by which we should, as it were, bind down the wrath and vengeance of God upon ourselves.

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

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure our souls endangered by them; but if we must be thus tried, do thou graciously rescue us from the power of the evil one, that he may not triumph in our sin and ruin! These things we know that thou canst do for thy children, and we are humbly bold to hope thou wilt do them for us: for thine is the kingdom of universal nature; and the fulness of almighty power, and the glory of infinite perfection; and to thee be the praise of all ascribed for ever. Amen. So may it be! We most sincerely and earnestly desire that thou mayest be glorified and our petitions heard and accepted.

Let this be the model of your prayers, for these are the most important blessings you can ask. And let me particularly charge you to remember the view and connection in which I have taught you to ask the pardon of your sins: for if you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, supposing that forgiveness to proceed from a truly religious principle: But if you do not forgive men their offences, but continue to cherish resentment and to seek revenge, neither will that God whom you call your heavenly Father, own you for his genuine offspring and forgive you your offences; but by using the petition I have now been prescribing, you will in effect bind down a curse upon yourselves.

I would also apply the general advice I before gave to fasting as well as to prayer; and would again exhort you, That when you keep a private fast (as I conclude my disciples will often do) you be not like the hypocrites, going about with a dejected melancholy face and putting on a dismal

\[\text{Rescue us from the evil one.} \] putai εἴλαιον ἢς εἶναι τὰς ἐπομοδώμεναι may literally be rendered thus. For this signification of ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπομοδώμενων, see note h, p. 193.

\[\text{For thine is the kingdom, &c.} \] Though I am sensible there is some reason to doubt of the genuineness of this doxology, notwithstanding all that Mr. Jones (in his History of the Canon, Vol. I. p. 141, 142) has urged in its defence. (See Dr. Mill in loc. and Mr. Hallet in his Notes on Scripture, Vol. I. p. 153, & seq.) Yet it is certainly very ancient; and, as Bishop Hopkins, Mr. Blair, and other excellent writers have well observed, so admirably suits and enforces every preceding petition, that I could not persuade myself to omit it. And I hope the learned reader will excuse me, if, in matters of moment, I sometimes seem over cautious of omitting some passages which are indeed wanting in many ancient manuscripts, and omitted by some celebrated commentators, ancient as well as modern. I apprehend I shall have done my part, in thus hinting at the doubt which learned men have entertained concerning them, where I conceive the reasons for such doubt to be considerable. For the word amen, as it signifies truth, see note on John 17. 1, p. 129. When added to the conclusion of our prayers it is intended to express the sincerity and earnestness with which we desire the blessing we ask, with some cheerfulness of hope as to the success of our petitions.
Reflections on the practice of religious duties.

sect. xl.

mal air; for upon these occasions they emaciate, contract and deform their countenances; that by their sad and mournful looks they may appear to men to fast, and may be esteemed as persons of unusual mortification and holiness: verily I say unto you, That, in this notice that is taken of them by their fellow creatures, they have all their reward, and have not any to expect from God. But thou, O my disciple, when thou keepest such a fast, and comest from thy devout retirement, dress thyself just as thou dost at other times; anoint thy head with oil, and wash thy face, instead of fouling it with ashes; That thou mayest not appear to men as one that fastest, but only to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who sees in secret, and observes what passes in retirement, as the surest test of men's true characters, will not fail to reward thee openly for thy genuine and unaffected devotion.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face:

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 Let us learn from these repeated admonitions of our blessed Redeemer what is the only acceptable principle of every religious action; namely, a desire to approve ourselves to God in it: and let us particularly bring it into the instances in which it is here recommended.

2, 6 Our Lord takes it for granted that his disciples would be both charitable and devout. Let us cultivate both these branches of the Christian temper and avoid ostentation in both; as remembering the day approaches when every one of us must be made manifest in his true character before the tribunal of Christ. And, oh, what discoveries will then be opened upon the world! How many specious masks will be plucked off, that the hypocrite's character may appear in its native deformity! And, on the other hand, how many secret acts of piety and benevolence, which have been industriously concealed from human observation, will then shine forth

q Emaciate, contract and deform their countenances.] I know not any word in our language which exactly answers to emaciate in this connection. It is rendered corrupt in ver. 29, (compare Acts xviii. 41. Heb. viii. 15. and James iv. 14.) and properly signifies to change, spoil and consume; and is with peculiar elegance applicable to such an alteration of the natural countenance as proceeded from their emaciating themselves, and contracting their faces into a dismal form. The learned author of Fortanlate Socre, p. 15—22, has rendered it unnecessary for me to add any thing more on this or the following verse.

r Anoint thy head with oil, and wash thy face.] This was usual among the Jews, not only at feasts, but at other times; compare Ruth iii. 3. 2 Sam. xiv. 2. and Judith xvi. 8. On the other hand dust and ashes were often used in times of deep mourning, or public fasting, which must sadly deform the countenance; see 2 Sam. xiii. 19. Esth. iv. 1. 3. Isa. lxi. 3. Dan. ix. 3. and Jonah iii. 6.
Christ exhorts to lay up treasures in heaven.

forth in all their glory, celebrated and rewarded by God himself, who sees in secret, and whose eye penetrates all the recesses of our houses and our hearts!

There may our praise and our portion be! In the mean time let us with humble pleasure obey the call of our Divine Master, and be often addressing our heavenly Father in such language as he hath taught us; entering for secret exercise of devotion into our closet and shutting our door, excluding (as far as possible) every thought which would interrupt us in these sacred and happy moments. From thence let our prayers daily come before the throne like incense, and the lifting up of our hands be as the morning and the evening sacrifice. (Psal. cxli. 2.)

Christ himself has condescended to teach us to pray. Attentive to his precepts, animated by his example and emboldened by his intercession, let us learn and practise the lesson. Shed abroad on our hearts, O Lord, thy Spirit of adoption, which may teach us to cry, Abba, Father! to draw nigh to thee with filial reverence and confidence and with fraternal charity for each other, even for the whole family, to whom thou graciously ownest the relation! Inspire us with that zeal for thy glory which may render the honour of thy name, the prosperity of thy kingdom and the accomplishment of thy will far dearer to us than any interest of our own! On thee may we maintain a cheerful dependance for our daily bread, and having food and raiment, be therewith content! (1 Tim. vi. 8) most solicitously seeking the pardon of our past sins and the influences of thy grace to preserve us from future temptations, or to secure us in them! And may our sense of that need in which we stand of forgiveness from thee, dispose us cordially to forgive each other, especially as thou hast wisely and graciously made this the necessary means of receiving our own pardon! Our corrupted hearts are too little disposed for these sentiments; but may God's almighty power produce and cherish them in us! and while the comfort is ours may all the glory be his, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

SECT. XLI.

Our Lord cautions his disciples against the love of the present world, and urges a variety of lively and convincing arguments to dissuade them from anxiety about the morrow. Mat. VI. 19.

MAT. VI. 19.

lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break in and steal. (compare Luke xvi. 14, and Mat. xxiii. 14.)

MAT. VI. 19.

I would also take this opportunity of cautioning you, my hearers, against that covetous temper which the Pharisees are so ready to indulge (compare Luke xvi. 14, and Mat. xxiii. 14.)
Christ exhorts to lay up treasures in heaven.

14. and therefore add, Do not make it your great care to lay up for yourselves treasures here on earth, where so many accidents may deprive you of them; where the moth, for instance, may spoil your finest garments, and a devouring canker may consume your corn, or may corrupt the very metals you have hoarded; and where thieves may dig through the strongest walls that you have raised about them, and may steal them away. But build your happiness on a nobler and more certain foundation, and store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where none of these accidents can happen; where neither moth nor canker can consume them, and where thieves cannot break in, nor steal them away; but the arms of Everlasting Power and Love shall secure you from every calamity and invasion.

21. The influence which this advice will have on your whole conduct should engage you to attend more diligently to it; for where that which you account your chief treasure is, there will your heart also be, and thither will the tendency of your actions be referred. See therefore that you form a right judgment on so important an article and do not over-value the world and its enjoyments. For as the eye is the lamp of the whole body; and therefore, on the one hand, if thine eye be clear, and free from any vitiating humour, thy whole body will be full of light; but, on the other hand, if thine eye be distempered, thy whole body will be full of darkness: so it is with respect to the practical judgment you form as to the worth of earthly and heavenly enjoyments. If therefore the light that

moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

21. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness: if therefore the light that is in thee

a Canker may consume your corn, or corrupt the very metals you have hoarded.] The word *βερχος* is by some translated *snout* or *beak*; and is supposed to signify any little insect that gets into corn and eats it. Mr. Blair seems to understand it so, and thinks our Lord here refers to clothes, *grain* and *gold*, as the chief treasures respectively obnoxious to moth, *snout* and *thieves*; which may seem the more probable, as a different word 3ερχος is used for *rust*, Jam. v. 9. But as *βερχος* properly signifies any thing that *eats* into another substance, I rather chose to render it *canker*, which has much the same ambiguity; and to paraphrase it in a manner including both the senses.

b If thine eye be clear, &c.] Some commentators have explained this as if our Lord intended here to urge the practice of liberality, as what would have a great influence on the whole of a man's character and conduct; and suppose it is illustrated by all those passages where an *evil eye* signifies a grudging temper, and a *good eye* a bountiful disposition (compare Deut. xvi. 9, Prov. xxiii. 6. xxviii. 23. and xxvii. 9. Heb.) and also by those texts in which *simplicity* is put for liberality, (Rom. xii. 8. and 2 Cor. vii. 9. ix. 11—15. Gr.) See Hammond, Whitby, L'Enfant, and Beausobre, in loc. But the sense given above appears most natural as well as most extensive.—I have rendered *αναβλυναν* clear, rather than *single*, as less ambiguous, and with more evident propriety applied to the *eye*; it is opposed to an *eye* overgrown with a *film*, which would obstruct the sight.

c God
There is no serving God and mammon.

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.

that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! and if the maxims you lay down to yourselves are wrong, how very erroneous must your conduct be!

And do not impose upon yourselves so far as to imagine that your hearts can be equally divided between heaven and earth: for as no man can serve two masters whose interests and commands are directly contrary to each other; but will quickly appear, either comparatively to hate the one, and love the other; or, by degrees, at least, will grow weary of so disagreeable a situation, so as to adhere entirely to the one, and quite neglect and abandon the other: so you will find you cannot at the same time serve God and mammon; that unworthy idol to which so many are devoting their hearts and their pursuits.

And I would charge you therefore to take heed that your affections be not engaged in a service so inconsistent with religion and true happiness; and in particular, I say unto you, Be not distressed with anxious cares about your subsistence in life what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, when your present stock of provisions is gone; nor with respect to your body, what you shall put on, when the garments you have are worn out. Is not life a better and more valuable gift than food, and the body than raiment? And if it be, why should you not trust that almighty and gracious Being who formed your bodies and inspired them with life, to maintain the work of his own hands?

*God and mammon.* Mammon is a Syriac word for riches, which our Lord beautifully represents as a person whom the folly of men had defied. It is well known the Greeks had a fictitious god of wealth; but I cannot find that he was ever directly worshipped in Syria under the name of mammon.

A late writer, who takes upon him, by the strength of his own reason, to reject at pleasure what the apostles believed and taught, strangely complains of a want of connection between this and the preceding verse. But can there be any better reason assigned against immoderate anxiety than this, that such a subjectio to mammon as this expresses is utterly inconsistent with the love and service of God?

Be not anxious about your subsistence in life. It is certain that the word *mammon* generally signifies an excessive anxiety (see Luke x. 41, xii. 11, xxi. 34, and Phil. iv. 6; and indeed almost every other place where it is used); which is agreeable to the derivation of it. There is no need therefore to say (as Archbishop Tillotson, Vol. II. p. 255, and Dr. Clarke in his Sermons, Vol. III. p. 116, & seq. do) that our Lord only addresses this to his apostles, who were to cast themselves on an extraordinary Providence, without being any wise concerned for their support. Mr. Blair has well proved the contrary at large in his excellent Appendix to his fourth Sermon, Vol. I. p. 55, & seq. and it is easy to observe that the arguments our Lord urges contain nothing peculiar to their case, but are built on considerations applicable to all Christians; compare Phil. iv. 6, and 1 Pet. v. 7, as also Luke xxii. 35, 36, and Acts xx. 34, from whence it appears that the apostles themselves were not entirely to neglect a prudent care for their own subsistence in dependence on miraculous provisions.

You
You may surely do it when you reflect on his care of the inferior creatures. Look on the birds of the air, for instance, that are now flying around you! for though they are gay and cheerful to a proverb, yet do they neither sow nor reap: nor do they, like some other animals, gather a stock of food into hoards, to lay up for winter; and yet the rich providence of your heavenly Father plentifully feedeth them; and are not you, his children, much more valuable in his sight than they? as well as much better furnished with means of providing for yourselves? Why then should you at any time suspect his care? And after all, this immoderate carefulness is useless, as well as unnecessary; for which of you can, by [all his] anxiety, add to his age or vigour so much as one cubit, or even the smallest measure or moment beyond what God shall appoint? Nay, it is much more probable you should rather impair than strengthen your constitution by indulging such a temper, which sometimes brings on grey hairs and death before their time.

And as for raiment, why are ye anxious [about that?] Observe not only the animal, but what is yet much lower, the vegetable part of the creation; and particularly, consider there the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not to prepare the materials of their covering, nor do they spin or weave them into garments: Yet I say unto you, That even the magnificent Solomon in all his royal glory, when sitting on his throne of ivory and gold, (1 Kings x. 13.) was not arrayed in garments of so pure a white, and of such

1. The birds of the air now flying around you.] It is not so proper to render æstræna, fowls, as that word generally signifies the larger kind of birds, and especially those under the care of men. For mentioning the birds, as then in their sight, see the latter part of note v on Mat. v. 14, p. 203.

g. Are you not much more valuable than they, as well as much better furnished with means of providing for yourselves? I may not you greatly the advantage of them, which may refer to man's being capable of sawing, reaping and gathering into barns, which the birds are not: and though I rather prefer the former sense, I thought it not improper to hint at the other; as I have done in many other places where such ambiguities have occurred.

h. Can add to his age.] It is well known that this is frequently the signification of the word Ækag, there being many places where it is evident that it is used for age (as John ix. 21, 23, and Heb. xi. 14.) and certainly it makes the best sense here; for it is seldom found that persons are solicitous about growing a cubit taller.—I confess a cubit of age is not a common phrase among us, though an inch of time be sometimes used; and in this view, had I rendered cubit by moment, as a learned friend who remarked on this passage advised, it would have been very justifiable.

i. Was not arrayed in garments of so pure a white.] As the eastern princes were often clothed in white robes, and they were generally counted a magnificent apparel (compare Esth. viii. 15. and Dan. vii. 9.)
We should seek first the kingdom of God.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and such curious workmanship as one of these lillies presents to your view. And if God so clothe the grass of the field, and shelters and adorns the flower that grows wild amongst it, which is [flourishing] to-day, and perhaps to-morrow is thrown into the furnace or the still, [will he] not much more [clothe] you, his servants and his children, O ye of little faith? that you should be so diletant as to distrust his care, or in the least to doubt of it!

Be not ye therefore any more distracted and 31 torn in pieces (as it were) with anxious and unbelieving thoughts, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink? How is it we shall be provided for, or what shall we wear, in the remainder of our lives? (For it is really be-32 neath your character as my disciples, thus to distress yourselves on this account: the heathen, who are strangers to the promises of God's covenant and to the hopes of his glory, do indeed seek after all these things: and it is no wonder that their minds are taken up with them: but you have greater business to employ you, and higher hopes to animate and encourage you;)

for you may be assured that as your heavenly Father knoweth that you need all these things while you dwell in the body, he will not fail to provide them for you.

But I exhort you that you turn your cares 33 into a nobler channel and seek, in the first place, and with the greatest earnestness and concern, the kingdom of God and his righteousness;

I think it more natural to explain the words thus (as Calmet does in his Dissert. Vol. II. p. 920), than to suppose with Ray (on the Creation, p. 107), that 

33 sect, xii.

Mat. VI. 33.

k Shelters and adorns the flower.] The word ἐγκαλύπτω, which we render clothe, properly expresses the putting on a complete dress that surrounds the body on all sides; and is used with peculiar beauty for that exalt yet strong external membrane, which (like the skin in the human body) at once adorns the tender structure of the vegetable, and likewise guards it from the injuries of the weather. Every microscope in which a flower is viewed affords a lively comment on this text.

Is thrown into the furnace or the still.] I apprehend that this may be as properly the signification of the word ἐκστέασας as given, and that the sense will thus appear to be more easy; for it can hardly be supposed that grass or flowers should be thrown into the oven the day after they are cut down; unless it was the custom to heat their ovens with new hay, which seems not very natural. Elsner indeed renders γάτα as stubble; but that seems not to suit the context.

m The kingdom of God, and his righteousness.] By righteousness Dr. Sykes here understands the Messiah; the righteous Branch who was to rule in righteousness, and in whose days the righteous were to flourish, (see Dr. Sykes on Christianity, p. 35, 36): But it seems more natural to interpret it of that way of becoming righteous which the gospel proposes, and which St. Paul,
labouring to secure an interest in the promises of the gospel yourselves, and to promote its reception among others, that by submitting to the righteousness of God you may be thus accepted as righteous before him: in that you will be sure of success; and as for all these little things of which I have now been speaking, they shall be added to you over and above, and, as it were, thrown in amidst a crowd of far more valuable blessings. And therefore, while you faithfully attend to this, be not anxious even for the morrow, and much less for future years; for indeed the morrow shall provide for itself; that Providence which hath taken care of you formerly, shall send in new supplies and suggest new expedients, as new necessities and difficulties require them: and, in the mean time, you need not anticipate future trials; for without such an addition, sufficient for the present day [is] the evil of it, and it is well if you have wisdom and grace proportionable even to that.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Ver. How kind are these precepts of our blessed Redeemer! the substance of which is indeed but this, Do thyself no harm. Let us not be so ungrateful to him and so injurious to ourselves, as to harrass and oppress our minds with that burden of anxiety which he has so graciously taken off. Every verse and clause we have been reading speaks at once to the understanding and the heart.

We will not therefore indulge these unnecessary, these useless, these mischievous cares; we will not borrow the anxieties and distresses of the morrow to aggravate those of the present day; but rather will we cheerfully repose ourselves on that heavenly Father who knows that we need these things, and has given us life, which is more than meat; and the body, which is more than raiment; and thus instructed in the philosophy of our heavenly Master will learn a lesson of faith and cheerfulness from every bird of the air and every flower of the field.

Let the Gentiles that know not God perplex their minds with unworthy suspicions, or bow them down to the ignoble servitude of
of mammon, that base rival of our living Jehovah: but we, far from desiring to share our hearts and our services between two such contrary masters, will cheerfully devote them to him, whose right to them is so infinitely beyond all room for any contest. Let us take heed and beware of covetousness, and make it our business not to hoard up earthly and corruptible treasures, but first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness: so shall other things be added for present subsistence; and so shall we lay up in store an incorruptible treasure in heaven, in which we shall be rich and happy, when the riches of this world are consumed with their owners, and the whole fashion of it is passed away.

While these divine maxims are spreading their light about us, let our eye be clear to behold them, and our heart open to receive them; and let us cautiously guard against those deceitful principles of action which would give a wrong bias to all our pursuits, and turn the light which is in us into a fatal and incurable darkness.

SECT. XLII.

Our Lord proceeds in his discourse to caution his disciples against rash judgment, and to exhort them to impartiality, prudence, prayer and resolution; and warns them against seducers.

Mat. VII. 1—20.

Mat. VII. 1.

You, my disciples, live in a very censorious age, and the scribes and Pharisees, who are in the highest esteem for the strictness of their lives, place a great part of their own religion in condemning others; but see to it that you do not judge those about you in this rigorous and severe manner, nor pass such unnecessary or uncharitable censures upon them, that you may not yourselves be judged with the like severity. For in this respect you will find, that according to the judgment with which you judge others, you shall be judged; and by that very measure that you mete to them, it shall be measured back to you: God and man will make great allowances to the character of the candid and benevolent; but they must expect "judgment without mercy who have shewed no mercy;" nor can they deny the equity of such treatment. (Jam. ii. 13.)

The

a Place a great part of their own religion in condemning others.] Though Christ does not so directly level his discourse against the Pharisees in this chapter as in the two foregoing, he seems to glance upon them in this and other expressions which he uses in it. That they were very culpable on this head appears from such passages as Luke xviii. 9—14. xvi. 14, 15. and John vii. 47—49. (Compare Isa. lxv. 5.) Their unjust censures of Christ are the strongest instances of it that can be conceived.

b Look
The caution I have mentioned is more apparently necessary, considering how prone men are to be partial to themselves: but why dost thou, whoever thou art, look at that little infirmity which is but like a mote in thy brother’s eye, while thou observest not the much greater fault which is like a beam in thine own eye? Or how canst thou say to thy brother, with any appearance of justice, or any degree of assurance, Hold still, and I will take the mote out of thine eye; while behold, it is much more visible that there is a beam in thine own eye? Thou partial hypocrite, begin thy reformation at home, and make it thy first care to clear out the beam from thine own eye, or to correct the errors of thy judgment and the enormities of thy life; and then wilt thou better discern how to remove the mote out of thy brother’s eye, and mayest attempt it with more decency, as well as greater probability of success.

I would farther remind you that how unexceptionable soever your own characters may be, there is some caution to be used in attempting to reprove, or even to inform others; or you may expose your admonitions to contempt and yourselves to abuse. Give not that holy [food] to dogs, or to such profane, furious and persecuting wretches as deserve no better name; nor cast your precious pearls of heavenly wisdom before such profligate sensualists as resemble swine rather than men; lest, as those brutal creatures might do, if jewels were thrown before them, they trample them under their feet with scorn, and turning [upon you] as if they had received an injury rather than a favour, fasten on you and tear you: for so extremely sordid and malignant

b Look at a mote in thy brother’s eye, while thou observest not the beam in thine own eye. Dr. Lightfoot (Hor. Hebr. in loc.) has shewn that this expression, as well as that in ver. 2, was a proverb among the Jews. The word נים, which we render mote, is well explained by Hesychius, who tells us it signifies a little splinter of wood (though others understand it of a small seed;) and thus it is opposed to יַפְרוֹ, a large beam, with great propriety. But as it is impossible that such a thing as a beam of wood should be lodged in the eye, I am ready to imagine that these words might signify different kinds of distractions to which that tender part is subject; the former of which might be no more, in comparison of the latter, than a grain or splinter to a beam.

c Hold still [and] I will take the mote out of thine eye. This seems to be the exact meaning of נים נון, which I chose to translate literally, as I think it elegantly intimates how ready men are to shrink back from reproof. The simile here used implies that it is as absurd for a bad man to set up for a reprover of others, as it would be for one that is almost blind himself to pretend to perform operations on other men’s eyes.

And turning [upon you] tear you. I cannot blame the translation of 1721, which follows Castalio, and renders it lest these (that is, the swine) trample them under foot, and those (that is, the dogs) turn upon you and tear you. This may perhaps be our Lord’s meaning, but it did not seem necessary
And encourages them to fervency in prayer.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

8 For every one that asketh receiveth: and he that secketh findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Lignant will you find many in these degenerate days.

Now, whether you want wisdom to guide you in these difficulties, or fortitude to animate you against such hardships; or, in a word, whatever your exigencies or necessities may be, ask the Divine assistance in prayer, and it shall be given you: seek it, and you shall find it; and if it be a while delayed, knock with repeated importunity at the door of mercy, and it shall at length be graciously opened to you. To this you are encouraged by the experience of every praying soul; for every one that asketh aright receiveth; and he that diligently seeketh, findeth; and to him that patiently knocketh, the door shall be opened.

And indeed it is no inconsiderable encouragement which you may derive from that natural affection to your offspring which a merciful God has infused into the hearts of those of you that are parents; for what one man is there among you, in all this numerous assembly, who, if his son should ask him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he ask him for a fish, will give him a serpent? Can you imagine any father could be so unnatural as to deny the necessary supplies of life to his hungry child; and instead of these to give him what would starve or poison him? If therefore you, imperfect and evil as you are, and some of you perhaps tenacious, froward and unkind, yet know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more fitly bear it, I conceive that in each of these places it may be rendered indeed.

[What man is there among you?]

This seems to be the emphasis of τις εἰσὶν ἐν ὑμῖν ἡγεμόνας: some think it also to imply the same as if it had been said, Which of you is there, though but a man? And as what is added in the eleventh verse plainly expresses this sense, perhaps it might also be intended here.—Young preachers will, I hope, observe how much life and force it adds to these discourses of our Lord that they so closely are directed, through the whole of them, as an immediate address to his hearers; and are not loose and general harangues, in the manner of those essays which are now grown so fashionable in pulpits. If any are grown too polite to learn true oratory from Christ, I wish they would at least learn it from Demosthenes, who, I doubt not, would have admired the eloquence of this sermon.
He teaches them to do as they would be done to.

**Sect. xii.**

Children; if you find your hearts disposed and ready to communicate the best of what you have for their relief and sustenance, how much more will your almighty and all-bountiful Father in heaven, who has a perfect sight of all your wants, and can with perfect ease supply them, and who himself has wrought into your hearts these benevolent affections, be ready to exceed you in expressing his kindness, so as freely to give good things to those that ask them of him by fervent and constant prayer?

12 Being animated therefore by his goodness, study to express your gratitude for it by your integrity and kindness to your fellow-creatures; and take it as a most sacred rule, All things which ye would be willing that men should do to you, do ye also in like manner to them: treat them in every instance just as you would think it reasonable to be treated by them, if you were in their circumstances, and they in yours: for this is, in effect, a summary and abstract of all the human and social virtues recommended in the moral precepts of the law and the prophets; and it was one of the greatest ends of both to bring men to this equitable and amiable temper.

13 It will indeed be very difficult thus to overcome the prejudices of self-love, and to subdue those other corruptions of the heart which oppose themselves to the obedience of the Divine laws; and the persecutions to which good men are often exposed will increase the difficulty: but I would more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law, and the prophets.

13 Enter ye in at the

...
He cautions them against seducing teachers.

14. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do not suppose that our Lord here refers to the rough habit worn by false prophets of old; for which purpose so many critics quote Zech. ixii. 4, and, very unaccountably, Heb. xi. 37. For, not to insist on the probability there is that those rough garments might be made of goat's or camel's hair rather than wool, (compare 2 Kings i. 8, and Mat. iii. 4.) the beauty of this simile is lost by this interpretation. A wolf in sheep's clothing is grown into a proverb for a wicked man that makes a great profession of religion, yet cannot dissemble so well as not to be discovered by attentive observation; which was just the character of the Pharisees in our Saviour's days; see Mat. xxviii. 27—28, and Luke xi. 39—42.

1. You may know them by their fruits.] The characters of men are not to be discovered by the doctrines that they teach; and therefore this cannot (as some have thought) be the meaning of knowing them who were their teachers by their fruits. It is more reasonable to explain it of their actions, which are often called fruits; (compare Mat. iii. 8, xii. 43, John xv. 5, and Col. i. 6) It will be objected that bad men may teach good doctrines, and even the worst have been known to do it in some instances. But as to this, I answer that our Lord does not exhort his disciples to reject whatever such men taught, but only to be upon their guard against them, that they might not credit any thing merely on their authority.—I only add that this caution would, by a parity of reason, extend to all that set up for teachers, as well as to prophets (not to insist on the probability there is that word is used) so that it would at
The tree may be known by its fruits.

and discover, through all their disguise, that base character which lurks beneath, and which may justly render you suspicious as to their doctrines:

(2 Tim. iii. 5—9.) For do men look to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?* Or can it be expected by you, in a common way, that you should gather spiritual advantage, or should obtain religious improvement from the lessons of wicked men? Their influence, on the whole, will be more likely to debauch than edify your minds; for as the fruit will be agreeable in its nature and kind to the tree that produces it, even so every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces bad fruit; and in like manner will the fruits that men produce be answerable to the habitual frame and disposition of their hearts. Nor can it indeed be otherwise in the usual course of things; for as a good tree cannot bear evil fruit, so neither can a corrupt tree bear good fruit; (compare Mat. xii. 33—35. sect. lxii.) And therefore, by the way, to prevent such false pretenders to religion from being a lasting incumbrance and mischief, they shall assuredly be overtaken by the righteous judgment of God; and as you see that every tree which, after a competent trial, beareth not good fruit, how fair and flourishing soever it may seem, is cut down and cast into the fire; such too will be the end of hypocritical professors and ungodly men, which it becomes you all seriously to consider. Upon the whole it will be found that there is now a difference in men's characters correspondent to the great difference to be made in their future estate; so that I had reason to say, that you shall generally know them by their fruits; the disguise will fall off in an unguarded moment, and it will be your wisdom to observe and improve the signal.

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

at least obliquely glance on the Pharisees, whose influence over the people was so injurious to the gospel, and so exceeding mischievous to those who had a veneration for them, that our Lord (and it necessary often to repeat such caution. See Mat. xv. 12, 19. xvi. 6. xxiii. 2; &c. see. Mark. viii. 13. and Luke xii. 1.

*Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?] These words suppose the plant was known to be a thorn or a thistle, and represent the folly of looking for grapes or figs from plants that had it not in their nature to bear them, or of expecting good from persons that were vicious and corrupt. Had Christ meant what has commonly been supposed, he would rather have said, You do not find thorns on a vine, or thistles on a fig-tree.
IMPROVEMENT.

When will the happy time come in which Christians shall form themselves on these important maxims of their great Master! When shall they be known to be his disciples by the candour of their sentiments, the equity of their conduct and the beneficence of their actions, as well as by the articles of their faith and the forms of their worship! Let us all apply these charges to ourselves in the dear and awful name of him that gave them.

What can be more dreadful to us than to think of being severely judged by that God, without whose hourly forbearance and gracious indulgence we are all undone? Let us then exercise that mercy which we need: and to form our minds to this most reasonable temper, let us often be thinking of our own many infirmities, and be humbling ourselves before God on account of them.

Animated by the gracious invitations and the precious promises which are here given, with earnest importunity let us make our daily addresses to his throne; asking, that we may receive, seeking, that we may find; and knocking, that the door of mercy may be opened to us. And while any of us feel in our hearts the workings of parental tenderness towards our infant offspring, let us consider it as a delightful emblem of yet greater readiness in our heavenly Father to pity and relieve his children.

May universal righteousness and charity be practised by us in the whole of our behaviour, and may we always exercise ourselves herein to have a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards men! (Acts xxiv. 16.) May we avoid all manner of injustice and guard against the sallies of a proud and over-bearing temper! May we be upright and benevolent in all our conduct; and make it our constant care to govern our actions by that most equitable rule, Of doing to others as we would reason ably desire they should do to us, on a change of our circumstances and theirs! Happy those generous souls in whom the bias of self-love is so rectified, that they can, in this instance, hold the balance between themselves and others with an impartial and unwavering hand!

On the whole, let us remember that we ourselves are at last to be tried by the rule by which we are here directed to judge of others, even by the fruits which we produce. May God by his grace make the tree good, that the productions of it may be found to his glory and the refreshment of all around us, that we may not be cut down as cumberers of the ground, and cast into the fire!
Christ has no value for mere nominal professors.

The way of life, which our blessed Redeemer has marked out for us in such precepts as these, may indeed to corrupt nature appear rugged and narrow, and the gate strait through which we are to pass: but let us encourage ourselves against all the difficulties, by considering that immortal life and glory to which they infallibly lead. Then shall we, doubtless, prefer the most painful way of piety and virtue, though with yet fewer companions than we might reasonably expect, to all those flowery and frequented paths of vice which go down to the chambers of death.

SECT. XLIII.

Our Lord concludes his sermon on the mount with a lively representation of the absolute necessity of a practical regard to his precepts. Mat. VII. 21, to the end.

SECT. xliii.

Mat. VII. 21.

These are the precepts I thought proper to give you; and you must govern your lives by them, if ever you hope to find your account in the most diligent attendance on my ministry: for it is not every one who saith unto me, Lord, Lord, who is ready now in words to acknowledge me as his Master, or who at last, with the most passionate and earnest cries, entreats my mercy, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven 4, and be admitted to the complete felicity in which the administration I am now opening shall finally terminate, but he only shall be entitled to that privilege, who conscientiously performs in the main series of his life the holy will of my Father who is in heaven.

22 It will be your wisdom to attend to these things; for though you now see me in what may seem a mean and despicable form, the time will certainly come when I shall appear as the Universal Judge: and I now forewarn you, that many will say to me in that day, when their eternal state is to be determined, Lord, Lord, have we not been employed in distinguished offices in thy church, and been furnished for them even by miraculous endowments? and in pursuance of them, have we not taught and prophesied

3 Shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.] Here the kingdom of heaven must signify that of glory above; for calling Christ Lord, is the very circumstance which constitutes us the subjects of his earthly kingdom, or members of his visible church. Compare Mat. viii. 11. Luke xiii. 28. and 1 Cor. xv. 50.

3 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not
The necessity of doing his will.

not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

22 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.

24 Therefore whatsoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock;

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand;

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

It will then openly declare unto them, I never loved you, or never approved of your character.

And when you made the most florid profession; and therefore depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; and whatever you that hear me may now imagine, that separation from me will be their everlasting destruction.

Hear therefore the conclusion of the whole matter, and seriously attend to it. Everyone, whoever he be, and how great soever his former irregularities may have been, who heareth these my sayings, and doeth them; or in the main course of his life governs his temper and his actions by them, lays a solid foundation for present comfort and everlasting security and joy: I will compare him therefore to a prudent man who built his house upon a firm rock; and the stormy rain 25 descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat with violence upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded on a solid rock. And thus shall the good man's hopes be established, when they come, as all must come, to the strictest trial. But every one that heareth these my sayings, and doeth them not, how constantly soever he may attend them, and whatever zeal he may profess for them, may justly be compared to a foolish man, who, without any care to secure the foundation, built his house upon the sand; and the stormy rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew with a tempestuous violence, and struck directly on that house; and it fell at once, and its ruin was great and wide as the building had been: a lively emblem of the ruin which will another day overwhelm the unhappy man who trusts to an outward profession and form of godliness, when he does not sincerely and practically regard it.

And

There is an incomparable dignity in this whole passage, which I have endeavoured a little to illustrate in the paraphrase. The poor despised Jesus not only calls God his Father, but speaks as the Eternal Judge before whom men should beg and plead for their very lives, dreading banishment from him as their final destruction.

25 I never knew you, or never approved of your character.] This word knew is plainly used in this sense. Psal. i. 6, Mat. xxv. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 19. John x. 14. Rom. vii. 15. and perhaps 1 Cor. viii. 3.

26 Even when you made the most florid profession.] This is a very remarkable circumstance that is strongly implied in the words, I NEVER knew you.
Reflections on the excellence and dignity of Christ's discourses.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these excellent sayings, the multitudes that heard him were struck with amazement at his doctrine. For in this and his other sermons he was still teaching them as one that had a Divine authority to dictate in his own name, and not as the scribes, their established teachers; who generally contented themselves with quoting the name and authority of some celebrated doctors of the former age, and that frequently to confirm some trifling remark or useless ceremony of human device: whereas the discourses of Christ were weighty and convincing and always delivered with an air of seriousness, dignity and majesty, becoming the great Prophet and King of his church, and the immediate Delegate from God to men.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. How justly may our admiration concur with theirs that heard these sayings of our Lord, while we have the honour and pleasure of attending these discourses as the inspired penmen have recorded them, by the assistance of that Spirit who was to bring all things to their remembrance! Are we not struck with the authority of this Divine Teacher, so as to bear our witness to the gracious and edifying words that proceeded out of his mouth? (Luke iv. 22.)

24—27 Let us not content ourselves with applauding what we have heard, but let us go away and practise it. Shortly will that stormy day arise which must try the foundation of our hopes. God will lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place. How thankful should we be that God has laid in Zion for a foundation, a chief Corner-stone, elect and precious;

e When Jesus had finished these excellent sayings.] This plainly intimates that all this discourse was delivered at once, and consequently that several passages related by Luke, as spoken at different times, are repetitions of it; compare Mat. v. 3, & seq. with Luke vi. 20, & seq.—Mat. v. 13, with Luke xiv. 24, 35.—Mat. v. 23, with Luke xii. 58.—Mat. vi. 9, & seq. with Luke xi. 2, & seq.—Mat. vi. 20, 21. Luke xii. 28, 34.—Mat. vi. 24, with Luke xvi. 13.—Mat. vii. 1, & seq. with Luke vi. 37, & seq.—and Mat. vii. 12—14, with Luke xii. 24.

f He was still teaching them.] Beza has well observed, that these words ἔτεκεν δὲ αὐτόν refer to the continued course and general character of his teaching, of which this discourse is a noble specimen; indeed so glorious a one, that I persuade myself the reader will pardon my having paraphrased it in so copious a manner.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.
29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.
precious; with an assurance, that _he that believeth on him shall not be confounded!_ (Compare Isa. xxviii. 16. & seq. and 1 Pet. ii. 6.)

_But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon; lest the weight of his ruin be proportionable to the height of his hopes._

(1 Cor. iii. 10.)

_We say unto Christ, Lord, Lord; but let us remember this will not secure our entering into his heavenly kingdom. Whatever be our profession, or whatever our office in his church, the most splendid and honourable of our works will be vain, if we are found workers of iniquity; for our great Master will then disown us as those whom he has never approved. Blessed Jesus! it will then be in vain to fly to thee with the importunity of prayer, and to repeat the most earnest addresses. We would now, while yet there is room for it, fall down before thee, entreating thee to add the teachings of thy Spirit to those of thy word, that we may be effectually engaged to do the will of thine heavenly Father, that we may finally be confessed and owned by thee and be admitted into the joy of our Lord!_

**SECT. XLIV.**

_Jesus descending from the mount, cleanses a leper who applied to him for a cure._


**Mat. VIII. 1.**

_Mat. VIII. 1._

_WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him._

Luke V. 12. And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold,

_Asc he was coming down from the mount._ I think this a sufficient warrant for fixing this story where we introduce it; though it be contrary to the order in which many learned men have placed it. Neither Mark nor Luke are, in this respect, by any means so express in the connection of it. Yet an attentive reader will observe, that I have not in this instance transposed either of them. The erroneous opinion that Luke vi. contained the sermon on the mount, and fixed it to an order different from Matthew's, is that by which so many have been led into a mistake here.

_in a certain city: or, in the confines of a certain city._ As Luke expresses it thus, I am apt to think it was not Capernaum, which Luke had so often named before; and consequently, that the mountain, on which Christ's sermon was delivered, lay at some distance from thence; whereas the plain, on which some of it was repeated, was contiguous to Capernaum, into which, as Luke says, he entered at the close of it; (see Luke vii. 1. sect. iv. and compare note b on Mat. v. 1. p. 199.) — I speak of the confines of this city, whatever it was; because lepers were not allowed to live in towns. Compare Num. v. 2. 2 Kings vi. 3. 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. and Luke xvii. 12.
Christ cleanseth a leper, and enjoins him silence.

**Sect. xliv.**


**Mark J. 41.**

*And Jesus, pleased with so strong a degree of faith,* performed the cure, and did it also in the most condescending manner; for, being moved with compassion at so melancholy a sight, hebetook him aside from the multitude, and stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying, Lord, though my distemper be to human power incurable, (2 Kings v. 7.) yet I know assuredly that, if thou wilt, thou canst cleanse me from it.

**Mark I. 41.** And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will that thy petition be granted, and from this moment therefore be thou clean. And the almighty power of his commanding word immediately took place, and as soon as he had spoken, the leprosy departed from him; and it appeared by the alteration of his countenance that he was entirely cleansed from that loathsome and invertebrate disease.

**42 And as soon as** he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. — [Mat. VIII. 3. Luke V. 13.—]

**43 And Jesus had no sooner wrought this miracle, but having strictly charged him not to divulge the matter,** he dispatched him presently away;—

**44 Saying unto him,** as he departed from him, *See that at present thou say nothing unto any one of my having performed this cure; but make it thy first business**

*E He took him aside from the multitude.] Else I think there could have been no room for the charge of secrecy given below; and the supposition of such a circumstance, which certainly happened in another cure (compare Mark viii. 23, sect. lxxxviii.) will be a sufficient answer to the objections which Mr. Whiston has urged against following the order of St. Matthew here. See his Harmony, p. 107, and Jones's Vindication, p. 112—121.

*d Having strictly charged him not to divulge the matter.] Some have supposed, that the phrase *eterno tempore* implies that Christ reproved him sharply for the sin for which he had been visited with this disease, and threatened him with the fatal consequence of it if he returned to sin again; and in this case, the probability of what we have supposed is strengthened, that this was spoken to him in private, and was delivered in the same manner as the like caution was which Christ afterwards gave to the impotent man. (Compare John v. 14, sect. xlvi.) But as the word is generally used to signify the giving of a strict injunction, or a solemn charge (as Phavorinus, Suidas and Hesychius, have explained it), I rather choose to understand it of the strict charge that Christ gave to the leper not to divulge the manner of his cure, which is expressly mentioned in the following verse; and in which sense it is evident that the same word is used Mat. ix. 30, sect. lxxixi. where the same charge is given to the two blind men that Christ restored to sight.

*e See thou sayest nothing unto any one of my having performed this cure.] Christ probably designed by this, not only to avoid the shame of any ostentation of his miraculous power, but to prevent the malice of his persecutors who might have been unwilling to pronounce this leper clean, and have been ready to deny the cure if they were told that he was healed by one they were so strongly prejudiced against; or might perhaps have accused Christ as having usurped an office that belonged to them.
business to go directly to Jerusalem, and there show thyself to the priest whose office it is legally to pronounce thee clean; and offer for thy cleansing those things, [Mat. the gift, which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. [Mat. VIII. 3. Luke V. 13.]

45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter.—

Luke V. 15. [And] so much the more there went a fame abroad of him; and great multitudes came together to hear him from every quarter, to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. [Mark I. 45.]

Mark I. 45.—Inso-

much, that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places.—

Luke V. 16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Improvement.

Our souls are overspread with the leprosy of sin: and where should we apply for help but to the healing power and recovering grace of the great Redeemer! Be the malady ever so deep, spreading or inveterate, we may surely adopt the words of the leper before us, and say, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

...
Christ returns again to Capernaum.

And how much reason have we to hope this compassion will be moved in our favour, and his power exerted in our cure!

If we have received that favour, we are under the obligation of no command to conceal it. It is, on the contrary, our duty most gratefully to publish it abroad, for the honour of our Benefactor, and the advantage of those who may be encouraged to make the same application in humble hope of the same success.

But when will the happy time come that men shall be as solicitous about their spiritual welfare as about the health of this mortal body! Almighty Physician! exert thine energy in this instance as a token of farther favours! Convince men of their pollution and danger, and bow their stubborn knee, that it may bend in submissive and importunate supplication!

Let the compassionate air with which this cure was wrought, be considered by all spiritual physicians as a lesson of condescension and tenderness; and let the modesty, with which it was conducted engage us to avoid every appearance of ostentation and vain-glory.

To conclude; since Christ himself found it proper to retire into a desert place to pray, when crowds of admirers were flocking in upon him, let it teach those who are engaged in the scenes of public business and fill them up with the greatest applause, yet resolutely to command some seasons for retirement; as remembering, that the more various and important our public labours are, the more evidently do we need to draw down succour by ardent prayer, that we may be strengthened and prospered in them.

SECT. XLV.

Christ returning to Capernaum heals a man quite disabled by the palsy; vindicates his power of forgiving sins; and calls Matthew the publican to attend him. Mark II. 1—14; Luke V. 17—28; Mat. IX. 2—9.

And after Jesus had spent some days in Capernaum, devout retirement, he appeared again in public,

And after Jesus had spent some days.]

Matthew has recorded so many events between the cure of the leper and the paralytic, that I should not have connected them, had not Mark so expressly asserted, that some of those events, especially the dispossessior of the legion, happened long after (see Mark iv. 35. note a, sect. lxxix, and Mark v. 1. sect. lxx.lxxx.) and Luke strongly intimates the same concerning the other story of the centurion's servant. (See Luke vii. 1, 2, & seq. sect. iv.) Now I think the honour of the New Testament requires—that when one of the evangelists does expressly assert the order in which he places facts in question and the other does not so expressly assert it (which is the case with Matthew here), the order of the latter, though an apostle and eye-witness, should be changed out of regard to the former. As likewise—that if none of the three assert their order, that in which any two agree to place a fact in question, should be chosen rather than that of the third. And on these two rules I have proceeded.
img displaces 193x409

and if on.

And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

It was noted that he was in the house.

Luke V. 17. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

proceeded in many instances.—But that the order of Matthew should be changed for that of Luke, when neither of them assert any thing concerning that order, is what I think no inference from Luke i. 5, can justify. (See note * on that text, p. 22.) Much less can it be allowable expressly to contradict Matthew, for the sake of keeping to the order of Luke; which yet most harmonizers seem to have done, even when he was relating what passed in his own house and presence. (See note a on Mat. ix. 18, sect. lxxii.) Could I have persuaded myself to take such liberties with any of the sacred writers, I should not have doubted to follow Matthew and John in their order universally, as Sir Isaac Newton doth, and to transpose Mark and Luke wherever they disagree with either of them; for I cannot observe that those two do in any instance disagree with each other in any of the facts in question.—As to the story of the paralysis here before us, Mark strongly connects it with that of the leper, as happening some days after it; though Matthew does not mention it till the next chapter, and places several events between them; while Luke according to his frequent custom, mentions it only as happening on a certain day. This therefore seems to be the proper place to introduce it, and Matthew’s order may be changed for the reasons given above.

b From Jerusalem.] If this happened, as most commentators suppose, a little before Christ’s second passover (John v. 1), some of these might be sent from the Sanhedrim with a view of gaining some information concerning Jesus, to guide their resolves concerning him at the ensuing feast, in which they persecuted him, and sought to slay him. John v. 16. It is very probable that the scribes at Jerusalem, hearing how expressly he had attacked their interpretation of the law, some days before, in his celebrated sermon on the mount, (which, so far as we can learn, was the first time he did it) might summon their brethren in the neighboring country to meet them at Capernaum, in order to attend on the next of Christ’s public discourses, wherever it might happen to be.

The power of the Lord was present to heal them.] According to the common method of construction this may seem to intimate that the healing power of Christ was exerted on some of the Pharisees: but as they came from distant parts to attend Christ as spies, it is not probable they were diseased persons; or that, if any of them being advanced in years might labour under some infirmities, they were so great and visible that a cure would be immediately remarked; and least of all can we suppose they had that faith in Christ which he required in those whom he intended to heal; (see Mark vi. 5, and compare John vi. 48.) It is more reasonable therefore to conclude, on all these accounts, that this is one of those few places where the relative them is referred to a remoter antecedent than that which is immediately before it. Compare in the original, Mat. xi. 1. xii. 9. Luke v. 30. John viii. 44. Acts viii. 26. and Heb. xii. 17. See Gloss. Philolog. Sacr. p. 513—515.


When
They let him down to Jesus from the house-top.

And immediately so many of the neighbouring inhabitants were assembled that there was not room to receive [them] in the house, or even about the door; so desirous were they to hear how Jesus would acquit himself in the presence of such curious, critical and prejudiced inquirers as those that were then sitting around him. And he preached the word of the gospel to them with his usual plainness, seriousness and authority, and confirmed it by various miracles.

And behold, among many others in most deplorable circumstances who were cured by him, they came unto him, bringing a man seized with the palsy, and quite disabled by it, so that he was obliged, in order to his being presented to Jesus, to be laid on a bed, or couch, and carried by four men. And they endeavoured to bring him in and lay him down before him, hoping that so melancholy a sight would affect his compassionate temper and engage his assistance.

And when they could not find any way to bring him in, and could not so much as come near enough to speak to Jesus, because of the crowd, and feared a delay might lose so precious an opportunity, they carried him round to a back passage, by which they went up to the top of the house (compare Mark xiii. 15), which, according to the Jewish custom, was made flat (Deut. xxiii. 8), and uncovered the roof of the apartment where [Jesus] was (which was a room that had no chamber over it), opening a way into the house by lifting up a kind of lattice or trap-door (compare 2 Kings i. 2), and when they had pulled [it] up, or had removed the frame of it to make the passage wider, they let down [the paralytic,] with his couch, through the tiles, with which

Mark ii. 2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no net so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

5 And [behold,] they came unto him, bringing [a man] sick of the palsy, which [lying on a bed] was borne of four: [Luke, and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.] [Mat. IX. 2. Luke V. 18.]

Luke v. 19. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, [and could not come nigh] because of the multitude, they went upon the house-top, and uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let him down through the tilting with his couch, into the midst before Jesus. [Mark ii. 4.]

d When they had pulled it up, or had removed the frame, &c. [Eze. 21.9; which were render broken up, nearly signifies pulling out, (Gal. iv. 13.) And no man in his senses can suppose the evangelist meant to say that they tore up the beams and rafters of the house upon this occasion; and yet this has been the foundation of great objections against this story. We have a right to suppose this removal of the frame was done with care; because the circumstances plainly require such care, and common sense would suggest it. Woolston’s perverse attack on this miracle is as plausible as anything he has written against Christianity; but I have endeavoured, in as few words as possible, to suggest an answer to the chief of his objections; and it may be considered as a specimen of the manner in which I shall proceed in other cases of the like nature: for it would be very improper to enter on the controversy at large here, especially after all the convincing and unanswerable treatises which have lately been written in defence of the evangelists; among which I apprehend none more valuable than that called The Miracles of Christ Vindicated, in four parts; to which I wish great pleasure refer for a larger account of this story, and the others handled by the excellent author of it.

They
which the other part of the roof was paved, into the midst of the company assembled, and so laid him before Jesus. And Jesus seeing their faith, and graciously excusing the inconveniences into which their affection had transported them, said to the man that had the palsy, Take courage, son; for thy sins are forgiven thee; and in token of it, I assure thee thy distemper shall be removed.

**But behold, such was the perverseness of some of the scribes and Pharisees who were then sitting there, that on his saying to the man in such an absolute and sovereign way, Thy sins are forgiven thee, they took offence at the expression; and reasoning in their hearts upon it, they said within themselves, maliciously reflecting on him, This man most certainly blasphemeth: Who is this that pretends to such an authority? [and] why does this arrogant man thus allow himself to speak such blasphemies as these? Such a speech as this surely deserves the name; for who can undertake to forgive sins, but God alone, the awful Majesty of heaven, who is affronted and dishonoured by committing them?**

And immediately, when Jesus, who perfectly knew the secret workings of their thoughts, perceiving in his own mind that they reasoned thus in themselves, though they did not openly declare their dissatisfaction and censure, he said to

They let down the paralytic—into the midst.] What is suggested in the paraphrase is the most probable account of the matter, if we suppose our Lord to have been in any covered room of the house. But Dr. Shaw’s hypothesis, which goes on principles which were quite unknown to me till I had the pleasure (since the first edition of this work) of reading his excellent travels, seems to me yet more natural. From considering what is now the form of the houses in Barbary and the Levant, he supposes that [is] signifies the court-yard, round about which the house was built; and that our Lord was there. He thinks that, crowded as this area was, the hearers of the paralytic might get in at the gate-yard (where perhaps Christ could neither be seen nor heard), and might carry him up the stairs, which commonly go up from thence; and being got to the flat roof might take down inwards a part of the balustrade or parapet-wall, and so let down the bed with cords by the side of the glazed and perhaps painted tiles which might beautify the walls of the house towards this court. Many of his quotations from the ancients do, in a very agreeable manner, at once illustrate this account, and receive new light from it. See Dr. Shaw’s Travels, p. 373—380.

*Take courage, son.* Few can need to be told that son is a title of condescension and tenderness by which superiors addressed inferiors that were not properly their children (compare Josh. vii. 19. Eccles. xii. 12, and 2 Tim. ii. 1.) as father was a correspondent title of respect, (compare 2 Kings v. 13. vi. 21. xiii. 14.) Yet it seems probable, from the use of it here, that the patient was a young man, considering that Christ himself was but a little above thirty; and if it were so it made the case the more pitiable. Luke uses the word man on the occasion; and Christ might possibly use both: as the apostle joins men and fathers, Acts vii. 2. and men and brethren, or, literally, men, brethren, Acts i. 16. ii. 19. xv. 7, 15. xxiii. 1. and xxviii. 17.
He proves his power of forgiving sins, by curing him.

Mark II. 9. To them, Why do you reason thus in your hearts, and so maliciously reflect upon me? [and] wherefore do you think [such] evil things of what I have now been saying? I shall be at no loss to indicate the reasonableness of it: for which is easier to say to this paralytic, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say to him, Arise, and take up thy couch, and walk away with it? May it not justly be concluded that if I have a power efficaciously to say the one, I may without any usurpation say the other likewise; and declare the sin forgiven, when I can thus miraculously remove the punishment of it? But that you may know the case, I put is not a vain presumptions boast, but that the Son of man here on earth, though appearing in so humble and obscure a form, has yet a Divine authority to forgive men's sins, (he turns about, and says to the paralytic,) O man, I say unto thee, Arise immediately; and to shew thou art perfectly healed at once, take up the couch on which thou liest, and, bearing it on thy shoulders, go thy way to thine own house, for at this instant I will enable thee to do it.

Luke V. 25. And immediately he was so strengthened by a secret power which went along with the word, that, believing the virtue and efficacy of it, he rose up before them all; and taking up the couch on which he lay, though before he was utterly weak and helpless, he went forth, vigorous and cheerful, to his own house, humbly glorifying and adoring God for that extraordinary cure which he had now received.

Mark II. 13. And when the evening advanced, and the day grew cooler, he went forth again by the sea-shore; and all the multitude who had before attended in or about the house, and many more who could not get near enough to see and hear what passed there, reason ye these things [Wherefore think ye evil] in your hearts? [Mat. IX. 4. Luke V. 92.]

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) [Mat. IX. 6. Luke V. 24.]

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. [Mat. IX. 6. Luke V. 24.]

Luke V. 25. And immediately he rose up before them [all] and took up [the bed] whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. [Mark II. 12.—Mat. IX. 7.]

26 And [Mat. when the multitude saw it, they were all amazed; and they glorified God, [Mat. which had given such power unto men] and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day; [We never saw it on this fashion.] [Mark II. 12. Mat. IX. 8.]

Mark II. 13. And he went forth again by the sea-side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.
there, resorted to him; and he cheerfully went on with his work, and taught them here, after all the former labours of the day.

And after these things, as Jesus passed out from thence (that is, from the house in which the paralytic had been cured), and was going down to the sea-side, he saw a man (who was indeed a publican, 9) that collected the customs there whose name was Matthew, [or Levi, the son of Alpheus,] sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, [Luke, and left all,] and followed him. [Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27, 28.]

**Improvemen**

It is a pleasure to reflect upon it that Christ was attended by such vast numbers of people, and that they who were teachers of others should themselves sit down to hear him. But it is melancholy to reflect on the perverse purposes with which many of them came; and how few did, on the whole, receive his word into their hearts, so as to bring forth fruit unto perfection. Curiosity led some, and interest others; and some came to find occasion of hurting him whose whole business in life was to do good. Yet these low, these vile purposes did not prevent his preaching and working miracles before them, and being ready to exert his power for their benefit. Thus courageous and resolute let us be in the discharge of our duty; thus solicitous, that we may not be overcome of evil, but may (which, on the whole, is always in some degree practicable) overcome evil with good. (Rom. xii. 21.)

How industrious were the attendants; and friends of this poor paralytic to obtain a cure for him! What contrivance, what labour

---

9 A publican.] This was a very odious name among the Jews, and their employment was attended with so much corruption and temptation, that there were few among them that were honest men; but they were generally persons of so infamous and vile a character, that publicans and sinners are often joined together as synonymous terms, (Mat. ix. 11. xi. 19. and elsewhere.) See the paraphrase on Luke iii. 12, p. 101.

b At the custom-house.] So προσκυνηματος properly signifies. Some have rendered it toll-booth; and I should have followed them had I not apprehended that the word might have suggested some modern idea, for which there is in the original no foundation.

---
Christ goes up to a feast at Jerusalem.

SECT. XLVI.

It is certain from Luke vi. that a passover happened soon after the facts recorded in the preceding.

AFTER this, there was a great feast of the Jews, even the feast of the passover; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

After this, there was a great feast of the Jews, even the feast of the passover; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Christ goes up to a feast at Jerusalem (generally supposed to be his second passover,) and there cures a poor impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. John V. 1—16.
The healing virtue of the pool of Bethesda.

Jesus, according to his custom, went up to Jerusalem, both that he might pay a religious regard to the ceremonial law, and that he might take an opportunity of teaching considerable numbers of people assembled from distant parts and countries where he did not appear in person.

Now it is well known, that there is at Jerusalem, near the sheep-market, a pool, or great reservoir of water, which is called in the Hebrew language, Bethsaida, or the House of Mercy; and was indeed, as the name intimates, a kind of hospital, having five porticos, or cloysters, built round it, to accommodate and shelter those who might resort to it for pleasure, convenience or cure: for the water was highly esteemed on account of some medicinal virtues which attended it, and the benefit many had received by bathing in it; and its reputation was greatly advanced, since those miraculous circumstances had been observed, which we shall presently mention.

In these cloysters were laid a great number of sick and diseased persons, such as were either blind, or lame, or had any part of their body withered; who either came or were brought thither in expectation of a cure and lay there waiting for the moving of the water. For God, to add the greater lustre to his Son's miracles, as well as to shew that his ancient people were not entirely forgotten by him, had been pleased of preceding section; and most critics (after the example of Irenæus, lib. ii. cap. 39.) conclude that this was it. And indeed, as the passover was the greatest of all their feasts it is sometimes denoted by the word τιμάω, even without the article. (See Mark xv. 6. and Luke xxiii. 17.) This chapter may, at least, be as well introduced here as any where else: and one has little temptation to recede from this order in favour of Mr. Mann's singular hypothesis; who supposes that the feast here spoken of was the feast of Pentecost, and that this whole chapter is transposed, and should come in at the end of the sixth. How little this is capable of defence we shall endeavour to shew in the notes on John vi. 1. and 4. see sect. lxxxviii. note b and o.

b Near the sheep-market.] I chose to retain the common translation of sheep-market rather than gate; because, if the report of the best travellers is to be credited, the place shewn for the pool of Bethsaida is much nearer the temple than the sheep-gate could be. (Compare Neh. iii. 1. and xii. 39.)

c A pool, or great reservoir of water.] The etymology of the word τιμάω intimates it was a place to swim in; so that it seems to me to have been a kind of bath like those near Jericho, where Aristobulus was drowned by Herod's order as he was swimming, (Joseph. Antiq. lib. vi. cap. 3. § 3.) I do not find any satisfactory proof (though many have asserted it) that the sheep to be sacrificed were washed here, or that the blood of the sacrifices ran into it: yet this is the foundation of that strange conjecture of Dr. Hammond which we shall presently mention.

d Having five porticos, or cloysters.] It is a very probable thought of Dr. Lightfoot (in his Harmony in loc.) that the bosom itself might be in the form of a pentagon, and that these cloysters might correspond to its five sides.

e To add the greater lustre to his Son's miracles, &c.] These reasons are suggested and well illustrated in Mr. Calvin's judicious notes on this story.
An angel at a certain season stirs the water.

of late to perform some supernatural cures at this place. For at a certain season, which returned at some particular periods, an unusual motion was discovered in the water; and from the marvellous effects of it, it was rightly concluded that at that time an angel descended into the pool and stirred the water, by which a healing virtue was

1 At a certain season.] Though when water might be sometimes rendered at that time (as Rom. v. 6.), and some have therefore thought the passover, or the feast that was mentioned just before, to be the season when an angel came and stirred the water; yet, as the words will very justly bear the sense that has been given them in our translation, there is no reason why we should suppose it to have only been an annual miracle, which would but needlessly increase the difficulty. Indeed the expectation of the people intimates it was at some particular periods, though probably they were not fixed in such a way as that they certainly could tell the stated times of their return; at least we know not what they were, nor can it be determined from this indefinite expression. And if it be thus taken to refer to a certain hour of the day, or day of the week (perhaps the sabbath, which was the day that they were now expecting it), water will signify at every such time, as water every year, Heb. x. 1. and water every day, Acts ii. 46, 47.

2 An angel descended into the pool and stirred the water.] The late English version renders it a messenger, agreeable to the strange hypothesis of Dr. Hammond; who thinks that this water had contracted a natural virtue by washing the carcasses and entrails of the sacrifices in this pool; and that, on stirring it up, that virtue exerted itself the more, so that a proper officer was appointed for that purpose: a thought so unphilosophical, as well as ungrounded in history and antiquity, that one would wonder how so learned a man could fall upon it. Mr. Fleming, to avoid the apparent difficulties of the literal interpretation, concludes that the latter part of the third and the whole fourth verse is a spurious addition of some ignorant monk in the eighth or ninth century; because that part is wanting in Beza's manuscript, and is written by a later hand in the margin of that in the French king's library, which Lamy in his Harmony so much extols. But I cannot acquiesce in this omission, since the passage in question is found in all the other most celebrated manuscripts, as also in the Syriac version, and all the rest: in the Polyglot bible: and besides this, the seventh verse (which some dispute) implies that there was a miraculous virtue in the water after it was troubled, which extended only to the first that went in, and cured his disease, whatever it were: so that the chief difficulties would still remain, were Mr. Fleming's criticism to be allowed, see his Christology, Vol. i. p. 13—15. I cannot here discuss the matter at large; but beg leave, in a few words, to hint at what seems to me the easiest solution of this greatest of difficulties in the history of the Evangelists, in which, of all others, the learned answerers of Mr. Woodston have generally given me the least satisfaction, and which few commentators enter into: and I am pleased to find, long since I wrote this note, that the ingenious Dr. Pearce agrees with me in the most material circumstances of this hypothesis; (see his excellent Vindication of Christ's miracles, p. 68, & seq.)—I imagine this pool might have been remarkable for some mineral virtue attending the water; which is the more probable as Jerom tells us it was of a very high colour: this, together with its being so very near the temple, where a bath was so much needed for religious purposes, may account for the building such stately cloisters round it, three of which remain to this day; (see Mounsdell's Travels, p. 108.) Some time before this passover an extraordinary commotion was probably observed in the water; and Providence so ordered it that the next person who accidentally bathed here, being under some great disorder, found an immediate and unexpected cure: the like phenomenon in some other desperate case was probably observed on a second commotion: and these commotions and cures might happen periodically, perhaps every sabbath (for that it was yearly none can prove,) some weeks or months. This the Jews would naturally ascribe to some angelic power, as they did afterwards the voice from heaven (John xii. 29.) though no angel appeared. And they and St. John had reason to do it, as it was the scripture scheme that these benevolent spirits had been, and frequently are, the invisible instruments of good to the children of men; (see Psal. xxxiv. 7. xcv. 11. Dan. iii. 28. and vi. 22.) On the whole making so ungrateful a return to Christ for this miracle, and those wrought at the former passover, and in the intermediate space, this celestial visitant probably from this time returned no more: and
5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.  
6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?  
7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.  
8 Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.  
9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked:—

—And on the same day was the sabbath.  

and therefore it may be observed that though the evangelist speaks of the pool as still at Jerusalem when he wrote, yet he mentions the descent of the angel as a thing which had been, but not as still continuing (compare ver. 2, and 4.) This may account for the surprising silence of Josephus in a story which made so much for the honour of his nation. He was himself not born when it happened; and though he might have heard the report of it, he would perhaps (as is the modern way) oppose speculation and hypothesis to facts; and, like Dr. Wellwood in a much plainer case, (see his Letter relating to Milford's cure,) have recourse to some indigestible and unmeaning harangues on the unknown force of imagination, or if he secretly suspected it to be true, his dread of the marvellous, and fear of disgusting his Pagan readers with it, might as well lead him to suppress this, as to disguise the passage through the red sea, and the divine voice from mount Sinai, in so mean and foolish a manner as it is known he does. And the relation in which this fact stood to the history of Jesus, would make him peculiarly cautious in touching upon it, as it would have been so difficult to handle it at once with decency and safety.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.  
6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?  
7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.  
8 Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.  
9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked:—

—And on the same day was the sabbath.  

and therefore it may be observed that though the evangelist speaks of the pool as still at Jerusalem when he wrote, yet he mentions the descent of the angel as a thing which had been, but not as still continuing (compare ver. 2, and 4.) This may account for the surprising silence of Josephus in a story which made so much for the honour of his nation. He was himself not born when it happened; and though he might have heard the report of it, he would perhaps (as is the modern way) oppose speculation and hypothesis to facts; and, like Dr. Wellwood in a much plainer case, (see his Letter relating to Milford's cure,) have recourse to some indigestible and unmeaning harangues on the unknown force of imagination, or if he secretly suspected it to be true, his dread of the marvellous, and fear of disgusting his Pagan readers with it, might as well lead him to suppress this, as to disguise the passage through the red sea, and the divine voice from mount Sinai, in so mean and foolish a manner as it is known he does. And the relation in which this fact stood to the history of Jesus, would make him peculiarly cautious in touching upon it, as it would have been so difficult to handle it at once with decency and safety.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.  
6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?  
7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.  
8 Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.  
9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked:—

—And on the same day was the sabbath.  

and therefore it may be observed that though the evangelist speaks of the pool as still at Jerusalem when he wrote, yet he mentions the descent of the angel as a thing which had been, but not as still continuing (compare ver. 2, and 4.) This may account for the surprising silence of Josephus in a story which made so much for the honour of his nation. He was himself not born when it happened; and though he might have heard the report of it, he would perhaps (as is the modern way) oppose speculation and hypothesis to facts; and, like Dr. Wellwood in a much plainer case, (see his Letter relating to Milford's cure,) have recourse to some indigestible and unmeaning harangues on the unknown force of imagination, or if he secretly suspected it to be true, his dread of the marvellous, and fear of disgusted his Pagan readers with it, might as well lead him to suppress this, as to disguise the passage through the red sea, and the divine voice from mount Sinai, in so mean and foolish a manner as it is known he does. And the relation in which this fact stood to the history of Jesus, would make him peculiarly cautious in touching upon it, as it would have been so difficult to handle it at once with decency and safety.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.  
6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?  
7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.  
8 Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.  
9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked:—

—And on the same day was the sabbath.  

and therefore it may be observed that though the evangelist speaks of the pool as still at Jerusalem when he wrote, yet he mentions the descent of the angel as a thing which had been, but not as still continuing (compare ver. 2, and 4.) This may account for the surprising silence of Josephus in a story which made so much for the honour of his nation. He was himself not born when it happened; and though he might have heard the report of it, he would perhaps (as is the modern way) oppose speculation and hypothesis to facts; and, like Dr. Wellwood in a much plainer case, (see his Letter relating to Milford's cure,) have recourse to some indigestible and unmeaning harangues on the unknown force of imagination, or if he secretly suspected it to be true, his dread of the marvellous, and fear of disgusted his Pagan readers with it, might as well lead him to suppress this, as to disguise the passage through the red sea, and the divine voice from mount Sinai, in so mean and foolish a manner as it is known he does. And the relation in which this fact stood to the history of Jesus, would make him peculiarly cautious in touching upon it, as it would have been so difficult to handle it at once with decency and safety.
The Jews are angry at his doing this on the sabbath.

commanded him, even on that day, to carry his
couch, both to shew his own authority and to
exercise the faith and obedience of his patient.
The Jews therefore, who saw him pass by in this
manner, said to him that was cured, It is the
sabbath-day; and therefore it is not lawful for
thee thou to carry a couch, or to bear any burthen
whatever. (Compare Jer. xvii. 21, 22. and
Neh. xiii. 15—19.) How is it then that thou
art so presumptuous as to profane this holy day?

But he answered them by giving an account of
his cure, and only added, He that miraculously
healed and made me well, and restored me with
a word to the health and strength, even he! said
to me, Take up thy couch, and walk away with it:
and I could not question his authority to dis-
pense with such a ceremonial precept. And
upon this, dropping all mention of the cure, and
only fixing on what seemed liable to exception,
they asked him then, Who is the man that said unto
thee, on this sabbath day, Take up thy couch, and
walk away with it? Now he that was healed
did not at that time know whom it was that had
cured him? For as there was a crowd of people
in the place, Jesus had modestly slipped away
among them as soon as he had spoken the healing
word.

But afterwards Jesus findeth him in the court
of the temple, and saith unto him, Behold, by the
singular mercy of God, thou art now recovered
to health and vigour; but take heed that thou
sin no more, lest something yet worse befall thee;
for thou knowest in thine own conscience that
the iniquities of thy youth brought this calamity
upon thee, and the deliverance thou hast now
received

Even he.] There seems to be this em-
phasis in the word εἰσάχθη, in this con-
tection after εὐαγγελία. It is very far from
being an expletive, though few versions take
any notice of it.

k Only fixing on what seemed liable to
exception.] They do not ask, Who is it that
has made thee well? but, Who is it that made
thee to take up thy couch, upon this sab-
bothday? though he had just told them it was
the author of his cure that gave him that
command; for all that they proposed was,
ot to hear of any good that had been done
to ensure their admiration and applause,
but to lay hold of some occasion to find
fault, to satisfy the pride and malice of a
censorious temper— I am obliged to Gronius
for this delicate remark, which well illus-
trates their partiality and malignity.

1 Mode-thy slipped away.] The word
εἰσάχθη (as Casaubon observes in his learn-
ed note on the place) is an elegant metaphor
borrowed from swimming; and we may
thus observe how well it expresses the easy
unobscured manner in which he, as it were,
girded through them; white, like a stream
of water, they opened before him, and
immediately closed again, leaving no trace
of the way he had taken.

m The iniquities of thy youth brought
this calamity upon thee.] Our Lord seems
not merely to have referred to a general
notion that diseases were the punishments of
sin, but to glance at some irregularities of
the
Reflections on the cure of the disabled man.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

received will be a dreadful aggravation of thy future guilt.

_The man_ then informed himself of those that stood by, who it was that spoke to him; and knowing him to be the person to whom he was obliged for his cure, he went away from the temple and told the Jews, who had before examined him, that it was Jesus of Nazareth who had restored him to health; expecting, no doubt, by this discovery, to have procured him that honour and respect which was due to so much power and goodness. _And yet the Jews were so far from paying him any just acknowledgments that, on the contrary, they persecuted Jesus on this account and endeavoured to put him to death, as an impious transgressor of the law, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day: and, in pursance of that unrighteous and barbarous purpose, they brought an accusation against him before the sanhedrim, which occasioned the large and excellent apology related in the two following sections._

IMPROVEMENT.

What reason have we humbly to adore that Almighty Being who _kills and makes alive, who wounds and heals!_ (Deut. xxxii. 39.) If the Jews had cause of thankfulness for this miraculous interposition, surely those virtues which God has in a natural way bestowed on medicines, and that sagacity which he has given to men for the discovery of those virtues, are matter of much greater acknowledgment, as the blessing is so much more extensive and lasting.

But how much greater still are our obligations to him for the blessings of his gospel and the ordinances of his worship, those waters of life by which our spiritual maladies are healed, and vigour restored to our enfeebled souls! Let us humbly attend them; yet during that attendance let us look beyond them: for surely the efficacy of this pool of Bethesda did not more depend upon the descent of the angel, than the efficacy of the noblest ordinances depends on that blessed Spirit which operates in and by them.

_Multitudes were continually attending at this pool: and why then is the house of God forsaken?_ where not one alone, but many, at the same moment, may receive spiritual sight and strength; yea, and

the man's younger years which, though they were committed before Christ was born (for we are told, ver. 5, that this disabled man had laboured under his disorder thirty-eight years) yet were perfectly known to him. Before the sanhedrim, ] See the reason for this conjecture in the next section, ver. 17, note 4, compared with ver. 33.
life from the dead? Yet, alas! under the diseases of the soul, how few desire to be made whole! Blessed Jesus! if thou hast awakened that desire in us, we would adore thee for it as a token for good; and would lift up our believing eyes to thee, in humble expectation that thou wilt graciously fulfil it.

14 The man who was lately languishing on his couch we quickly after find in the temple: and where should they be found who have been raised up from beds of weakness, and brought out from chambers of confinement but in the sanctuary, rendering their praises to the God of their mercies? How reasonable is the caution which our Lord gave him there! Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. May we see sin as the root of all our afflictions; and, by the bitterness of them, may sin be embittered to us, and our hearts fortified against relapsing into it, especially when we have been chastised, and restored again!

15 One would have expected that, when this grateful creature published the name of his Benefactor, crowds should have thronged about Jesus, to have heard the words of his mouth, and to have received the blessings of his gospel; and that the whole nation should have gloried in the presence of such a person, as far more valuable than the descent of a heavenly spirit at some particular seasons for the cure of their diseases, or even the abode of an incarnate angel among them would have been. But instead of this, behold the malignity of our fallen nature, and the force of stubborn prejudice! They surround him with an hostile intent; they even conspire against his beneficial life; and for an imagined transgression in a point of ceremony, would have put out this light in Israel. Let us not wonder then if our good be evil spoken of: (Rom. xiv. 16.) Let us not wonder, if even candour, benevolence, and usefulness, do not wholly disarm the enmity of some; especially of those who have been taught to prefer sacrifice to mercy; and who, disrelishing the genuine contents of the gospel, naturally seek occasion to slander and persecute the professors, and especially the defenders of it.

SECT. XLVII.

Christ vindicates the miracle which he had wrought at the pool on the sabbath-day, and solemnly declares the dignity of his person and office. John V. 17—30.

John V. 17. THE miracle which he had just performed was a plain evidence of his Divine authority and power: but Jesus being questioned by the Jews, and, as it seems, examined before their most solemn
18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father; making himself equal with God.

### Footnotes

3 Before their most solemn council.] I here follow Mr. Fleming's opinion (in his Christology, Vol. II. p. 296) which seems to be confirmed by ver. 33; and there appears a great deal of additional propriety and beauty in the discourse when it is considered in this view.

5 He took the opportunity of declaring at large the dignity of his person, &c.] Christ had hinted at several of these things in his conference with Nicodemus (John iii. 13—21, sect. xxvi.) who had probably reported them to his brethren. But he here expatiates more largely on some; and, no doubt, if Nicodemus, as a member of the council, was now present, he heard him with great pleasure and improvement.

c Called God his own Father.] This is the plain and literal sense of the original, τινα λέγει τινι κυριον αυτον; The whole nation of the Jews thought God their Father (John viii. 41.) and they could not therefore have accounted it blasphemy to have used the phrase, had they not interpreted it in so high and appropriating a sense.

d The
Jesus therefore, to explain the matter more fully to them, and to leave them yet more inexcusable in their malicious opposition to him, answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, and do most faithfully and solemnly declare, That the Son of God, great and glorious as he is, now acts in an avowed subjection to the authority of the Father and can do nothing of himself; in pursuance of any distinct schemes or separate interest of his own, unless he see the Father doing it or perceive him intimating it as his pleasure that it should be done: for whatsoever are the things that he (that is, the Father) doeth, even these likewise doeth the Son in a most intimate conjunction with him; at all times cheerfully complying with his purposes and esteeming it his honour always to be employed in his service. For the Father loveth the Son, and that with so entire an affection, that he sheweth him all things that he himself doeth, letting him into the secret of his councils, and teaching him in the most wonderful and Divine manner to act in prosecution of them; and he will shew, or point out to him far greater works than these which he has hitherto performed; which shall hereafter be accomplished by him, that you may all be filled with wonder, though you will not be

---

\[d\] The Son can do nothing of himself. I cannot forbear mentioning a remarkable note of the learned Eisler (Observ. Vol. 1. p. 307, &c.), in which he shews by a great variety of instances, that the later heathen writers seem to have ascribed to Minerva, as the daughter of Jupiter, many things which our sacred scriptures speak of Christ as the Son of God.

\[e\] Unless he see the Father doing it. Whether our Lord here means in the general, unless he see it to be correspondent to the Father's scheme; or whether he refers to any peculiar Divine impulse which he sometimes felt upon his mind, leading him to exert his miraculous power in this or that instance, I cannot certainly determine: but rather incline to the latter, which might also be comprehended in ver. 17. — The particle ἐκ τοῦ, which is exactly the same in signification with ἐκ τοῦ, is here also used in a less proper sense. See the note on John xvii. 12. sect. cxxix. and compare John viii. 38. sect. civ.

\[f\] Sheweth him all things that he himself doeth. The editors of the Prussian Testament say, that the word διακοσμητικός, which we have rendered sheweth, signifies here to teach or form to any thing; as a master forms his scholar to do what he himself doeth, and teaches him the secrets of his art or profession: but I cannot acquiesce in this sense, as expressing the whole meaning of the phrase. It rather refers to the ample and comprehensive knowledge which the Son has of the whole plan of the Father's councils, in all their mutual relations and dependences; whereas the prophets and the apostles too, had, in comparison of this, but very limited and contracted views. Compare Isa. xl. 10, where it is said (as we have no room to doubt) of Christ, and probably in this sense—his work is before him—Dr. Whitby refers αὐτοῦ to the Son; and understands it as if it had been said, Whatever the Son doeth, is by the direction of the Father; but I think the genius of the Greek language would not in that sense have allowed the repetition of αὐτοῦ, but it would rather have been said, παρθενίας ἀπὸ διακοσμητικοῦ οὐχί: not to insist upon it, that the sense in which I have explained it is much nobler, and not so nearly the same with what Christ had said in the preceding verse.

---

19 Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.
The Father had commissioned him to judge the world.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

[This important power God has committed to me; though our Lord here speaks of himself in the third person, yet afterwards, in ver. 50, & seq. he speaks in the first; and common sense would teach all that heathen, that by the Son he here meant himself. Now I appeal to any unprejudiced person to judge, whether our Lord's making such a declaration as this before the Jewish rulers, and probably in full council, was not far more liable to exception, than merely his calling the temple his Father's house (John ii. 16.) at his first passover; in the same manner as he long before had done, in calling God his Father, even when he was but twelve years old, (Luke ii. 49.) So little is there in Mr. Maune's argument from the text. (See note e on John ii. 16, p. 137.)—And it is also to be remembered that, according to Mr. Maune's Scheme of the Harmony, he makes this to have happened about ten months before Christ's death, and long before many of these charges to his disciples, not to make him known; from whence this gentleman argues, that the forecited words in John ii. 16, could not be spoken till his last passover.

1 Renew
He has this power of judging, as the Son of man.

Sect. xlvii.
John V. 24.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear, shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 Shall come forth out of his former offences; but is passed from that state of death in which men naturally are, to a state of life, security and felicity. Think not this an incredible assertion; for verily, verily, I say unto you, and in the strongest terms renew the important declaration, That the season cometh, and is now just at hand, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear [it] shall immediately live; for within these few months there shall be some dead bodies raised to life by the word of his power (See Mark v. 41. Luke vii. 14. John xi. 43. and compare Mat. xxvii. 52, 53), and many souls that are dead in sin shall, by his grace, be quickened and made spiritually alive. For as the Father has originally and essentially life in himself, so he has also given to the Son, that he should, for these purposes of glorious and Divine operation, have a principle of life in himself to be communicated unto whom he will. (See i. Cor. xv. 45.) And he has given him authority, not only to quicken men now, but also to execute final judgment, because he is the Son of man; and as he has voluntarily humbled himself to so lowly a form (see Phil. ii. 5—11), God will accomplish to him all those glorious predictions which represent him as possessed of universal and perpetual dominion and coming in the clouds of heaven in that day when the judgment is set and the books are opened. (See Dan. vii. 9—14. Phil. ii. 8, 9. and Heb. xii. 2.)

And therefore, wonder not at this which I have now declared concerning the resurrection of a few, shortly to be expected; for the hour is coming in which all that are dead and buried now, and all that shall then be lying in the graves, though mouldered away and consumed there, shall hear his voice, And shall come forth out of

h Renew the important declaration.] These repetitions of the same assertion are by no means vain, considering the vast importance of the truth; and how incredible it would appear, that he who stood before them in so humble a form, was in reality the Lord of Life, and the universal Judge. See note e on John i. 51, p. 129.

i Some dead bodies raised to life, and many souls made spiritually alive.] I express it thus ambiguously, because I am something doubtful, whether it may not refer to the conversion of sinners by Christ's ministry, rather than the resurrection of a few by his miraculous power. It is well known, sinners are often represented in scripture as dead (Mat. viii. 22. Eph. ii. 1. v. 14. 1 Tim. v. 6. and Jude, ver. 12), and if the expression is metaphorical, is to be taken, as we render it, with the most literal exactness, for they that hear, or they, and they alone, that so attend unto the voice of Christ as to believe in him—it will then limit it to this sense; which seems also favoured by ver. 24, where death plainly signifies a state of sin and condemnation.
forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

50 I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

of the dust, they that have done good, to the resurrection of eternal life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of final damnation. See to it therefore, that you shew a due regard to him before whom you yourselves are to stand; and do not rashly condemn a Person from whose lips you are to receive your decisive sentence. Not 30 that any corrupt bias of partial resentment will be brought into the proceedings of that day, or into any of my conduct; for I can of myself do nothing; but now act by a delegated power as the minister of a righteous God: and therefore as I hear, I judge, pronouncing according to the evidence of facts before me; and upon this account it must appear that my judgment is just; because I seek not any distinct will or separate interest of my own, but the wise and holy will of the Father who sent me; which is, that every man should be treated according to his real character, and be the object of favour or of wrath, as his temper and conduct have been upright or wicked.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what humble prostration of soul should we bow before Ver. the Lord Jesus Christ while we read such words as these! Though 19, 20 he appeared under the form of a servant; and as man and mediator, confessed a holy subjection to his Father and his God; yet is he his own, his only-begotten Son, the Son whom he loves, whom he honours, whom he commands all men to honour even as himself; and to whom such power and authority are committed, that he is the principle of life and the administrator of judgment. Let us 23 adore the wisdom of such a contrivance, that he who humbled himself thus low, should be so highly exalted. Let us labour to secure 26 an interest in him; treating him with that submission, duty and 27 obedience, which becomes at once the divinity of his nature and the dignity of his office.

May we be enabled by Divine grace so to hear the voice of his 25 gospel, that we may arise to a life of holy obedience; that we may another day hear him with joy calling forth our sleeping dust, and 28 arise to the resurrection of life; while those that have despised and rejected him, shall find themselves the helpless prisoners of his justice, and with reluctance and terror come forth to the resurrection of damnation!

Sect.

| 10. Mat. xxvi. 39, and note h on Mat. xii. interest of my own. | 7. sect. xlix. | 261 |
| 11. Heb. x. 9, | vol. vi. | H h |
Christ having declared to the Jews (and, as it seems, to the Sanhedrin), the dignity of his person, office and character, goes on to represent the proofs of his mission; and concludes his discourse with proper admonitions and cautions. John V. 31. to the end.

JOHN V. 31.

OUR Lord proceeded in his discourse to the Jews, and said, I have certainly entered a very high claim, and represented myself as a person of great dignity and authority; nor do I see it without sufficient proof. Indeed If I bear this witness of myself alone, it must be acknowledged, that my testimony is not immediately [to be admitted as] true: you have a right to insist on other evidence; and a variety of it arises from the testimony of John, from the power of my miracles, from the testimony of the Father and from innumerable passages in your own sacred writings.

32 I would then first observe that, besides what I have told you of myself, there is another of undoubted reputation and veracity that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he beareth of me is true and credible; and well remember by the happiest tokens, the great fact on which it especially turned: nor can you reasonably take upon you to dispute it; for the person I refer to is John the Baptist, whom your whole nation agreed to reverence as a prophet:

33 And you know, that you yourselves sent messengers on purpose from your own court unto this John (John i. 19—27, sect. xx.), and he, in the most express terms, bore a faithful and honourable testimony to the truth of what I have now attested and referred to, assuring you that he saw the Spirit in a visible form descend upon me. I do not indeed receive the chief testimony on which I

32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I receive not testimony from man; but

a Is not [to be admitted as] true. That this is the sense of the word true here, is very evident; and appears in part from comparing John viii. 15—17, sect. ciii.

b The great fact on which it especially turned.] The propriety and spirit of our Lord's expression, I know that the witness which he beareth of me is true, is much illustrated, by supposing that here is an oblique reference to that great event, the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ at his baptism; on which John so expressly grounded the testimony he bore to Christ, the very next day after their messengers came to him, who probably staid some time to make their remarks on his preaching and conduct. (See John i. 29—34, sect. xxi.) And the blessed effects of this effusion on Christ still continued, and incessantly wrought in him.

For
I rest the credit of my mission, from man; nevertheless, I say these things to you, on your own principles, out of a tender and compassionate concern for your conviction, that you, who are now conspiring against my life, may be saved from that destruction which he foretold as the portion of those who should reject me, and which the greatest of them shall not be able to escape, (Mat. iii. 10—12, sect. xvi.) He was indeed a burning and a shining light (Ecclus. xlviii. 1), who, to his bright and distinct knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, joined a most fervent zeal in bearing his testimony to them; and for a while you were disposed greatly to rejoice in his light; but you did not express that continued regard to his preaching which at his first appearance you seemed to promise.

I will not therefore insist farther on this topic, but proceed to other evidence. And I have indeed a testimony which is much greater still than [that] of John; for the works of wonder and mercy which the Father has assigned and given in commission to me, that according to his wise and gracious purposes I might accomplish them among you, even these miraculous works which I daily perform, are also witnesses in my behalf, and bear a most convincing testimony to me, that the Father hath sent me as his Ambassador to men, with the most ample commission to reveal his will.

And indeed I may say, with the greatest propriety, that by these miracles, as well as by the public testimony that he gave me at my baptism, the Father who has sent me has with the strongest evidence confirmed my mission and has himself borne witness to me: nor have you any reason to dispute the testimony that he thus hath given me [though] you have never either heard his voice, or seen his form, as being one whom no man hath seen nor can see; for he has testified the same concerning me in his word, where he has spoken of me in the clearest manner. But, notwithstanding the submission you

35 He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 But I have a greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me: ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

6 For a while you were disposed greatly to rejoice in his light.] Our Lord might speak thus of John, though he was yet living, as his light was now in a great measure extinguished by his imprisonment; so that the argument from this text, for transposing this chapter, seems inconclusive. Had the sanguined, as some have supposed, imprisoned John before he was seized by Herod (see the preface to the Prussian Testament, p. 244), our Lord would hardly have failed to reprove them for it on so natural an occasion as this.
He had the testimony of his miracles, and of his Father.

John v. 38.

You profess to his authority, you will not be persuaded to receive the testimony he has given: and after all that he has said, it is still evident that you have not his word cordially abiding in you; nor do you shew a due regard even to those former revelations which you acknowledge as Divine; for notwithstanding all the reasons that are there given to induce you to it, you do not believe him whom he had sent with a much fuller and clearer discovery of himself than any of his former messengers have brought.

You make it your employment and your study to peruse and search the scriptures, and enter into deep enquiries concerning the contents of them; because you very rightly apprehend that you have the doctrine of eternal life in them, that they contain the promises, and instruct you in the way of obtaining it; and these now are [the very writings] which in numberless passages bear a most important testimony to me. And yet the obstinacy of your hearts is such, that notwithstanding you profess so great a regard for them, you will not come to me, that you may have that eternal life which they direct you to obtain in this method, but rather choose to die under the force of your inveterate prejudices.

I speak of your coming to me: but let me remind you that it is not out of an ambition of drawing multitudes about me, to follow and applaud my teaching; for the whole of my conduct proves that I receive not glory from men.

But I say it out of a tender regard for your instruction and reformation; for notwithstanding your distinguished profession of piety, and the eminent

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

d You have not his word abiding in you.] Some would render it, You have not his LOGOS, that is, residing among you for any continuance of time (see Mr. Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 65,) and refer it to Christ's making so short an abode at Jerusalem: but I prefer the more obvious sense. Compare John xv. 7.

e You search the scriptures.] There is a known ambiguity in the word ἰδρύωs, which may justify either this translation or the common one; nor is it very material which is preferred, I thought the following words, which express their high opinion of the scriptures, rather suited the former; and it is exceeding probable that, at a time when the Pharisees were so impatient of the Roman yoke, they would with great difference search the sacred oracles for predictions relating to the Messiah; though it is too plain they had an unhappy bias on their minds, which prevented the good effects which might have been expected from that inquiry, had it been impartial. It is also well known, that refined criticisms on their sacred writings made the most fashionable branch of learning among the Jews; in comparison of which, profound literature was held in great contempt, and indeed by many of their sages in great abhorrence: see Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xx. cap. ult. § ult. and Mr. Bissoe's Sermons at Boyle's Lecture, p. 89, 90.

f I receive not glory from men.] The whole series of this discourse excellently shews how far our Lord was from soothing the vanity of great and learned men, in order to obtain their favour.
And the scriptures also testified of him.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

eminent station in which you are placed, I know you, and have observed it for some time concerning you, that you have not the love of God in you, that great and only principle of a true religion and happiness. For I am come to you in my Father's name, and with evident credentials from him; yet you receive me not; which, if you had really loved him, you would undoubtedly have done: whereas if another should come in his own name, without such credentials, and set up a scheme of temporal grandeur and dominion, him you would readily receive, in pursuit of those worldly principles which, though directly contrary to the love of God, yet bear the rule in your corrupt hearts. But how indeed can you believe in me, and fall in with such an humbling and self-denying scheme as that of my gospel, while, with an ambitious emulation, you are receiving honour of each other, and seek not that true honour which comes from the approbation of God alone, and from the testimony of your consciences in his sight.

Nevertheless, remember this, that you will another day appear self-condemned for this your infidelity: and do not think that, to convict you in his presence, I will accuse you to the Father; it will not be necessary that I should do it; for even now, that Moses, in whom you trust as your great law-giver and patron, is (as it were) your accuser before God, and charges you with being regardless of him as well as of me. For if you had believed Moses, and really had that regard to him which you profess to have, you likewise surely would have believed me; for he wrote concerning me in many most memorable passages. But I will now conclude my discourse;

8 If another should come in his own name.] Some think here is a reference to Barchochbas, a noted impostor in the following age, for adhering to whom the Jews were severely chastised by Adrian. (Ench. Hist. Erecs. lib. iv. cap. 6.) But it is certain there were many other pretended Messiahs, who wrought no miracles, and yet met with a much better reception from the Pharisees than Christ did; and I doubt not but Christ meant to include, at least, all those who appeared while the sanhedrim existed.

h You are receiving honour of each other.] This has much more spirit, if we consider it as applied to the members of the sanhedrim, who had such distinguished titles of honour, than if we only take it as spoken to a mixed multitude, who might happen to surround Christ in the temple: the taste of the Pulpit seldom lies that way.

i That Moses, in whom you trust, is your accuser.] This is one of the most expressive passages that can be imagined, in which Moses, their great law-giver, is represented as looking down with indignation upon these elders who gloried in being the most distinguished of his disciples; and seeing how injuriously they treated Jesus the great Prophet, turning himself to God with a severe accusation against them, and urging his own predictions as an aggravation of their inexcusable infidelity.

k He wrote concerning me in many most memorable passages.] Christ might perhaps intend
course; for if you do not believe his writings, which are daily in your hands, and the Divine authority which you so strenuously assert, how shall I expect that, under the power of such prejudices, you shall believe my words?

When our Lord had thus spoken he withdrew; and they were so overawed with the majesty of his presence and the unanswerable force of his discourse, that they did not attempt to seize or detain him.

IMPROVEMENT.

How various is the evidence of our Redeemer's mission, and with what pleasure should we trace it in the testimony which John bore, Verse the miracles which himself wrought, the testimony of the Father to him and the predictions which the prophets uttered and recorded! To confirm our faith in all, let us be daily searching the scriptures, as the oracles of God and the great fountains of life and salvation. We profess a regard to them: may that regard never be our condemnation! or the blessed penmen witness against us, as Moses against those who gloried in his writings, and yet wanted a true faith in them!

In proportion to the degree in which we are convinced of the truth of Christ's religion, let us set ourselves to cultivate the temper which he exercised. He sought not glory from men, but made his Father's will the rule of his actions, and his Father's honour the end of them. Let us not greedily catch at human applause, but aim at an infinitely nobler object, even the honour that cometh from God alone, the only true judge of actions and characters, because the only discerner of hearts.

May we have not only his word in our hands, but his love remaining in us; that thereby our natural aversion to the methods of his saving grace in the gospel may be subdued, that notwithstanding the obstinacy of our degenerate wills we may come unto Christ that we may have life! May we receive him with the greatest readiness, as coming to us in his Father's name: and not only for a season rejoice in his light, but steadfastly continue in his word, as made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; that the advantages which we enjoy may not be found to aggravate our guilt and to condemn us with the unbelieving Jews!

Christ

intend to refer to what Moses had written, —of the seed of the woman, (Gen. iii. 13,) —of the seed of Abraham, in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed, (Gen. xxii. 18.) —of the Shiloh, who should come to gather the people, (Gen. xlix. 10.) and of the Prophet whom God should raise up unto them from among their brethren, (Deut. xviii. 18.),—as well as to the many ceremonial institutions which had their final accomplishment in him.

2 Returned
Christ shewed the tenderness of his compassion in the severity of his rebukes, and spoke these awful and awakening words that these his unjust and inveterate enemies might be saved. May they be the power of God unto our salvation as they will be, if we believe in him whom he hath sent.

SECT. XLIX.

Christ vindicates his disciples from the censure of the Pharisees, for rubbing the ears of corn in their hands as they passed through the fields on a sabbath-day. Luke VI. 1—5; Mat. XII. 1—8; Mark II. 23, to the end.


AFTER the preceding conference with the Jews, our Lord departed from Jerusalem, where he had met with such an ungrateful reception, and returned towards Galilee; and it came to pass, that about this time, on the first sabbath after the second (day of unleavened bread),

Jesus, has advanced another yet less probable than either; which is, that it was the second of the two great feasts of the passover; as we call easier-day itself high easier, and its octave, low easier, or low sunday. But though the seventh day of unleavened bread was to be a holy convocation, yet the law expressly allowed the Jews to dress victuals on it (Exod. xii. 16); which would have afforded so direct an answer to the Pharisees' objection, that one can hardly suppose Christ would have failed to urge it. — On either of these two last suppositions, it must be rendered, the second prime sabbath; but as I could not translate it all, without fixing it one way or the other, I chose the former rendering, for these two reasons: (1) Because I cannot find that there is any Divine command to observe the sabbaths which follow the day of the three great feasts, and particularly that of pentecost, with any such peculiar solemnity as to afford sufficient reason for this distinguishing title; though large sacrifices were to be offered every day for seven days after the passover, and for eight during the feast of tabernacles; which are distinctly prescribed, Num. xxviii. 16—25, and xxix. 12, 18 seq. And (2) Because, considering what Philo and Isidorus assert, and Josephus intimates, of corn being ripe in Judaea about the time of the passover (see Puet. Var. Diss. lib. ii, cap. 11, Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xvi. cap. 18, and Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. cap. 10, § 5), and the law of presenting the waves made of new wheat on the day
The Pharisees complain of it as a breach of sabbath.

Jesus, attended as usual by a train of followers, (who had been with him at the feast), went through the corn-fields; and as his disciples were hungry, and the barley was now ripe, they began, as they went, to pull off some of the ears of corn; and rubbing them in their hands to break off the beards and the husk, did eat the grain.

And some of the Pharisees, who were employed by the rulers to follow him from place to place as malicious spies on all his discourses and actions, when they saw it, were offended at the time and circumstances of the action, and reproving his disciples, said to them, Why do ye thus gather and rub out the grain; for that is a kind of servile work, which it is not lawful for any one to do on the sabbath-days? And that they might involve their Master also in the same charge, though he did not himself join with them in it, they said to him, Behold, these thy disciples in thy very presence, do that which it is not lawful for any one to do on the sabbath; and wilt thou permit it to pass without a reproof?

And Jesus said in answer to them, Have ye, that value yourselves so much on your acquaintance with the sacred writings, and set up for the expositors of them to others, never read that which death must be fixed to such a time that the passover two years before it may be a late one. But I fear the argument is not so conclusive as one could wish, considering with what ingenuity and labour it is pursued. For that great man seems to have forgot how expressively Maimonides and the other rabbis assert that the Jews did not always fix their passover by the vernal equinox; but, in case of a backward spring, added an intercalary month between that and . (See Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. on Mat. xi. 1.) If this be credible it shews how little we can ascertain the Jewish passovers by astronomical calculations; and if it be not, why did Sir Isaac proceed in his computations on those rules for the translation of feasts, which we have only by late rabbinical tradition? See Bochart. Hieroz. li. cap. 50.

Offended at the time and circumstances of the action. The law so expressly allowed to pluck ears of corn as one passed through a field, that, malignant as they were, they pretended not to find fault with the thing itself (see Deut. xxiii. 25.) but they were perversely enough to think this a kind of rejoicing and dressing the grain, which was indeed forbidden on the sabbath.

c Abinaher

day of pentecost (Lev. xxiii. 17), it seems probable the harvest was generally concluded before that day. (See also Scalig. Emend. Temp. Proleg. p. 25, 26, and lib. vi. p. 557, 558. I suppose these considerations, or the authority of such great names, may have determined most harmonizers to introduce this story immediately after the fifth chapter of John; nor do I see any reason to vary from them herein. And the order would be the same if Reland's conjecture were to be admitted, that the πρωτοφαγον was the first sabbath in the civil, and the ιεροφαγον the first in the ecclesiastical year. (See Reland. Antig. Heb. lib. iv. cap. 9.) But this is a conjecture, which has so little to support it even in hypophora, as scarcely to deserve a mention.

To pull off some of the ears of corn. The word παρασκέυαζον, here used, may indifferently signify ears of any kind of grain; but it might probably be barley, that being first ripe in those parts. (Compare Exod. ix. 31, 32.) Sir Isaac Newton lays a great deal of stress on this, for fixing the time of Christ's death; concluding this passover must happen late, and that it was two years before that in which our Lord was crucified; and consequently that Christ's hungered, and began [Mark, as they went,] to pluck the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands, [Mat. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23.] And certain of the Pharisees [when they saw it] said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-days? [Mark ii. 24.] And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what

David
David did, when [Mark, he had need and] was an hundred, [Mark, he] and they which were with him? [Matt. xii. 3—Mark ii. 25.] How he went into the house of God [Mark, in the days of Abiathar the high priest,] and did take and eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him, [which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them] but for the priests alone? [Matt. xii. 4. Mark ii. 26.]

Mat. xii. 5. Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.

6 Abiathar, who was afterwards the high priest.] If our present reading (which Beza suspects, though older than the Syriac version) be allowed as genuine, here is a remarkable instance of a person being designed by an office which he did not bear till after the date of the event referred to; in like manner as Cyrenius (Luke ii. 2.) is called governor of Syria because he was so after the enrolment. It seems indeed that Ahimelech was high priest when David took the shew bread, though in all the story he is only called the priest; and as it is merely an arbitrary supposition that the father was sometimes called Abiathar, or the son of Ahimelech, it seems impossible to defend the received reading otherwise than by supposing with Grotius, that as Abiathar was a much more celebrated person than his father, our Lord mentions his name in preference to the other. He was probably present, and, for any thing we certainly know, his aged father might act by his advice in the affair referred to; which if he did, it was exceeding proper to mention him here.

6 Something greater than the temple.] So many manuscripts, with Theophylact, read μανὴ, something greater, instead of μανὴ, one greater, (see Dr. Mill in loc.) and in this view the opposition seems so natural that I prefer this reading. Our Lord might perhaps point to his own body, the noblest temple of the Deity (compare John ii. 21, sect. xxiv.) or it might refer to the work then going on: but the former sense is much more natural.
in prosecution of my service, they do what is so much less laborious than the offices which you allow there in the priests.

And he said unto them farther on this occasion,

The sabbath was made for the benefit of man, subservient to the rest and relief of his body, as well as to be spent in religious improvement; and not man for the observation of the sabbath, or of any other ceremonial institution whatsoever.

But if ye had known the intent of that scripture, Hos. vi. 6. and had considered what this meaneth, "I require mercy and not sacrifice;" that is, I always prefer acts of charity to matters of positive institution, when in any instance they interfere with each other; you would not have condemned the innocent, as you have now done, merely for rubbing out a handful of corn to refresh them in my service.

You are therefore, on the whole, greatly to blame to censure them; and would be so, if they had only my dispensation for what they do, and were defended by no farther arguments; for the Son of man is a person of so great dignity and authority, that he indeed is Lord even of

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.

Mark II. 27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.—[Luke VI. 5.]

Mat. XII. 7. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.


For the Son of man is Lord, &c.] The author of the new translation renders it in Matthew, The sabbath is subservient to man; though he paraphrases it as it stands in Mark, The Son of man has a power of dispensing with the law of the sabbath; which is undoubtedly the true sense; for I cannot find that the Son of man does, in the New Testament, signify any one but Christ; and were the words (which are exactly the same) to be translated in Mark as he has rendered them in Matthew, they would be a mere repetition of ver. 27. The sabbath was made for man, &c. It is worthy of our notice that Matthew introduces these words with γὰρ, for, and Mark with ὥσπερ, therefore, or so that; and both connections may be justified. Yet as it is hardly to be imagined both were equally intended, I look upon this to be a considerable proof that the sacred writers were not always critically exact in the use of their particles: a remark which I apprehend to be of great importance both for clearing their sense and vindicating their character. Whoever considers the ambiguity of many of those Hebrew
Reflectons on the apology of Christ for his disciples.

The sabbath [itself]; and he may hereafter give you far more surprising instances of his power over it.

IMPROVEMENT.

With pleasure we observe the zeal which these attendants of Christ express, who chose on a sacred festival to expose themselves to hunger as well as toil, rather than they would lose the benefit of his instructions, which, like the heavenly manna on the day preceding the sabbath, were then poured out in a double plenty. But what numerous auditory is so candid as to contain none who come, like these Pharisees, with a desire to cavil rather than to learn! The malignity of their temper sufficiently appeared in taking exception at so small a circumstance: hypocrines that could thus strain at a gnat and yet swallow a camel, (Mat. xxiii. 24.) scrupling to rub out a few grains of corn, while they sought to devour widows' houses, and were, under this grave mask of the strictest piety, inwardly full of rapine and all wickedness! (Luke xx. 47. and xi. 39.)

Let us attend to the apology Christ makes for his disciples. It speaks his own authority, as greater than the temple, and Lord of the sabbath: and well might he, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, without the least presumption, use such language as this. It likewise declares much of the genius of his religion, which deals not in forms and ceremonies, and dispenses even with rituals of a Divine appointment, when humanity and benevolence interfere with the observance of them. Since God will have mercy rather than sacrifice, let us abhor the perverseness and wickedness of those who sacrifice mercy itself, not merely to ceremonies of a Divine original, but to their own arbitrary invention, superstitious dreams and precarious though confident determinations. Let us practise habitual caution and candour, lest, before we are aware, we condemn the innocent and the pious, and become guilty of what is much more displeasing in the sight of God than the faults which a peevish and censorious temper may fancy it discovers in our brethren.

Sect.

Hebrew particles which correspond to the Greek, will find little reason to wonder at it. Compare Luke xi. 36. sect. ixiv. and note a there.

k Even of the sabbath itself; xai την σαββατικήν.] This certainly implies that the sabbath was an institution of great and distinguished importance; and may perhaps also refer to that signal authority which Christ by the ministry of his apostles should exert over it, in changing it from the seventh to the first day of the week.

I 12

* When
Christ observes the Pharisees, design against him.

SECT. L.

Christ, on a following sabbath cures a man whose hand was withered; and vindicates that action from the cavils of the Pharisees.


WE have just mentioned an instance of the Pharisees cavilling at a very innocent action of the disciples; we shall now proceed to another, in which they charged our Lord himself with the violation of the same sacred rest, in a yet more malicious and unreasonable manner. For it came to pass also, when he was departed from thence (that is, from the town in whose neighbouring fields they had rubbed out the ears of corn), that on another sabbath he entered again, as he was used to do, into the synagogue, in some other city which lay in his way through Galilee, and taught his heavenly doctrine there. And behold, a remarkable circumstance occurred: for there was a man present, whose right hand was withered, the nerves and sinews of it being so shrunk up that it was entirely useless.

7. And the scribes and Pharisees, who were there also present with him, watched him, to observe whether he would again heal on the sabbath-day; that they might find some new matter for an accusation against him, having succeeded so ill in the former attempt, and plainly perceiving that his reputation grew more and more among the people.

8. But when the synagogue-worship was dispatched, and our Lord's sermon was also concluded; he, knowing the malignity and wickedness of their thoughts and views, instead of being discouraged by the design they had against him, the same day, seeing a certain man at work on the sabbath, he said to him, O man, if thou knowest what thou doest, thou art happy; but if thou dost not know it, thou art cursed, and a transgressor of the law. This is undoubtedly a spurious addition; for had the Pharisees heard any thing like this from Christ, they would have followed him no farther, and observed him no more, to find matter even of capital accusation against him. And indeed it goes on a very false supposition that the ceremonial law was already abrogated.


And it came to pass also, [when he was departed hence,] on another sabbath, that he entered [Mark, again] into the synagogue, and taught: and [behold,] there was a man [Mark, there,] whose right hand was withered. [Mat. XII. 9, 10. Mark III. 1.]

7. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath-day; that they might find an accusation against him. [Mark III. 2.]

8. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. [Mark III. 3.]

When he was departed from thence.] There can be no doubt as to the connection of this story with the proceeding, in which all the evangelists agree; and indeed had not Luke told us it was an another sabbath, the words of Matthew would have led us to imagine it had been the same day. Perhaps he might spend most of the week in the town to which the fields mentioned above belonged.—Beza's favourite manuscript, now at Cambridge, as well as one of Stephens's, adds the following words in Luke, immediately before this story: The
him, said to the man who had the withered hand, 
Rise up from thy seat, and stand in the midst of the assembly: and he cheerfully arose, and stood in the most conspicuous part of the synagogue, hoping to receive the favour of a cure.

And as the Pharisees saw what Jesus intended,
they asked him, saying, Is it then to be taken for granted that it is lawful to cure on sabbath-days, as well as at other times? And they put the question in that general form, b on purpose that they might have an opportunity to accuse him, and not from any desire of instruction. And 11 he said to them, in reply to that ensnaring question, What man is there of you, in all this assembly, who, if he have but one sheep that on the sabbath-day should fall into a pit, and he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-days.

b They put the question in that general form.] The word ἕξωσαν is very extensive, and properly includes all the care, labour, and attendance, which the case of any discontented or wounded person can require; as I apprehend our English word cure also does; though, through the poverty of our language, we are forced to apply it to those miraculous effects which were so instantaneously produced by the healing word of our blessed Redeemer. — What Syriac word they might use I know not; but it is plain the question is put in very general terms, which best favoured their base purpose of founding an accusation on our Lord's answer.

c If ye have but one sheep that should fall into a pit.] The common version is more literal; but that which I have given plainly suits our English idiom better, and appears to me perfectly faithful, for the stress of the thought cannot lie on supposing a man to have but one sheep in all; but in this, that one only fell into the pit, yet for the comparatively small value of that one he would not scruple to undertake the labor of helping it out on the sabbath.

d To do well, and to perform the lovely acts of charity and mercy.] This is the meaning of that phrase, ἀματρικ; παντες; in the use of which the evangelist might intimate an appeal to some reminders of a moral sense, distinguishing the natural beauty of such actions, which these worst of men could not totally eradicate.

e Secretly

Luke VI. 9, Then said Jesus unto them,
days, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy
[and] even kill the innocent? thereby secretly
referring to the purpose of destroying his life, which, while they were thus scrupulous about the observation of the sabbath, they were even then forming in their hearts. But they were silent; being convinced in their own minds of the reasonableness of what he said, and stung with secret remorse of conscience, yet unwilling to confess what they saw and felt.

5 And when he had looked around upon them all with a just indignation, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, and for that condemnation and ruin which he knew it would bring upon them, as well as for the mischief it might occasion to others, he says to the man that laboured under the calamity which was mentioned before, Stretch forth thine hand. And accordingly he stretched it out, and was not only strengthened for that particular motion of which he was before incapable, but his hand was perfectly restored, and was well and strong as the other.

6 And the Pharisees were so incensed at the affront which they imagined they had received in our Lord's neglecting their censure, and intimating his knowledge of the evil purposes of their hearts, that they were no longer able to bear the place; but went out of the synagogue, and immediately took counsel together with the Herodians, who, different as their civil and religious

be zealous for the authority of the Romans, by whose means Herod was made and continued king; and it is probable, as Dr. Prideaux conjectures (Connect. Vol. II. part 2, book 3, ad fin.) that they might incline to conform to them in some particulars which the law would not allow of; and particularly in the admission of images, though not in the religious, or rather idolatrous, use of them. Herod's attempt to set up a golden eagle over the east gate of the temple is well known (see Joseph. Antiq. lib. xvi. cap. 6, (al. 8. § 1—3.) these complaisant courtiers would, no doubt, defend it; and the same temper might discover itself in many other instances. On all these accounts they were most diametrically opposite to the Pharisees; so that the conjunction of their counsels against Christ is a very memorable proof of the keenness of that malice which could thus cause them to forget so deep a quarrel with each other.
Reflections on the rage of the Pharisees against Christ.

Religious notions were from those of the Pharisees joined with them in their enmity to Christ, and zealously united in a conspiracy against him, how they might destroy him, either by a public prosecution, or a private assassination. And they were filled with madness and rage against him, and discoursed over the point at large with each other, to determine what they might do to prevent the growing reputation of Jesus among the people, and to put a period at once to his labours and his life.

But Jesus knowing [it,] that nothing might hinder him from fulfilling his ministry, withdrew himself from thence, and went with his disciples to the sea of Galilee, on the shore of which he frequently preached to the people.

**Improvement.**

What actions are so fair and lovely, that malice cannot turn them into reproach! What characters are so unblemished, what so exemplary, that uncharitableness cannot revile and condemn them! While the eyes of distressed multitudes were turned to Christ as their only Physician and most valuable Friend, the eyes of the Pharisees are continually upon him for evil; and they behold his wondrous miracles; not for their own conviction, but that they may, if possible, turn them into the means of his destruction. So ineffectual are the most obvious and demonstrative arguments, till Divine grace conquer men's natural aversion to a Redeemer's kingdom and captivate their hearts to the obedience of faith!

To have reviled and dishonoured Christ and to have endeavoured to prevent the success of his ministry, had been a daring crime: but these desperate wretches conspire against his life; and, different as their principles and interests were, form a transient friendship to be cemented by his blood. Blessed Jesus! well mightest thou say, Many good works have I shown you, and for which of them would you murder me; (John x. 32.)

What reasoning could be more plain and forcible than this which our Lord used? and yet, like deaf adders, they stop their ears, and harden their hearts against it. Inhuman creatures, that were more concerned for the safety of a sheep than the happiness of a man! Yet would to God that unworthy temper had died with them; for surely there are those, even among professing Christians, who regard their cattle more than even the souls committed
Multitudes follow Christ from the sea shore.

Mark III. 7.

It was before observed that Jesus retired from the synagogue, where he had cured the man that had a withered hand, and went with his disciples to the sea-shore: we now pursue the story, and add, that he was there attended by a great multitude of people who followed him from Galilee, and even from Judea: And particularly from Jerusalem, where that extraordinary cure lately wrought at the pool of Bethesda, and that excellent defence with which it was followed, had greatly increased his popularity: nay, there were some that came yet farther from the south, and were from Idumea; the natives of which country being long since obliged to become Jews, had many of them seen Jesus at the feasts; and others too attended him.

a We now pursue the story. The connection of this section with the preceding, both in Matthew and Mark, is express: and I desire the reader would once for all observe, that when I give no reason for placing the sections in the order in which they stand, it is because I am not aware there is any difficulty or controversy about them. And their following each other in the evangelists, though without any express note of exact connection, I always reckon a good reason for continuing that order, unless there be some weighty argument inducing us to change it.

b Obliged to become Jews. That Herod had obliged them to this about an hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ, we are assured by the account of Josephus gives us, Antiq. lib. xiii. cap. 9, (al. 17) § 1.

"Rushed"
He heals them of all their diseases.

Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

And he spake unto his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

For he had healed many, [and he healed them all,] insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. [Matt. XII. 15.]

And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

And they who were possessed with impure spirits, 11 as soon as ever they saw him, though they before were perfect strangers to him, immediately fell down before him in a posture of submission and homage; and such a terror seized the demons that possessed them, that they cried out, with all the appearances of horror and confusion, saying, We know that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the most high God. 4

But our Lord preserved the usual modesty of his temper on these occasions as well as others; and, being desirous to occasion as little disturbance and offence as possible, he charged them with strictness, and some appearance of severity, that they should not make him known: for, intending to visit several of those parts himself, he

1 Rushed in upon him.] This the phrase αττασθησας απο αυτου; yet more strongly expresses, which signifies that they were ready to drive each other upon him, so that those nearer him could hardly stand, being pressed forward by those behind.

2 Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the most high God.] The Leicester manuscript reads it, Σου εις τον Βοι, τον Ευς: ους Εν, θαρσως; Thou art God, the Son of God: which I mention, not that I think the authority of that sufficient to justify a change in the received reading, but only as one remarkable instance, among many others which I could easily give, of the negligence with which that manuscript was collated by Dr. Mill's correspondent; since this reading, memorable as it is, is omitted by the Doctor. But I hope the world will ere long be favoured with a far more exact account, not only of that manuscript, but of several others much more valuable than that, some quite omitted by Dr. Mill, and others very imperfectly collated. This we are encouraged to expect from the reverend, accurate and indefatigable Mr. Wasse of Ayno, whose obliging readiness to assist me in this work I do myself the honour of acknowledging with the utmost gratitude. His death, since the publication of the first edition of this volume, is a calamity to the learned world long to be lamented.

4 He charged them with strictness, and some appearance of severity.] This we may take to be included in the force of that expression, ποιησαι αυτους...
A prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in Christ.

he was unwilling to give an unnecessary alarm to his enemies; and he always chose to avoid every degree of ostentation.

So that in him it might be evidently seen to be accomplished which was spoken by Isaiah the 18 prophet (Isa. xlii. 1—4), saying, "Behold the great Messiah, my Servant whom I have chosen for the great work of redeeming and saving my people; he is my Beloved, in whom my very soul does entirely acquiesce as every way qualified to perform it: for I will put my Spirit upon him; and he shall proclaim judgment, that is, the great law of religion, righteousness and truth, even to the most distant of 19 the heathen nations. He shall not contend with martial violence, nor cry out in a clamorous and turbulent manner; nor shall any one hear his voice in the streets, as giving a loud and dis-20 quieting alarm: But he shall manage his administration with so much gentleness and sweetness, with so much caution and tenderness, that (as it is proverbially expressed) he shall not break even a bruised reed or cane, which snaps asunder immediately when pressed with any considerable weight; nor shall he ex-21 tinguish even the smoking flax, or the wick of a lamp, which, when it is first beginning to kindle, is put out by every little motion: with such kind and condescending regards to the weakest of his people, and to the first openings and symptoms of a hopeful character, shall he proceed, till he send forth judgment to victory, or till he make his righteous cause gloriously triumphant

Mat. xii. 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

18 Behold my Servant whom I have chosen, my Beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

[By Isaiah the prophet.] I refer the learned reader to Grotius and Heinsohn for the difference between the original and the quotation here, which chiefly lies in the clause of sending forth judgment unto victory.

g He shall not break a bruised reed, nor extinguish the smoking flax.] The immense pains Zeerus and some other commentators have taken to show on what accounts either the Pharisees or the multitudes, or the Jews or Gentiles, might be compared to a bruised reed or smoking flax, seem very wide of the purpose. They seem to be only proverbial expressions to signify a person or a most gentle character (as I illustrate them above), and something resemble the proverb among the Spanish Jews to the same purpose; If such a one were to walk on a pavement of eggs he would not break them: (see Pol. Synops. in loc.) To suppose, with Dr. Lightfoot, it signifies he shall not make so much noise as breaking a bruised reed does, or pouring water on smoking flax, sinks the idea too low.

h Till he send forth judgment to victory.] Isaiah says to truth: and we may take the words to signify till he make the cause of righteousness and truth completely victorious; or, till at length he take a righteous and speedy vengeance on the Jews for rejecting him, to verify and fulfill the truth of his predictions.—I have expressed it in a manner which may suit either; but I think the former much preferable, since then the words describe the general character of Christ's administration in all ages, and especially as it best agrees with the sense of the original. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth: He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set, or established, judgment in the earth: which phrases explain each other, and the sense of each is abridged here.

[And
21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust triumphant over all opposition. And this gentle and gracious administration shall charm man-kind in so sensible and irresistible a manner, that the Gentiles shall confide in his illustrious name; and distant, yea barbarous nations, shall seek their refuge and salvation in his grace; though Israel may ungratefully reject him, and therefore be justly abandoned by God."

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Surely face does not more exactly answer to face in water than the character of Christ drawn by the prophet to his temper and conduct as described by the evangelists. How should Zion rejoice, and the daughter of Jerusalem shout, that such a King cometh unto her, meek and having salvation! (Zech. ix. 9.) Let us with pleasure trace his gentle administration, and with a cheerful confidence commit our souls to so kind and so faithful a hand: far from breaking, he will strengthen the bruised reed; far from quenching the smoking flax, he will rather blow it up into a flame. How well does it become the disciples of Christ, and especially how well does it become his ministers, to imitate what was so amiable in their Lord, and not to despise the day of small things! Let us not strive nor cry; but, laying aside all unnecessary contentions and angry debates, let us receive one another as Christ hath received us (Rom. xv. 7), and, avoiding all vain ostentation, let us silently and meekly attend, each of us, to the discharge of his proper office. So may we hope that the cause of religion will go on successfully around us, and that righteousness will in due time be brought forth to complete victory over all opposition, and, by its own genuine influences, be happily established in the earth.

The Gentiles trust in a Redeemer's name, and the British Isles are numbered among those that wait for his law. May our souls with humble submission bow themselves to receive it, and observe it with such faithful care and obedient regards, that our example, wherever it is seen, may promote the reception of it among those that as yet are strangers to it!

SECT.
Christ is all night in prayer on a mountain.

SECT. LII.

Our Lord having spent the night in prayer on a mountain, in the morning chuses the twelve apostles; and then comes down to the multitude assembled in the plain, and performs a great number of miracles among them. Luke vi. 12—19. Mark iii. 13—19.

LUKE VI. 12.

And it came to pass in those days of his teaching near the sea of Galilee, that Jesus, seeing the general notice which was taken of his appearance, and the inclination which multitudes had to be farther informed concerning him, determined to chuse a number of persons who should assist and succeed him in his ministerial work. And as the office to which he intended to assign them was of so great importance, even to the remotest ages, previous to the choice of them he went forth to a neighbouring mountain to pray; and his heart was so much enlarged on this momentous occasion that, notwithstanding all the labours of the preceding day, he continued all night at his devotions, in an oratory [devoted to the service] of God, where he had some opportunity of being sheltered by the trees which were planted round it.

13 And when it was day, early in the morning he called his disciples to him, [even] those whom he pleased, (compare John xv. 16,) and they cheerfully came to him upon his summons: and out of them he chose [and] constituted twelve, whom he also

a In those days.] There can be no doubt of the place of this section, since this choice of the twelve apostles is mentioned both by Mark and Luke just in this connection; and Matthew does not mention it at all till he comes to speak of the mission of the twelve, which is plainly a different thing, and happened some time after. Compare Luke xii. 1, 2, with Mat. xvi. 1—3, sect. lxxiv.

b In an oratory [devoted to the service] of God; κοινομενον τω θεῷ. This is so singular an expression that I cannot agree with our translation; but rather conclude with Drusius, Prideaux, Whitby, Hammond, and many other good critics, that we are to understand it of an oratory, or praesepe, or prayer-house, as Dr. Watts chuses to render it, (in his late ingenious discourse on the Holiness of Places, p. 111.) and as the word seems also to be used, Acts xvi. 13. (See Hammond in loc.) Descriptions of these places may be found in most writers of Jewish Antiquities, and in none that I know of better than in Calmet) at the word Prosepe, and in Prideaux's Conversion, Vol. i. p. 387—389. It is well known they were open at the top, and planted round with trees; as well as often situate by the sides of seas or rivers, as was probably the case here. I did not chuse, with Dr. Whitby, to render it in God's house of prayer, that phrase having been so peculiarly appropriated to the temple. See Mat. xxvi. 13.

c Constituted twelve.] So I chuse to render έκκύριωτα rather than ordained; (ordinatio to the ministry, carrying along with it an idea by no means suiting what passed now,) which was so long before their entering on the office. The word is used elsewhere for appointing to an office, 1 Sam. xii. 6. Gr. and Heb. iii. 2.—It is probable our Lord
Having called his disciples, he chooses twelve for his apostles.

also named his apostles, or envoys; a name which well expressed the office for which they were designed: these he now fixed upon, that for some time they should continually be with him, not only to attend upon his public ministry, but to enjoy the benefit of his private conversation; that he might furnish them the better for the great work in which they were to be employed; and that at length, after suitable preparation, he might with more advantage, send them abroad to preach his gospel, and thereby make way for his own visits to some more distant parts where he had not yet been. And to enable them the more effectually to do it, he determined that they should then have power to heal distempers, and to cast out demons from those unhappy people who were possessed by them; well knowing such endowments would command a regard, notwithstanding the meanness of their appearance.

And the twelve persons who were so signally honoured by him, and whose names (excepting that of Judas Iscariot) will be ever venerable in the Christian church, as being, next to Christ, the great foundations of it, (Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14,) were these; Simon, whom (it has been observed before, John i. 42, p. 125) he surnamed Peter, that is, a rock, on account of his remarkable steadiness and intrepidity of temper (see Isa. l. 7,) as well as the peculiar use to be made of him: And James, [the son] of Zebedee, the fisherman; and John the beloved disciple, who was the brother of James: and he surnamed them Boanerges, which signifies, Sons of thunder; thereby intimating with what victorious and resistless power they should bear down all opposition, and with Divine eloquence and mighty miracles confound the enemies of his gospel:

Lord chose twelve apostles in reference to the twelve tribes of Israel, (see Mat. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 30. Rev. xxi. 12, 14. and compare Exod. xxiv. 4. Deut. i. 23; and Josh. iv. 2, 3,) and therefore care was taken, on the death of Judas, to choose another to make up the number. (Acts i. 21, 22, 26.) Which seems to have been a piece of respect paid to the Jews previous to the grand offer of the gospel to them; whereas when they had generally rejected it, two more, Paul and Barnabas, were added without any regard to the particular number of twelve.

They came unto him: and of them he chose [and ordained] twelve whom also he named apostles [that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.] MARK III. 15. 14.

MARK III. 15. And to have power to heal sickness, and to cast out devils.

16 And Simon he surnamed Peter; [LUKE VI. 41.—]  

17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; (and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is. The sons of thunder; [LUKE VI. 14.—].)  

d He surnamed Peter.] To surname, here plainly signifies to give an additional name; [προετευχεν τα ονομα αυτοις παρεμφυτησαν.]  

c Boanerges, which signifies Sons of thunder.] As it stands in this form, it is plainly a corruption of BENEF REGIUM. Considering the remarkable gentleness of John's temper and manner of writing, it is more reasonable to interpret this title as in the paraphrase, than to refer it to any thing peculiarly awful or overwhelming in their manner of address beyond what was to be found in the other apostles.

f Lebbeus,
gospel: And Andrew, and Philip, of whose first acquaintance with Christ we were before informed, (John i. 40, 43;) and Bartholomew; and Matthew, or Levi, who had lately been called from the infamous employment of a publican, (Mat. ix. 9. p. 249.) and Thomas, who was also called Didymus, as having a twin brother; and James [the son] of Alpheus, called James the less, (Mark xv. 40) and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus, and who was [also called] Judas, or Jude, [the brother] of James; and Simon the Canaanite, called also Zelotes; or the zealot, as having before professed a distinguished zeal for the law: And, worthy of being mentioned in the last place, or rather unworthy of being mentioned at all, otherwise than with the greatest abhorrence, was Judas Iscariot, or a man of Cariot, (Josh. xv. 25.) that infamous abandoned wretch, who also was the traitor, that afterwards was so ungrateful to his Lord, that he even betrayed him, into the hands of his bloody enemies: he had professed himself, with secular and worldly views, a disciple of Christ; and though our Lord well knew him, yet, as his character was free from any visible ground of suspicion, in order to accomplish what was delivered in the sacred oracles, he was pleased to invest him with this holy office, and to place him among his apostles: (compare John xiii. 18.) And

Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus, and who was also called Judas, or Jude, the brother of James.] That this person had all these names appears from comparing the catalogue given us in the places before us, and in Mat. x. 2—4, and Acts i. 13. Lebbeus being derived from Lob, which signifies the heart, and Thaddeus probably from Thad, a Syro-chaldaic word, which, as some critics tell us, signifies the breast, seem equivalent names, and may signify the hearty Judas; perhaps to distinguish him from that other Judas whose faithless breast and foul heart had brought a kind of infamy on the name; so that neither Matthew nor Mark use it when speaking of this apostle; and John takes particular care to prevent the confusion which might arise from the ambiguity of it. John xiv. 22.

Simon the Canaanite, called also Zelotes.] It is matter of some doubt with me whether he was called the Canaanite, as being a native of Cana in Galilee, as some have thought; or whether it be derived, as Dr. Hammond thinks, from the Hebrew Kanad and signifies the same with Zelotes. But though we have many instances of extraordinary zeal in Phinehas, Elijah, the Maccabees, &c. and read in ancient Jewish writers of the Judgment of zeal by which Stephen was murdered, Paul assailed, &c. yet I cannot find any sect of men distinguished by that name till mentioned by Josephus (Bel. Jud. iv. cap. 3. (al. 5.) § 9,) a little before the destruction of Jerusalem. If Simon had the additional name of Zelotes given him on account of his personal zeal for the law (which is possible,) he might probably be a Pharisee: but Mr. Fleming’s conjecture that he was the father of Judas Iscariot, who is called the son of Simon (John xiii. 4.) seems very precarious, considering how common the name of Simon was. See Fleming’s Christology, Vol. II. p. 167.

That even betrayed him.] It is plain that was has great force here, if it be rendered even; or else it seems a mere expiatory.

Unclean.
And after he had acquainted these twelve persons with his design, and had given them such private instructions as he judged convenient to render their attendance upon him subservient to the execution of their important office, he came down from the mountain with them, and stood in the neighbouring plain: and as the morning was now pretty far advanced, the crowd of his disciples [gathered round him:] and besides those that had followed him for some time, and were now persuaded of his Divine mission, there was also still waiting upon him (as we observed above, Mark iii. 7, 8, p. 276) a great multitude of people from all parts of Judea, and particularly from Jerusalem, and even from the shore of Tyre and Sidon, which lay on the Mediterranean sea; who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases: And they also who were infested with unclean and wicked spirits, made their application to him; and they were cured of the terrible disorders which those malignant beings occasioned. And the whole multitude of these unhappy people endeavoured at least to touch him; for so extraordinary were the miracles of this day, that in some instances, where our Lord did not so much as take any apparent notice of the case, yet there went a Divine, though secret virtue out of him, and wrought so powerfully on those that touched him, that it healed them all, how desperate soever their distempers were.

IMPROVEMENT,

When we consider how much the church in all ages has been indebted to the labours of the apostles, and how much we ourselves owe to them, we shall see great reason of thankfulness to our wise and gracious Master, who was pleased to assign this work to his servants, and so eminently to qualify them for it. It is observable, that before he sent them forth, he chose them to be with him in a more

Unclean spirits.] It seems to me an excessive refinement in the learned editors of the Prussian Testament to distinguish (as they do in their note on Mat. x. 1) unclean spirits from other evil spirits which might possess men; supposing the word only to signify such kind of spirits as drove men to dwell among the tombs, by which they became ceremonially unclean. How little it can be suspected from Luke iv. 33, see the note there, p. 191. It is evident unclean and evilspirits are generally used as nearly synonymous terms, referring to the moral impurity and malignity of their natures. Compare Mat. xii. 43; Luke xi. 24; and Rev. xvi. 13, 14.
more constant attendance on his person and ministry. May all
who succeed them as preachers of the gospel, be such as have inti-
mately known Christ themselves, and have been accustomed to
spiritual converse with him; that they may with the greater
ability, zeal and efficacy, recommend him to others!

We may assure ourselves that these his future ministers had no
inconsiderable share in those petitions in which, with unabating
fervour and intenseness of devotion, our Redeemer spent this me-
morable night. And if we have any regard for the support of
religion in the rising age, let us likewise be earnestly praying both
for them that are already in the ministry, and for such as are pre-
paring for it. This surely ought to be the frequent care, not
only of those who have the tremendous charge of educating such as
are ere long to be intrusted with the honour of the gospel and the
care of souls, but of those who are now struggling with the glori-
ous labours and trials of that important office, and even of all
those private christians, who cordially love the interest of their
Master, and wish the salvation of their fellow-creatures.

Let us unite our cries to him who has engaged to be always
with his church even to the end of the world, and say, "Light up,
O Lord, a brighter and a stronger flame in the lamps of thy
sanctuary! Polish these arrows of thy quiver, that they may
pierce deep into the consciences of men! Let thy priests be clothed
with salvation, that thy saints may shout aloud for joy! And pour
forth upon them so plenteous anunction of thine Holy Spirit, that
the odours of thy grace may by their means be diffused around
throughout all thy tabernacles; like that of the fragrant oil,
which was poured on the head of Aaron, in such rich abundance,
that it not only ran down on his beard, but reached even to the
skirts of his garments! Amen, and Amen."

SECT. LIII.

Christ, in the audience of his new-chosen disciples, and of the multi-
tude, repeats in the plain many remarkable passages of his sermon

LUKE VI. 20.

AND [Jesus] lifting up his eyes on his disci-

LUKE VI. 20.

ples, who surrounded him, and more espe-
cially directing them to his apostles whom he had
lately chosen, said unto them, Happy are you who

LUKE VI. 20.

are

Blessed

nies surprises me more, than that so many of
them make this discourse to be the very ser-
mon
21 Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God.

22 Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh.

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and be exceeding glad; for so is your reward. And I tell you, ye are happy; for your reward is prepared of me. For whatsoever shall do the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have barns nor stores up for winter. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by considering is able to add one hair to his stature? And if ye be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clotheth the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewith shall we be clothed? (For after the same manner shall the angels also come in to take up the unrighteous dead; and where they are, their bodies shall be destroyed; and their bones shall be scattered among the nations. For, lo, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.) I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. To him that overcometh will I grant to hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.
We are to love our enemies, and to do good to all:

Sect. List.

Luke VI. 35.

whelmed with trouble and distress at such abuses and assaults, be glad in that day, and with holy alacrity even leap for joy; for, behold, your reward in heaven is great in proportion to your sufferings on earth: For thus their fathers did to the prophets of old, who now are in seats of distinguished glory. (See Mat. v. 11, 12.)

24 But there is, generally speaking, cause to denounce a woe to you who are rich; for so ensuring are the circumstances in which you are placed, that it is much to be feared you have already received all your consolation (compare Luke xvi. 25.) and will be so taken up with the transient pleasures of time as to forget and forget everlasting blessedness. There is generally reason to say, Woe unto you who are now filled to the full, and pampered with all the most luxurious dainties! for you shall ere long suffer hunger, and fall into a state of indigence and misery, aggravated by all the plenty which you have enjoyed and abused. Woe unto you who spend your lives in mirth and gaiety, and are so vain as now to laugh off every solemn and awful thought! for you have reason to expect a portion in those doleful regions where, without intermission and without end, you shall mourn and lament. And again, I may generally say, in so corrupt an age as this, Woe unto you when all men speak well of you; for such universal applause is seldom to be gained without sinful compliances; and thus did their fathers to the false prophets of old, who soothed them in their idolatries and other crimes with smooth addresses and vain assurances of security and happiness.

26 You, my disciples, if you would approve your fidelity to God and to me, must act in a very different manner, by which you will certainly expose yourselves to hatred and persecution: But I say unto you, and to all that hear me this day, Far from entertaining sentiments of malice and purposes of revenge, love even your enemies, and do good to them that hate you: Bless them that in the malignity of their hearts revile and curse you; and cordially and fervently pray for them that most spitefully harrass and abuse you. (See Mat. v. 44.)

27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies; do good to them which hate you;

28 Bless them that curse you; and pray for them which despitefully use you.

And,

d Generally speaking.] Compare Mat. xix. 23, 24. It is most evident that such expressions as these in scripture are to be taken with some limitations, otherwise they would be contrary to fact in some instances.
And thus we shall appear to be the children of God.

29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.

And, as ever you would attain to such exalted degrees of fortitude and goodness, accustom yourselves patiently to bear the common injuries of life, which a false sense of honour and interest renders so much more intolerable than they really are. If, for instance, a man smite thee on the [one] cheek, rather than return the blow, offer also the other to him; and if he take away thy mantle, do not by violence attempt to hinder him [from taking] also thy vest. (See the notes on Mat. v. 39, p. 214.)

I would also charge it upon you to labour after a diffusive liberality, as well as exemplary meekness: be ready then to give to every one that asketh thee for an alms, where thou hast reason to believe it is charity to do it; and from him that taketh away thy possessions in an injurious manner, do not immediately demand them back in the forms of law, but rather endeavour by gentler methods to reduce the offender to reason. And do not by any means imagine, that the injuries you receive from others will cancel the bonds of common humanity to them; but as you would reasonably desire that men should do to you, do you also in like manner to them, and by putting yourselves, as it were, in their places, endeavour to form your minds to an impartial judgment. (See note on Mat. vii. 12, p. 234.)

And indeed if you only love them that love you 32 what great thanks are due to you upon that account? For there are some sentiments of gratitude common even to the worst of men, which incline the most scandalous sinners to love those that love them, and to profess an affectionate regard for those by whom they have been treated with respect and kindness. And if you do good 33 offices only to them that are your benefactors, what mighty thanks are due to you for that? For even the most infamous sinners, either from instinct, or from mere self-love, may often be observed to do the same. (Compare Mat. v. 46, 47, p. 216.)
And if you lend only to them from whom you hope to receive, and that, perhaps, with considerable advantage to yourselves, what favour do you shew in that, or what extraordinary thanks are due to you on that account? For even the greatest sinners lend to other sinners like themselves, that, when there is occasion, they may receive the like assistance in return from them.

L 12
Reflections on the maxims Christ has repeated.

**But I exhort you to love your enemies, and to do good, and lend in cases of great necessity, even when you can hope for nothing again; and so your reward in heaven will be great, and you will appear to be the sons of the most High God; for in the course of his daily providence he is kind to the ungrateful and evil, causing the undeserved benefits of the sun and rain to descend upon them, and filling their insensible hearts with food and gladness.** (Compare Mat. v. 44, 45, 36 and Acts xiv. 17.) *Be ye therefore merciful, as he also whom you call your heavenly Father is merciful; and unto whom indeed you cannot stand related as his children, if you have no concern to imitate and to obey him.* (Compare Mat. v. 48, p. 216.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

How necessary is it, that our forgetful hearts should have line upon line, and precept upon precept? If Christ did not think it improper to repeat this discourse, surely it will not be needless for us to renew our attention to it. Oh that every word of it were engraven on our hearts as with the point of a diamond, that we might learn, in spite of all the foolish wisdom of this world, to form ourselves on these maxims, as the surest guide to present and to eternal felicity!

21–26 *Our Lord again pronounces the poor and the hungry, the mournful and the persecuted, happy; and represents those as miserable who are rich and full, joyous and applauded; not that this is universally the case; but because prosperous circumstances are so frequently a sweet poison, and affliction a healing though bitter medicine. Let the thought reconcile us to adversity, and awaken our caution when the world smiles upon us; when a plentiful table is spread before us, and our cup runneth over; when our spirits are gay and sprightly; or when we hear, what to corrupted nature is too harmonious music, that of our own praise from men. Oh that we may secure, what is of infinitely greater importance, the praise of our heavenly Master, by a constant obediential regard to these his precepts!*

34 May we be happy proficient in the art of bearing and forgiving injuries! May we be ready to every good word and work! maintaining an eye quick to observe, a heart tender to feel, a hand open

---

*When you can hope for nothing again.] I cannot think (as Dr. Bevan and some others have done agreeably to the Syriac and Arabic versions) that ἐπὶ ἀνακριβήν should be rendered causing none to despair; since neither the phrase itself, nor the opposition in which it stands to ver. 34, will admit such an interpretation. See Dr. Whitby's note here.*

a If
open to relieve the calamities and necessities of friends, of strangers and of enemies, giving to some; and where, perhaps, there may be little prospect of a return, lending to others; which, if it engage them to greater industry, is as real a benefit as if the loan were a gift.

On the whole, let us not presume to call God our Father, if we do not labour to resemble him; nor dare to challenge the peculiar honour and privileges of Christ's disciples, if we do not distinguish ourselves from others by the charity of our tempers and the usefulness of our lives, as well as by the articles of our faith and the forms of our worship.

SECT. LIV.

Our Lord goes on to repeat many remarkable passages of his sermon on the mount, with some proper additions relating to the same subjects. Luke VI. 37, to the end.


JUDGE not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

a If you do it from a truly religious principle.] This must be supposed, to make it consistent with those passages in which love to God, and faith in Christ, as well as other branches of the Christian temper, are insisted upon as so absolutely necessary, that without them the greatest lenity and indulgence to our fellow-creatures cannot give us a claim to the promises of pardon and salvation.

b Into your lap.] Here is an evident reference to the mantles which the Jews were, into which a considerable quantity of corn might be received. Compare Ruth iv. 15. 2 Kings iv. 39. Neh. v. 18. Prov. xvi. 33.
The danger of following blind and ignorant teachers.

He spake also, at the same time, a parable to them (which he afterwards repeated, Mat. xv. 14.) to caution them against submitting with an implicit faith to the conduct of ignorant or vicious men, who might set up for religious teachers; and said, Can the blind undertake to guide the blind? Will they not both, in such a case, be likely to fall into a pit, or ditch, which may happen to lie in their way? And, in like manner, you have nothing to expect from following such men, but to perish with them. There is little reason to hope that, under their instruction, you should be wiser and better than they: for it is, you know, a common proverb, That the scholar is not above his teacher; but all that can reasonably be expected is, that every one who is a finished [scholar] should come up to him that teaches him; and it is this that he will principally aim at, to be as his master: It is of great importance therefore that you should well consider whom you take to be your teachers; for it is necessary your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, if you expect a share in the kingdom of heaven. (See Mat. v. 20, and x. 24, 25.)

Yet, on the other hand, I would not have you to be forward in blaming them, or any other, while you neglect a due regulation of your own temper and conduct: for why dost thou look at the little mote which is in thy brother’s eye, and observest not the much greater disorder which is like a beam in thine own eye? Or how canst thou with any decency, or to any purpose, say to thy brother, Brother, hold still, [and] I will take out the mote which is in thine eye, while thou art at the same time so blind and partial, that thou seest not the beam which is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, who falsely pretendest that zeal for the honour of religion, which, while thou art thus careless of thyself, thou canst not really have, first cast out the beam from thine own eye, and then thou wilt discern [how] to take out the mote that is in thy brother’s eye; which is an office that requires greater wisdom and conduct than in thy present circumstances thou canst be supposed to have. (See the notes on Mat. vii. 3, 4, p. 232.)

Till thou shalt thus reform thyself, there is not much to be expected from thine endeavours to reform others: for as there is no good tree which

39 And he spake a parable unto them: Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect, shall be as his master.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother’s eye.

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth
Reformers should begin with reforming themselves.

which produces bad fruit; so neither is there any bad tree which produces good fruit: For all the
world is agreed that every tree is to be known
by its proper fruit: men, for instance, do not
gather figs of thorns, nor do they gather a cluster
of grapes from a bramble. (Compare Mat. vii.
16, p. 235.)

And indeed, where men converse with any de-
gree of intimacy, they may be known and judged
of by their words as well as by their actions.
A good man, maintaining an habitual sense of
the Divine Presence, and feeling in his own soul
a spring of habitual and diffusive benevolence
to his fellow-creatures naturally produces that
which is good, out of the good treasure of
love which is laid up in his heart: and on the
other hand, a bad man out of the bad treasure
of evil principles and corrupt affections which is
laid up in his heart, produces that which is bad,
which often breaks out before he is aware, and
discovers his character, even contrary to his in-
tention; for his mouth naturally speaks from the
overflowing of the heart, and no man has so much
artifice as to command it entirely so that it shall
never discover itself in some unguarded moment.
(Compare Mat. xii. 34, 35, sect. lixii.)

Yet remember, it is not merely by men's
words that their character will finally be judged,
and their estate fixed; especially, that it will not
be determined by a few pious and devotional
forms of speech, which in themselves are of very
little worth: for why do ye call me, Lord, Lord,
or what imaginable purpose does that profession
serve, if in your practice you are regardless of
my will, and do not the things which I say and
command to all that call themselves my disci-
plcs? (Compare Mat. vii. 21.)

This is a vanity of which I have formerly
warned you: and to repeat the warning, I will
shew you, on the other hand, to whom that man
is like, who comes to me, and hears my words, and
practises agreeably to them: and, on the other
hand, to whom it is that he may be resembled,
who hears my words, and doeth them not. As
to the former, he is like a prudent man, that
built an house on the river-side; and, considering
the

45 A good man out of the good treasure of
his heart bringeth forth that which is good;

46 And why call ye

47 Whosoever com-

48 He is like a man,

\[c\text{ Men, for instance.} \] This is one of those
many places where the word \(\gamma \alpha \zeta \text{ (for)}\) has
not its usual signification, of introducing the
reason of something before asserted, but
merely intimates an illustration of it.
Reflections on the admonitions Christ has given us.

Sect. Liv.


the importance of the undertaking and the difficulty of the situation, dug deep through the sand and marl and gravel, till he came to the solid stone, and placed the foundation of his house upon a rock: and afterwards he was abundantly repaid for all his labour and expense; for when the inundation came, the current of the river with an impetuous torrent violently broke upon that house, and yet was not able to shake it, because it was founded upon a rock: thus securely will the practical hearer stand the shock of temptations, and the trial of death and of the judgment-day.

49 But, on the other hand, he that hears my words, and does not practise them, is like a foolish man, that built an house on the bare surface of the ground, without any care to secure a foundation; against which the impetuous stream did violently break with the same fury, and, being unable to withstand the shock, it presently fell down; and the ruin of that house was irreparably great, and its inhabitants were all crushed under it. (Compare Mat. vii. 24—27, sect. xliii.)

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let a frequent reflection on our own faults teach us candour; and let a sense of our continued dependence on Divine liberality make us liberal towards those that need our assistance; lest we lose the comfort so justly forfeited, and abused mercies be another day repaid with measures of wrath, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.

We are another day to give an account of ourselves before God: let us then judge for ourselves in matters of religion; and be very careful that we do not stupidly follow blind guides, till we fall with them into destruction. “Lead us, O Lord, in the way everlasting! Form us to a more perfect resemblance of our great Master! Make us severe to ourselves, and, so far as it is real charity, indulgent to others! Sanctify our hearts by thy grace, that they may be as trees bringing forth good fruit, or as fountains pouring out wholesome streams! There may a good treasure be laid up, from whence good things may be abundantly produced! There may those holy and benevolent affections continually spring up, which may flow forth with unaffected freedom, to refresh the souls and animate the graces of all that are around us!”

46, 49 May these beautiful, striking, repeated admonitions, which our Saviour gives us of the vanity of every profession which does not influence the practice, be attended to with reverence and fear! We
We are building for eternity; may we never grudge the time and labour of a most serious inquiry into the great fundamental principles of religion? May we discover the sure foundation, and raise upon it a noble superstructure, which shall stand fair and glorious, when hypocrites are swept away into everlasting ruin, in that awful day in which heaven and earth shall flee away from the face of him that sits upon the throne! (Rev. xx. 11.)

SECT. LV.

Christ, after preaching in the plain, goes to Capernaum, and miraculously cures, even at a distance, the centurion’s servant that was sick of a palsy. Luke VII. 1—10. Mat. VIII. 5—13.

LUKE VII. 1.

NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, [when Jesus was entered into Capernaum,] he [came unto him; having first] sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant:—[Mat. VIII. 5.]

a He came to him. It is very plain, from Luke’s larger and more circumstantial representation of the case, that the centurion did not come at first in his own person (see Luke vii. 6, 7), but he might properly be said to do that which he directed the elders to do in his name: and nothing is more frequent, even to this day, in our courts of law, than to say that a person comes into the court and asks a thing which he asks perhaps only at third hand, by the counsel whom his solicitor has employed in his cause. b Worthy

SECT. LV.
The great humility and faith of the centurion.

**MAT. VIII. 6.** And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy grievously tormented.

**LUKE VII. 4.** And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

**MAT. VIII. 7.** And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

**LUKE VII. 6.** Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, [and answered,] saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself to come any farther; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: [MAT. VIII. 8.—]

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, [speak the word only;] and my servant shall be healed. [MAT. VIII. 8.]

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say unto

render it in such a manner as will suit either.

**c Ranged under the authority of my commanding officer.** It is well known that the Roman centurions were subject to the command of their respective tribunes; as our captains are to that of their colonels.

**d Slave.**
Such shall be received, and the Jews be cast out.

soldiers under myself, order and govern them by the intimations of my will, whether present or absent; and I say to one, Go to such a place, and he goeth; and to another, Come hither, and he cometh; and to my slave, Do this, and he immediately doeth it; now I firmly believe thou hast yet a more absolute power over the strongest and most desperate diseases, and canst at pleasure command them off from the afflicted, when thou art either near, or at a distance; and I shall thankfully accept this cure in the manner that may be least inconvenient to thyself.

And Jesus hearing these things, admired him on account of his great humility, and the strength of his faith; and, turning about, he said to the multitude that followed him, Verily, I declare unto you, That through all my journeys and converse, I have not found, even in all Israel, such an illustrious degree of faith as now appears in this stranger, who only sojourns among you. But I say unto you with great solemnity, That many shall at last come, not only from the neighbouring provinces of the Roman empire, but even from the remotest Gentile nations, which lie to the east and west of its utmost boundaries, and shall sit down with your pious ancestors, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to share with them in the delightful entertainments and final blessedness of the kingdom of heaven. But many of the children of the kingdom, who were born within the sacred enclosure, and appeared to stand fairest for all the mercies of the covenant, and indeed the bulk of the Jewish nation, shall be rejected with abhorrence for their unbelief, and be cast out into that gloomy darkness which is without; there for it cannot be said, with any propriety, either that the holy patriarchs, share with Christians in the present privileges of the gospel-state, or that the Jews weep and wail on account of their being excluded from them.

Slave.] As the word ἴκλητα; generally signifies a slave rather than a hired servant, I chose to render it thus here, as thinking it most expressive of the authority to which the speech refers.

East and west.] Perhaps this may be only a proverbial phrase to signify coming from the most distant parts. But I cannot forbear observing here that the gospel spread much more to the east and west of Judea than to the north and south of it: though it seems rather to be spoken as a general expression, which will appear by comparing it with Luke xiii. 29. and Isa. xlix. 5, 6.

Final blessedness of the kingdom of heaven.] So the phrase must here be explained; but it also sometimes goes yet farther, when the person

Mat. VIII. 11. And I say unto you, That many shall at last come, not only from the neighbouring provinces of the Roman empire, but even from the remotest Gentile nations, which lie to the east and west of its utmost boundaries, and shall sit down with your pious ancestors, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to share with them in the delightful entertainments and final blessedness of the kingdom of heaven. But many of the children of the kingdom, who were born within the sacred enclosure, and appeared to stand fairest for all the mercies of the covenant, and indeed the bulk of the Jewish nation, shall be rejected with abhorrence for their unbelief, and be cast out into that gloomy darkness which is without; there for it cannot be said, with any propriety, either that the holy patriarchs, share with Christians in the present privileges of the gospel-state, or that the Jews weep and wail on account of their being excluded from them.

Slave.] As the word ἴκλητα; generally signifies a slave rather than a hired servant, I chose to render it thus here, as thinking it most expressive of the authority to which the speech refers.

East and west.] Perhaps this may be only a proverbial phrase to signify coming from the most distant parts. But I cannot forbear observing here that the gospel spread much more to the east and west of Judea than to the north and south of it: though it seems rather to be spoken as a general expression, which will appear by comparing it with Luke xiii. 29. and Isa. xlix. 5, 6.

Final blessedness of the kingdom of heaven.] So the phrase must here be explained; but it also sometimes goes yet farther, when the person

Mat. VIII. 11. And I say unto you, That many shall at last come, not only from the neighbouring provinces of the Roman empire, but even from the remotest Gentile nations, which lie to the east and west of its utmost boundaries, and shall sit down with your pious ancestors, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to share with them in the delightful entertainments and final blessedness of the kingdom of heaven. But many of the children of the kingdom, who were born within the sacred enclosure, and appeared to stand fairest for all the mercies of the covenant, and indeed the bulk of the Jewish nation, shall be rejected with abhorrence for their unbelief, and be cast out into that gloomy darkness which is without; there for it cannot be said, with any propriety, either that the holy patriarchs, share with Christians in the present privileges of the gospel-state, or that the Jews weep and wail on account of their being excluded from them.

Slave.] As the word ἴκλητα; generally signifies a slave rather than a hired servant, I chose to render it thus here, as thinking it most expressive of the authority to which the speech refers.

East and west.] Perhaps this may be only a proverbial phrase to signify coming from the most distant parts. But I cannot forbear observing here that the gospel spread much more to the east and west of Judea than to the north and south of it: though it seems rather to be spoken as a general expression, which will appear by comparing it with Luke xiii. 29. and Isa. xlix. 5, 6.

Final blessedness of the kingdom of heaven.] So the phrase must here be explained; but it also sometimes goes yet farther, when the person

Mat. VIII. 11. And I say unto you, That many shall at last come, not only from the neighbouring provinces of the Roman empire, but even from the remotest Gentile nations, which lie to the east and west of its utmost boundaries, and shall sit down with your pious ancestors, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to share with them in the delightful entertainments and final blessedness of the kingdom of heaven. But many of the children of the kingdom, who were born within the sacred enclosure, and appeared to stand fairest for all the mercies of the covenant, and indeed the bulk of the Jewish nation, shall be rejected with abhorrence for their unbelief, and be cast out into that gloomy darkness which is without; there for it cannot be said, with any propriety, either that the holy patriarchs, share with Christians in the present privileges of the gospel-state, or that the Jews weep and wail on account of their being excluded from them.
Reflections on the faith of the Centurion.

there shall be perpetual weeping for sorrow, and gnashing of the teeth with envy, at such an enraging sight.

And, having uttered these words for the admonition of the Jews, and for the encouragement of this pious stranger and his friends, Jesus said to the centurion, who now stood by, Go thy way home in peace; and be it unto thee, and to thy servant, according to thy faith. And in that very hour that he spake these words, just at that instant, was his servant healed.

And they who had been sent from the centurion as his messengers to Christ, returning with him to the house, were eye-witnesses of the cure, and found the servant that had been sick restored to perfect health and vigour. This might occasion the conversion of the family; and was a miracle that greatly raised the fame of Jesus, and made the multitude more eager in their pressing after him.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is pleasant to think of this good centurion, who amidst all the temptations of a military life, retained the principles, not only of liberality and humanity, but of piety too; and, probably amidst the raillery of his irreligious and idolatrous brethren, had the courage to frequent, and even to build a synagogue. Surely his devotion did not enervate, but rather invigorate and establish his valour; nor did he find himself less dutifully regarded by the soldiers under his command for his parental tenderness to his afflicted servant, which brought him thus humbly to petition Christ in his favour. Such may our officers be! and we may hope that the hosts of heaven will with pleasure cover their heads in the day of battle, and obedient troops be formed, by their example and their care, to the discipline of virtue as well as of war.

We see the force of real goodness to conquer the most inveterate prejudices: the elders of the Jews at Capernaum turn petitioners for a Gentile, for a Roman centurion: so may we disarm the virulence of a party spirit, and conciliate the friendship of those who otherwise might have their eyes upon us for evil!
In plentiful circumstances and an honourable station, how great is the humility of this worthy man! How low are the thoughts that he has of himself! And with what veneration and respect does he address himself to Christ! And, had this centurion been even a tribune or a general, this humble address would well have become him when he was thus applying unto Christ. And how well does it become us, when entreaty the blessed Jesus to exert his healing power on our hearts, to bow with deep humility before him, and to say, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, or worthy the honour of appearing in thy presence!" He that thus humbleth himself, shall be exalted, (Luke xviii. 14.) nor do we ever stand fairer for the praise of Christ than when we see ourselves undeserving even of his notice.

Behold an instance of faith in a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, by which their unbelief was condemned! Oh that the virtues of heathens may not another day rise up to our condemnation, notwithstanding an higher profession and much nobler advantages! We cannot but rejoice to hear that many shall come from the east and the west, to sit down with the pious patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven: but how deplorable is the case of those children of the kingdom, who, with all their towering expectations, shall be cast out, and doomed to hopeless sorrow and to everlasting darkness!

May Almighty Grace awaken those who are now ignorant of the value and importance of the blessings of the gospel; and excite those holy desires after them, which may prevent that impatience and envy, that rage and despair, with which they must otherwise view them at an unapproachable distance; yea, view them possessed by multitudes, whom they are now most ready to despise!

SECT. LVI.

After having quitted the multitude who crowded in upon him, and reposed himself that night at Capernaum, Jesus goes the next day to Nain, and raises the son of a poor widow from the dead. Mark III. 19—21. Luke VII. 11—17.

NOW after Jesus had performed this miracle and was prevented thus from going to the centurion's, before he left Capernaum with his twelve new-chosen apostles, they went into an house², where he commonly resided while he was

² They went into an house.] We must conclude, from the manner in which Mark connects this with the names of the apostles, that it happened very quickly after their being chosen. The other evangelists inform us of some previous events which happened in the mean time; but they might be dispatched in a few hours. This therefore
He departs the next day from Capernaum to Naim.

Mark III. 20. was in that city. And the multitude, that had been standing in the plain, assemble again about the doors and windows of the house; and, animated by the illustrious miracle he had just performed on the centurion's servant, they pressed so eagerly upon him, that they of the family could not so much as eat bread, though it was the proper hour for it. And, when his friends had heard [of it,] that he was so intent upon his work as to go out of doors again to preach to the people, they went out after him, to lay hold on him, and importune him to come in; for they said, 

He is transported too far; not to allow himself time for his meals, after all the watchings of the last night, and the fatigue of this day.

Luke VII. 11. And, Jesus having so far yielded to their importunity as to repose himself that evening there, it came to pass on the next day, that he went from Capernaum to a city called Naim; and many of his disciples went thither with him, and a great multitude of others. And, when he approached the gate of the city, a circumstance happened, which proved the occasion of one of the most memorable miracles of his life. For behold, the corpse of a dead person was carried out in funeral procession

is undoubtedly the proper place for these verses; and it is strange that Le Clerc and others should have placed them before the sermon in the plain. (See Luke vi. 17 — 20, p. 283, 284.) I suppose this was after the care of the centurion's servant, as the word ἑαυτῷ, (Mat. viii. 5.) seems to intimate that Christ was then entering Capernaum; and the multitude was not yet dismissed when that care was wrought. (Mat. viii. 10.)

There said, He is transported too far: [They said, He is beside himself, or, He is mad, is very offensive. One can hardly think Christ's friends would speak so contemptibly and imployically of him; and, if that sense must necessarily be retained; it would be much more decent to render the clause, If that is, the multitude mentioned in the verse before is mad, thus unreasonably to break in upon him. But 2 Cor. v. 13, is the only passage in the New Testament where the word has this signification. It generally signifies to be greatly transported, or, as we express it in a word derived from this, to be thrown into an ecstasy. (Mark ii. 12. v. 42; vi. 51. Luke viii. 56. and Acts ii. 7, 12. xii. 16.) And, though the Seventy sometimes use it for fainting away, (Gen. xlv. 26. Josh. ii. 11. and Isa. vii. 2.) I do not find it ever signifies that faintness which arises from excess of labour or want of food: but our Lord's attendants seem to have feared lest his zeal and the present forecency of his spirit, should have been injurious to his health.

c After all the watchings of the last night, and the fatigue of this day.] Compare Luke vi. 19. S seq. sect. ii. whence it appears our Lord had sat up the preceding night, and eaten nothing this day; but spent the morning in giving a charge to his new-chosen apostles, and the advance of the day in preaching to a vast auditory, and working many miracles.

d To a city called Naim.] If Naim was a city of the tribe of Issachar, and lay at the foot of mount Tabor (where most geographers have placed it), our Lord made a pretty long journey, this day, especially considering what was mentioned in the last note; for he must thus have travelled afoot twelve miles. Lightfoot supposes it to be the same with En-gannim, which is mentioned in Josh. xix. 21, and xxi. 29. but this lay also in the tribe of Issachar, and must have been at no less distance from Capernaum, (See Lightfoot's Chorog. ad Luc. vii. 11. § 3.) The circumstance here recorded might probably happen towards the evening, at which season funerals are commonly celebrated.
Meeting the funeral of a widow's son, he raises him to life.

12 And, when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the bier, (and they that bare him stood still,) and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak: and he delivered him to his mother.

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

procession (according to their manner of burying without the walls of their cities), and the deceased was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, which made the case so much the more deplorable; and this sad circumstance, together with others which attended it, so influenced the minds of many of her neighbours, that there was a great multitude of the city with her.

And, the Lord seeing her in this afflicted condition, was moved with tender compassion for her; so that he prevented any opportunity of solicitation on their part, and said unto her, Weep not any longer upon this occasion; for I am come to bring thee consolation and relief. And presently approaching them, he touched the bier, on which, according to the manner of that place and time, the corpse was laid, covered over with a kind of mantle, or winding-sheet; and the bearers, who were carrying it upon their shoulders, stood still: and with an unaffected freedom and simplicity he said, in such a manner as discovered his Divine authority, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise! And, as soon as he had spoken these astonishing words, the youth who had been dead, awakened by that almighty energy which went along with them, sat up, and began to speak: and Jesus, when he thus had shewn his power in restoring him to life, discovered too the sympathizing kindness of a friend; and, taking him by the hand, delivered him to his mother, in such a manner as to express the pleasure he found in changing her sorrow into a transport of proportionable joy.

And a religious dread fell upon all those who were present; and they glorified God, saying, Truly a great prophet is risen up among us; and God has again graciously regarded his ancient people, who were in former ages so often distinguished by his favours. And this report of him, and of this glorious miracle which he had wrought, went forth, not only through the neighbouring parts of Galilee; but was soon spread through all Judea, and the whole region that was round about; and greatly heightened and increased the mighty expectations from him which they had long since begun to entertain.

IMPROVEMENT.

It surely becomes us likewise to glorify God on account of this great Prophet, whom he has raised up, not only to his ancient people,
people Israel, but to be for salvation to the ends of the earth. (Acts xiii. 47.) Welcome, thou Messenger of the Father's love! How illustrious thy miracles! how important thy doctrine! how beneficent and amiable the whole of thy behaviour.

11. He went from Capernaum, to Nain, still on the same blessed errand, to do good to the bodies and the souls of men. Oh that our lives, in their humbler sphere, might be such a circle of virtues and graces! that we might thus go about doing good; and might learn, by the happiest of all arts, to make the close of one useful and pious action the beginning of another!

13. Of him may we also learn the most engaging manner of conferring benefits; that lovely mixture of freedom and tenderness, which heightens the sweetness, and doubles the value of every favour! May our hearts imbibe the same temper, and it will diffuse on our actions some proportionable gracefulness! May our bowels, like his, yearn over the afflicted, and our hand be ever ready thus gently to wipe away their tears! But, O gracious Redeemer, how impotent is our pity when compared with thine! with thine, which could call back lamented children from the grave, and turn the sorrows of a weeping parent into a torrent of joy! We are sometimes ready fondly to say, "Oh that thou hadst been near when the darlings of our hearts were snatched away from us, and we left them in the dust!" But thou indeed wast near; for thou hast the keys of death and the unseen world! And this we know, that, if our beloved children are sleeping in thee, thy voice shall at length awaken them; and thou wilt deliver them to us, to die no more; and wilt thyself graciously take part in that mutual and lasting joy which thou shalt give to us and to them.

SECT. LVII.

John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to Jesus, to inquire whether he was the Messiah; and Jesus answers them in a convincing, though oblique manner. Luke VII. 18—23. Mat. XI. 2—6.

Luke VII. 18. \*\*WE have before mentioned the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and given some account of the occasion of it. (Sect. xxviii. p. 156, & seq.) Now the disciples of John had the courage to resort to him where he was confined, and informed him of what passed: and they particularly gave him an account of all these things which had now lately been performed by Jesus; how he had cured the centurion's servant,

\* All these things which had now lately been performed by Jesus.] This is a plain argument that this message from John happened quickly after the miracles which Luke had
John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to Jesus.

19 And John [when he had heard in the prison the works of Christ,] calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them unto Jesus, saying [unto him,] Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? Mat. xi. 2, 3.

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath had recorded in the preceding part of this chapter. And therefore, though Matthew has mentioned many other facts and discourses before he relates this message, yet because he asserteth nothing at all as to the order and connection of it, (see Mat. xi. 2,) I have, with most other harmonisers, thought myself obliged to follow Luke, on the principles laid down above. See note a, p. 244.

b For their satisfaction therefore, rather than his own, Mr. L'Enfant, with some others, thinks as Justin Martyr and Tertullian did, that John was so discouraged by his own long imprisonment, that he began himself to doubt whether Jesus was the Messiah: and, accordingly, he supposes that when our Lord afterwards says, Happy is he that is not offended in me, he meant it as a caution to John, that he should be upon his guard against so dangerous a temptation. But, considering what clear evidence John had before received by a miraculous sign from heaven, and what express and repeated testimonies he himself had borne to Jesus, I cannot imagine this to have been possible; especially as he foreseaw, and foretold, that he must himself quickly be laid aside. (John iii. 50, p. 153.—But his disciples might very probably be offended at this circumstance, as well as at the freedom of Christ's conversation, so different from the austerity used among them; and therefore he might think it necessary to put them in the way of farther satisfaction: not to say, that the warmth of John's temper might render him something uneasy at the reserve which Christ maintained: and that he might imagine it agreeable to the general design of his own office, as his forerunner, this to urge a more expressive declaration. For these reasons, I chuse to render and paraphrase it thus, rather than with Limborch (Theol. Christ. lib. iii. cap. 11. § 14.) to translate it, Thou art he that should come, and doth look for another? that is, We do not expect any Messiah but thee: so understanding it, as a repeated testimony, which John here by proxy when he could no longer do it in his own person. All the spirit of Christ's answer would be lost, if we were to understand the message in this sense. c He that cometh: 殴/19^1.7. It seems that, by their speaking of the Messiah by this phrase, (He that cometh, or, He that is coming,) the pious Jews in the most lively manner expressed their confident expectation of him, and their eager longing for his appearance, as the greatest and most welcome messenger of God to man, and the most desirable person that ever did, or should come into the world. (See Mark xi. 9, 10, and compare Psal. cxviii. 28. Dan. vii. 14. Hab. iii. 3. Serm. 15. b. bat. 11. and Zech. ix. 9. Bishop Pearson justly observes, that this among many other arguments, proves, that the notion of two Messiahs, one suffering, and the other triumphant, is a vain dream of the modern Jews, that was altogether unknown to the ancients. See Pearson on the Creed, p. 183.)

Vol. vi. N
Jesus refers them to his miracles for an answer to their question.

21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

22 Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go, and relate to John the things which you yourselves have seen and heard this day, as well as those that you have been informed of by others, who have been eye and ear witnesses of my miracles and discourses: say, in particular, That the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the very dead are raised: and observe also, that I do not court the rich and the great, as impostors are most apt to do; nor do I bear a commission chiefly directed to them, as some of the prophets did; but, as you see by the auditory now around me, the poor, and even the meanest of the people, have the gospel preached to them; they have the good news of eternal salvation most freely published among them, and the blessings of it offered to their acceptance. And be sure you add farther, that I appear in such circumstances, that there is reason to say, Happy is he that is not scandalized, or stumbled, at me: for

23 And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. [Mat. XI. 6.]

2 Of their diseases and plagues. ] Matt. viii., plagues or scourges, may probably signify some of the most grievous distempers, such as leprosies, palsy, inveterate palsy, &c. (Compare Mark iii. 10, and v. 29—34.) and may allude to their being supposed to be such corrections as intimated the great displeasure of God against the persons on whom they were sent. Compare John v. 14, and ix. 2.

4 And graciously bestowed sight, &c. ] The original phrase, εὐαγγελίζοτα στοίχειον, seems to express, both in how generous, and how kind and affectionate a manner, our blessed Redeemer performed these cures.

A Happy is he that is not scandalized, or stumbled, at me. This was intended as an awful admonition to the disciples of John that they should themselves guard against those prejudices which might prevent their receiving Christ; and contains a strong intimation that their final happiness would be
for he must be singularly wise and religious, who
is not shocked by the strong popular prejudices
which lie against me. Let John consider these
things in themselves, and let him compare them
with those prophecies which foretold that the
Messiah should work such miracles (Isa. xxv.
5, 6.) that he should preach the gospel to the
poor (Isa. lxi. 1.) and that many should despise
and reject him (Isa. viii. 14. liii. 1-3.) And
he, and, by a parity of reason, on and the rest
of his disciples, may easily collect a convincing
answer to the question you are come to ask,
without any more express declaration from me.

IMPROVEMENT.

We have here in John the Baptist a very edifying instance of Ver.
a most candid and pious temper. How solicitous was he to remove
those scruples from the minds of his disciples which, perhaps,
their excessive fondness for him might have occasioned? He wisely
sends them to converse with Jesus themselves: and surely they
who most accurately inquire into the credentials he brings, will be
most effectually convinced and impressed by them.

Let us, when tempted to doubt of the truth of Christianity, re-
collect the various and unanswerable proofs of it, which are sum-
med up in these comprehensive words; arising from the miracles
and character of our Redeemer, and the prophetic testimony that
was borne to him. Let us particularly rejoice that the poor have
the gospel preached; and that the blessings of it are offered to en-
rich the souls of those, whose bodily necessities we often pity, with-
out having it in our power to relieve them.

And,

be determined by the regards they should
pay to him, as well as that these prejudices
should generally prevail to men’s ruin,
See note c on Mat. v. 29, p. 211.

Compare them with those prophecies.]
Archbishop Tillotson has largely shewn the
correspondence between the prophecies and
events here referred to; see Tillotson’s Works,
Vol. II. p. 451, & seq.—Dr. Thomas Jac-
son has laboured the point yet more largely
in the second part of his curious discourse on
this text. See his Works, Vol. II. p. 470,
& seq.

Without any more express declaration
from me.] Nothing could be more appo-
site, natural and convincing, than such an
answer as this, which took its rise from
what Christ was then doing, and rested on
the most apparent testimony of God himself
in astonishing miracles, to which they knew
their master made no pretences (see John x.
41.) miracles of so beneficent a nature,
that no austerity of a retired life were by
any means comparable to them; and mir-
acles receiving an additional lustre from
their being foretold by a prophet many ages
before (see note i on John ii. 22, p. 139.)
and even by Isaiah the prophet, by whom
the Baptist was so particularly described,
that as he himself had frequently referred to
him (Mat. iii. 3. Luke iii. 4-6. and John
i. 23.) so his disciples must, no doubt, have
made themselves peculiarly familiar with
his writings.—These, and many other par-
ticulars, are set in a most beautiful light by
the masterly hand of Bishop Atterbury, in
his Posthumous Sermons, Vol. II. p. 41-50,
who has very judiciously abridged what is
most material in the large discourse of the
learned Dr. Jackson referred to in note e.
Jesus discourses with the multitude concerning John.

And, since our Lord pronounces a blessing upon those that shall not be offended in him, let us consider what those things are, in the doctrine or circumstances of Christ, which have proved the most dangerous stumbling-blocks, and endeavour to fortify our souls against those temptations which may arise from them. So the trial of that faith which is a much more valuable treasure than gold which perishes, though tried in the fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, (1 Pet. i. 7.) and we, on the whole, may be advanced in our way by incidents which at first threatened to turn us entirely out of it; as the faith of these disciples of John must surely be confirmed by those doubts which they had for a while entertained.

SECT. LVIII.

Jesus discourses with the multitude concerning John, and justly complains of the perverseness of that generation. Luke VII. 24—35. Mat. XI. 7—19.


NOW when the messengers of John were gone away to inform their master of the things which they had seen and heard, Jesus began to speak unto the multitude that still surrounded him, concerning John the Baptist, and to inquire into the reason of their having formerly flocked after him as they had done. I know (said he) that many of you were of the number of his hearers, and were baptized by him: now I would seriously ask you, and advise you attentively to ask yourselves, What went you out into the wilderness in which he preached, to behold? You did not surely go on any trifling occasion, or for a mere amusement: none of you would be so senseless as to undertake a journey to see a reed, or a bulrush shaken by the wind, nor can you say you found him wavering in his conduct, or inconsistent in the testimony that he bore to me.

25 But what then went you out to see? You could not go with any expectation to find a man in such a place, dressed in soft garments of the finest silk, and living in an elegant and sumptuous way: for, behold, they that wear a splendid dress, and live luxuriously, are to be sought in royal palaces rather than in a rough and barren wilderness; and you well knew that John’s manner of living was plain and austere, such as suited the message he brought, and illustrated his integrity in delivering it.

But
But once more I would ask you, What did you then go out to see? Are you not ready to allow that you went out to see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a common prophet. For this is the very person of whom it is written, 27 (Mal. iii. 1.) "Behold, O my Son, I send my appointed messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee, and in a proper manner introduce thee into the world."

Wherefore I assuredly say unto you, That among all those that have been born of women, or the whole race of mankind in all former ages, there hath not arisen a prophet greater than John the Baptist; for as he is, with regard to his moral and religious character, one of the best of men, so he has some peculiar honours superior to any prophet of former generations: nevertheless, there is a sense in which he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he. [Luke VII. 18.]

Luke VII. 29. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, saying, "We have heard his sayings; do we not reason that this is the voice of a prophet?" John answered and said, "I am baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

He is now laid aside from his ministry, yet I would have you reflect upon the consequences of his preaching, and to consider the success of it: and you must needs remember that when he came and preached the baptism of repentance, and publicly proclaimed that the Messiah was at hand, all the people in general hearing [him] preach, and even the publicans themselves, justified God, and testified their approbation of the Divine scheme in sending such an Ambassador, by

2 Superior to any prophet of former generations.] The obvious sense of what is here expressed, together with the following words, does plainly limit it to them alone. And it might properly be said that John was greater than any of the ancient prophets on account of his wonderful conception and birth, his excellent knowledge of gospel-mysteries, (see especially John iii. 27. & seq. sect. xxvii.) his express testimony to the Messiah, and his remarkable success in making way for him: John was also himself the subject of ancient prophecies, and long expected by the church.

b All the people in general hearing him preach.] The reader will observe that (with Grothus) I take these to be the words of Christ, continuing his discourse; whereas our translation seems rather to intimate they are the repetitions of Luke on the sentiments of those who are now hearing Christ. I long considered them in this view; but it now seems to me so evident, from the most ancient manuscripts and versions, that the words, And the Lord said, at the beginning of ver. 31, were not in the original, that I could not but connect and render them thus. Nevertheless I shall show so much regard to the common reading as to add (in note below) the version and paraphrase in that sense and connection; submitting it, on the whole, to the learned reader to judge as he shall think proper; but must first desire him to consult Grothus, Dr. Mill and the Polyglot.

c Justified God, and testified their approbation, &c.] From the opposition between those
He shows what had been the effects of his ministry.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Mat. XI. 12. And from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

15 For all the prophets, and the law, prophesied until John.

Those that justified God and those that rejected his counsel, it is plain that to justify here signifies to approve and vindicate. Compare ver. 33. (at the end of this section); Rom. iii. 4. and 1 Tim. iii. 16.

II. How plainly he dealt with them and their brethren.] Of this see the paraphrase on Luke iii. 10. p. 101.

v From the days of John the Baptist even to the present time. Sir Isaac Newton (in Prophecy, p. 159.) urges this as an argument to prove that some considerable time must have elapsed since John's imprisonment. But, on the common Lutheran, it must be near a year; and our Lord might probably include some time of his ministry preceding his imprisonment; so that he cannot be much assisted in our calculations by this text.

v The kingdom of heaven is attacked with violence—and the violent seize it with eagerness. [ἐπιδράω, καὶ ἑπιδράω ἐπιδράω ἐπιδράω. The words of the original are very strong and forcible, and the translation I have given is very literal.—It seems necessary to interpret the latter clause as in the paraphrase, to prevent the appearance of a tautology: Yet I did not venture to render ἑπιδράω, ruffians or bravoos; because I think the version should be left in as great a latitude as the original; and I was afraid of even a great variation from what is commonly taken to be the meaning of this passage, might have shocked some at the first hearing. To suppose, as a late ingenious writer has done, that this refers to the first attempts made to destroy the gospel in its infancy, and that επιδράω signifies tear it to pieces, does not appear natural in this connection; though the word must be allowed sometimes to have that import.]

This
13 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come.

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke VII. 31. And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? [Mat. xi. 16.]

22 They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, [unto their fellows] and saying, We have piped unto you, and you have not danced. We have wept, and you have not pitied: this is Elias who was to come. [And the Lord Jesus further said,] To what then shall I now compare the men of this generation? and to what are they like? Reflect upon yourselves, and you will surely see the justice of the comparison which I am going to make. They are like a company of little children, whom you may sometimes have observed, as they were sitting in the market-place, to be so froward and perverse in their behaviour to each other, that no contrivance could be found to please them; and some of them you may have heard calling out to their companions, and saying, What shall we do to please you, and to bring you to join with us in our diversions? We have tried all the ways we can think of: sometimes we have piped to

...to God towards them; and, not having been baptized by him, were displeased to hear so high an encomium given to John. 31. And the Lord knowing how ready they were to cavil, both at him and his forerunner, said, with a particular reference to these Pharisees and doctors, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? &c." Compare note b in this section.

...They are like little children. It is plain our Lord's exact meaning is, that the men of that generation, or the cavillers of whom he was now speaking, were like the children complained of, and not like those that made the complaint: but, more especially in Matthew's style, the phrase [at times] often signifies only in general that the thing spoken of may be illustrated by the following similitude. And so the phrase must be understood, Mat. xiii. 24, and 45. xviii. 23, xx. 1. and xxii. 2.
to you a pleasant tune, and you have not danced to
the musick; and at other times we have changed
the ditty and mourned to you, or played and
sung such dirges as are used at funerals, and you
have not taken your part and lamented with us;
but are always finding fault with every thing we
do and will not be prevailed upon to join with
us. Such is that childish obstinacy and per-
verseness that appears in you, who think your-
selves the oracles of wisdom in the present age;
and you discover the same froward temper in far
more important instances: for John the Baptist,
of whom I have now been speaking, came with
an uncommon austerity of behaviour, neither
eating bread, as others do, nor drinking wine, but
living on locusts and honey and water in the
wilderness; and you say, He has a devil, and acts
like a wild distracted demoniac, whom an evil
34 spirit drives from the society of men. On the
other hand, the Son of man is come, without any
of this severity, eating and drinking, as others
do, conversing familiarly among you and with
a temperate freedom sharing in your festivals as
well as your common meals; and you say, Be-
hold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a fit
friend and companion of publicans and sinners:
thus ungratefully do you injure his character for
that humanity and condescension which you
35 should rather applaud. But, nevertheless, true
wisdom has still been justified and vindicated by
all those who are indeed her children: and they
who are truly wise and religious must needs
approve this beautiful variety in the conduct of
Providence; and see that the difference in our
manner of living suits the purposes of our re-
spective appearances and is adapted to promote
the general design of God's glory and man's
salvation.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy would it be, if we could learn to correct the natu-
ral inconsistencies of our temper and conduct by wise reflections
and considerations! How much more improving would our atten-
dance on the ministrations of God's servants be, were we seriously
to ask ourselves to what purpose we attended!

It ought surely to be followed with such considerations, since it
is intended to lead us to the kingdom of heaven: a glorious prize!
too glorious to be obtained by faint wishes and inactive desires.

There
Jesus upbraids the cities where his miracles were wrought.

There is a sense in which it still suffers violence: and how sad is the degeneracy of our natures, that we should exert so little warmth in such a pursuit, and so much for every trifle! Instead of that holy ardour with which men should press into it, they fold their hands in their bosoms, and lose themselves in soft luxurious dreams, till the precious opportunity is for ever gone. May Divine Grace display the crowns and palms of victory before our eyes, in so awakening a manner, that we may joyfully seize them, whatever obstacles may lie in our way, whatever must be done, or whatever must be borne to secure them!

Let us not, as we love our own souls, through a proud self-sufficiency reject the gracious counsels of God which are addressed to us, lest we should be another day condemned by publicans and sinners. Divine providence and grace are using a variety of methods with us: let not our perverseness and folly, like that of the Jews, frustrate them all; but rather let us shew ourselves the 35 children of wisdom, by falling in with its measures and improving as well as applauding them.

SECT. LIX.

Our Lord laments over the impenitent cities of Galilee, acknowledges the Divine sovereignty in the dispensations of the gospel and invites sinners to come to him. Mat. XI. 20. to the end.

Mat. XI. 20.

Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.

21 Wo unto thee, Chorazin! Wo unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Mat. XI. 20.

Then, after Jesus had in general reproved the Jews for the perverseness of their carriage under the great advantages that they enjoyed, he began particularly to upbraid the cities in which most of his miracles had been wrought because they did not repent, and believe in him: And in the most affectionate and solemn manner he declared, how terrible would be the consequence of their impenitence and unbelief; and said, Wo unto thee, O Chorazin, and Wo unto thee, O Bethsaida, where I so often have conversed and taught! for surely if the miracles which have been wrought in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon of old, though they were places so remarkable for their luxury, pride and contempt of religion, they would long ago have repented with tokens delivered, as well as how many surprising miracles he had wrought in these parts; as may be seen in several preceding sections.

a Because they did not repent and believe in him.] Our Lord had great reason thus to upbraid them on this occasion; considering how much time he had spent among them, and how many excellent discourses he had

Vol. VI. O O

b Places so remarkable for their luxury, pride and contempt of religion.] This is frequently
tokens of the deepest humility, covering themselves in sackcloth and lying in ashes. Wherefore I say unto you, That as they never had such means of conviction as you have been indulged with and have ungrATEfully abused, the condition even of Tyre and Sidon, in the day of the final and universal judgment, shall be more tolerable than yours, who will deservedly be exposed to a much heavier weight of vengeance. (Compare Luke xv. 13, 14, sect. xcv.)

22 But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, especially, O guilty Capernaum, who hast been (as it were) exalted even to heaven, not only in wealth and magnificence, (compare Dan. iv. 22.) but, what is infinitely more valuable, in the means of grace, by my long abode in thee, and continued labours among thine inhabitants: such dreadful desolation is appointed for thee, that thou shalt (as it were) be brought down to hell, being swallowed up in utter irrecoverable destruction: (compare Isa. xiv. 13—15.) And thy punishment will be apparently just; for surely if the miracles which have been wrought in thee, had been performed even in Sodom itself, licentious and abandoned as that infamous city was, it would have been convinced and reformed; so that, instead of being consumed by that shower of flaming vengeance, it might have continued in all its glory and beauty even to this day. Wherefore I say unto you, That the condition even of the inhabitants of the land of Sodom in the day of the final judgment, shall be more tolerable

frequently the case with rich trading cities: and that it was so with those in particular, may be learned from many passages in the Old Testament, as well as from profane writers. See Judg. xviii. 7. Isa. xxvi. 10. Ezek. xxviii. 2, 9, 17. 22. and Amos i. 9. 10.—May God preserve London in particular from resembling them in character, whom in commerce and grandeur it so much exceeds!

c Covering themselves in sackcloth and lying in ashes. As covering themselves with sackcloth (or hair-cloth, for such it was), and lying in ashes, were usual expressions of mourning; so they particularly were made use of on days of public fasting and deep humiliation for sin: and therefore are justly introduced here, as expressions of sincere repentance and self-abhorrence. Compare Esth. iv. 1—3. Job xii. 6. Isa. lvii. 5. Dan. ix. 3. and Jonah iii. 6—8.

d In the day of judgment. Dr. Hammond understands this passage as referring to the temporal calamities to come on these places by the Romans; who did indeed shortly after overrun the whole country, and made dreadful ravages in some of these cities. See Joseph. de Bell. i. lib. ii. cap. 6, 7. (al. 5, 6.) 8 lib. vi. cap. 9. (al. vii. 17.) But there is no evidence that the destruction of these Jewish cities was more dreadful than that of Tyre and Sidon, and it was certainly less so than that of Sodom and Gomorrah: besides, our Lord plainly speaks of a judgment, that was yet to come, on all these places that he mentions.

e Licentious and abandoned as that infamous city was. It is well known that those abominable cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had long since grown into a proverb for wickedness and misery. See Gen. xiii. 13. xviii. 20. Deut. xxix. 23. xxxii. 52. Isa. i. 9, 10. iii. 9. xiii. 19. Jer. xxii. 14. xiv. 18. Lam. iv. 6. Amos iv. 11. Zeph. ii. 9. Mat. x. 15. and Rev. xi. 8.
God hides from the proud what he reveals to the humble.

land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 All things are delivered unto me, of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any person, for your condemnation shall rise in proportion to your more aggravated guilt, and to those more valuable mercies and privileges which you have abused.

At that time also (as well as another that 25 will be elsewhere mentioned, (Luke x. 21, sect. cvi), Jesus took occasion, from the circumstances which he then observed, to say, I ascribe glory to thee, O Father, thou supreme Lord of heaven and earth, that while thou hast, in the course of thy wise, though mysterious providence, hid these great things of thy gospel from those who have the character of wise and understanding persons, or from the learned scribes and refined politicians of the age, whom thou hast suffered, through their own pride and folly, to reject them with disdain; thou hast brought the humble to the knowledge of them, and hast graciously revealed them to many of the lowest and plainest of mankind, who, in comparison of the former, are but as infants. Mortifying as such a circumstance might seem, I cordially acquiesce in it; and say, Be it so, O my Father, since such is thy sovereign will and pleasure thus to exalt thine own glorious name, and to lay the creature in low abasement before thee. And then, turning himself to those that stood near him, he said, Do not be led by the example of your great and learned men to slight and despise me; for, humble as my circumstances now appear, all things are delivered unto me by my almighty Father, who has fully instructed and empowered me for whatever relates to the salvation of men: And such are the mysteries and
determines to permit, and which he foresees will be in fact the consequence of those circumstances in which his creatures are placed, though the ir wills are laid under no constraint. (Compare Exod. vi. 3, 4. 2 Sam. xi. 11, 12. xvii. 1, and 1 Kings xxii. 23.) In this sense alone could he be said to hide those things from the learned men of this age, which he revealed so plainly, that honest and well-disposed persons, though children in understanding, might come to the knowledge of them. Compare Mat. x. 34, 35.

† Has fully instructed and empowered me, &c.] I cannot, with Mr. L’Enfant, confuse the sense of καθισταναι, as appears from comparing Heb. xiii. 15, and Rom. xv. 9.

‡ Thou hast hid those things, &c.] God is often said, in scripture, to do those things which he determines to permit, and which he foresees will be in fact the consequence of those circumstances in which his creatures are placed, though the ir wills are laid under no constraint. (Compare Exod. vi. 3, 4. 2 Sam. xi. 11, 12. xvii. 1, and 1 Kings xxii. 23.) In this sense alone could he be said to hide those things from the learned men of this age, which he revealed so plainly, that honest and well-disposed persons, though children in understanding, might come to the knowledge of them. Compare Mat. x. 34, 35.
The yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light.

and glories of my person and kingdom, that no one fully knows the Son, but the Father; neither does any truly know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son is pleased to reveal him: For I have that knowledge of him to which no creature can pretend; and it is my great errand to the world to discover his nature and will, and lead his wandering creatures into a saving acquaintance with him; A work which I undertake with the greatest cheerfulness and delight: and therefore, come unto me by faith, all ye that labour, and are heavy burdened, whether with the distresses of life, or with the sense of guilt (see Psal. xxxii. 4. xxxviii. 4.) or with the load of ceremonial observances which your unmerciful teachers are so ready to impose (Mat. xxiii. 4.) and I will case you of the grievous burdens you are sinking under.

Be persuaded then to take my yoke upon you, and to learn of me, as my obedient disciples; for I am meek, condescending and loving in heart, and will impose no unnecessary hardships upon you: but on such an application to me, you shall find that refreshment to your souls which you in vain would seek elsewhere; that composure, satisfaction and joy, which nothing but humility and meekness, with an entire submission to me, can give. For such is the genius of my gospel, that though it will indeed bring you under some restraints, they are not only tolerable, but, on the whole, desirable: and I may truly say, that my yoke is easy and gentle; or, if there be a mixture of difficulty attending it, such assistances and encouragements are provided, that with them my burden is light and pleasant to those who by divine grace are engaged to submit to it. (Compare 1 John v. 3.)

IMPROVE-

knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
IMPROVEMENT.

What can we imagine more dreadful than the guilt and condemnation of those who hear the gospel only to despise it! How can we read the doom of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, without trembling for ourselves, lest we should incur the like sentence! Such have been our religious advantages and opportunities, that, like them, we have indeed been lifted up to heaven: The Lord grant that we may not, by our misimprovement and disobedience, be cast down to the lowest hell! that Tyre and Sidon, and even Sodom and Gomorrah, may not at last rise up in judgment against us, and call down on our heads a punishment more intolerable than that which has fallen upon them, or which they must even then feel!

Our vain curiosity may perhaps be ready to ask, Why were these advantages given to them that abused them, rather than to those who would have improved them better? But let us impose upon our minds a reverential silence; since the great Lord of heaven and earth giveth not an account of any of his matters, (Job xxxiii. 13.) It is so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight!

Still we see the gospel hid from many who are esteemed the wisest and most prudent of mankind; and, blessed be God, we still see it revealed to some, who, in comparison of them, are but babes. Let not this offend us; but rather taking our notions from the word of God, let us learn to honour these babes as possessed of the truest wisdom, and adore the riches of Divine grace, if we are in their number, while many of superior capacities are left to stumble at this stone till they fall into final ruin.

Whatever objections are brought against Christ and his ways, may we ever adhere to them, since all things are delivered to him by the Father! From him therefore may we seek the true knowledge of God, as ever we desire everlasting life!

We have all our burdens of sin and of sorrow! While we labour under them, let us with pleasure hear the gentle and melodious voice of a Redeemer, thus kindly inviting us to come unto him, that we may find rest to our souls. Let us with pleasure subject ourselves to him, and go on in our holy course with that improvement and cheerfulness which become those who learn by their own daily experience that his commandments are not grievous, and feel that his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

SECT.

pleasant; and γαρδικός, easy, may be also rendered gentle and agreeable; and so with great propriety may express that true pleasure and cheerfulness which are the genuine result of a sincere submission to Christ's government, which is plainly the meaning of taking his yoke. (Compare Deut. xxviii. 47, 48. 1 Kings xii. 4. and Isa. x. 27.)—It is observable, that the word yoke is particularly used for ceremonial impositions, Acts xv. 10. and Gal. v. 1. and the word burden is used in the same sense, Mat. xxiii. 4. Compare Mat. xvi. 19. and note b there, sect. lxxxviii.
A woman, that had been a sinner, washes Christ's feet with tears.

SECT. LX.

Jesus accepts an invitation to dine at a Pharisee's house, and vindicates the woman who anointed his feet there. Luke VII. 36. to the end.

LUKE VII. 36.

And one of the Pharisees who was present at this discourse, and might feel himself touched by some insinuations which it contained, under a specious pretence of respect to our Lord, though as it seemed with an ensnaring design, invited him to eat with him that day, taking care to have others of his own sect present to observe what passed. And Jesus, being willing to express his condescension and candour, accepted his invitation; and entering into the house of the Pharisee, he sat down to table, without taking any notice of the omission of some usual ceremonies of respect which so great a guest might well have expected.

37 And, behold, there was a woman in that city who had once been a great and scandalous sinner, and was still accounted infamous on account of the lewdness and debaucheries of her former life. and, when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, she took encouragement from his late gracious invitation, and determined to give a remarkable token of her reverence and love to so glorious and compassionate a Saviour; and for this purpose she brought an alabaster vessel full of richly perfumed ointment; And standing by the couch on which our Lord, according to the custom of those times, lay down to eat, waiting behind him in the posture of a servant at his feet, her very heart was melted with such pious remorse, that in the presence of the whole company she was unable to refrain from weeping in such great abundance, that she began even to wash his feet with a shower of tears; and observing

a One of the Pharisees, who was present at this discourse.] Dr. Whitby has abundantly proved this to be a different story from that of Mary's anointing Christ's head a little before his death; (Mat. xxvi. 6—13. sect. cxiv.) And indeed the difference is so great and so plain, that it is astonishing to great a critic as Grotius should so confound them, and build so many remarks on that gross mistake.

b To wash his feet with a shower of tears.] This is the proper signification of the word βαλασάλα. Compare Mat. v. 45.—We are not to imagine she came with a purpose thus to wash and wipe the feet of Christ; but, probably hearing that the Pharisee who

LUKE VII. 36.

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him; and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment;

38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did
39 Now when the Pharisee which had invited him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, this man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have something to say to thee on this occasion, which deserves thy regard. And, with an hypocritical profession of respect, he says, O thou great Teacher\(^d\), I am ready to attend; and whatsoever thou wouldst offer, say [it freely]. Then Jesus immediately delivered this parable as a just, yet mild reproof to his host: A certain creditor, which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty:

had invited Jesus to dinner had neglected the usual civility of anointing the head of his Divine guest, she was willing to supply the defect; and as she stood near Jesus, she was so melted with his discourse that she shed such a flood of tears as wetted his feet, which lay bare on the couch, his sandals being put off; and, observing this, she wiped them with her hair, which she now wore flowing loose about her shoulders, as mourners commonly did; and then, not thinking herself worthy to anoint his head, poured out the liquid perfume on his feet. In this view all appears natural and unaffected.

\(^d\) O Teacher.] So \(\text{\textit{\text{δε\}}}}\)\(\text{\textit{\text{σαγαθος}}}\). properly signifies, and I think expresses something more than the English word master, especially in the sense in which it is now commonly used. Whether this was mere hypocrisy, or whether it was intended as a sort of snare on our Lord, who, though he professed himself so great a teacher, would allow this woman to use such freedoms with him, I pretend not certainly to say.

\(^e\) Five hundred denarii, or Roman pence.] It is in the original \(\text{\textit{\text{διαμώλυνα}}}\), which is well known to have been a Roman coin, in value about seven pence halfpenny of our money; so that five hundred of them were nearly equivalent to fifteen of our guineas, and fifty to one guinea and a half.—There is no reason to believe that there was any mystery intended in Christ's fixing on these sums rather than any others that had as great a difference between them.
Jesus vindicates the woman in what she had done.

Now as they had not any thing to pay, so that neither of them could discharge any part of his debt, he freely forgave them both the whole of what they respectively owed: and upon this it may be reasonably expected that both would have some sense of his goodness; say, therefore, which of them do you think would love him most?

And Simon very readily replied and said, I suppose, so far as I can judge from the circumstances thou hast mentioned, that he to whom he forgave most could not but have the greatest affection for him. And [Jesus] said to him, Thou hast judged very rightly, and the reflection is evidently suited to the case that we have here before us.

And, turning himself to the woman, he said to Simon the Pharisee, Thou seest this poor afflicted woman, and canst not but take notice of the extraordinary tenderness and affectionate regard to me that she has now discovered. I came into thine house as a guest, on thine own express invitation [and] thou didst not give me any water to [wash] my feet, though that be so customary and necessary a refreshment on these occasions; but she has plentifully watered my feet with her tears, and wiped them even with the tresses of her hair. Thou didst not give me the usual respect of a kiss, when I first came under thy roof; but she, ever since she came in, has not ceased, with the greatest humility and affection, even to kiss my feet. Thou didst not so much as anoint my head with common oil, though few entertainments fail of being attended with that circumstance; but she, as thou seest, has anointed even my feet with this precious and fragrant ointment.

Drusius supposes this may be understood as if our Lord had said, “Thou didst not give me so much as water to wash my feet; whereas some guests have their feet washed with wine mingled with spices.” Athenæus does indeed mention such an extravagance; but to be sure our Lord did not intend the least insinuation in favour of it.

How customary it was for the master of the house to receive his guests with such a salutation, to provide them with water to wash their feet, and to anoint their heads with oil, or some liquid perfume, the reader may see in many other commentators, and particularly in Cabell’s Account of the Jewish Feasts. It is possible Simon might omit some of these civilities lest his brethren who sat at table with him should think he paid Jesus too much respect; and, if there was any such slight intended, it might be an additional reason for our Lord’s taking such particular notice of the neglect.

Ever since she came in.] The evangelist so expressly tells us that she heard of Christ’s being at dinner with the Pharisee before she came in (ver. 37.) that I make no doubt of following those copies which read it καθώς, she came in, rather than those which have καταλήγος, in the first person, which our translation follows.

Anointed my head with oil, though few entertainments fail. [C.] How common this circumstance was, may be judged by comparing Deut. xxviii. 40. Micah vi. 15. Psal. xxiii. 5. civ. 15. and exii. 5.

Therefore
47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

48 And he saith unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him, began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace.

ment. Wherefore I say unto thee, and openly declare it, both for her vindication and for thy admonition, Her many sins, which I well know have been exceeding heinous, are graciously forgiven; and therefore, as I have been the means of bringing her to repentance and peace, she has thus testified the high regard that she has to me, and has loved me much, as being persuaded that she never can sufficiently express her sense of the obligation: whereas thou, who art over-confident in thine own righteousness, lookest but slightly upon me; as he to whom but little is forgiven, or who thinks his debt was but small, is not so much affected with the kindness of the creditor that forgives him, and loveth him but little.

And, to renew the kind assurance of the par- don that before was granted to the woman, he says to her, in the presence of them all, I know the sincerity of thy repentance; and therefore now, for thy encouragement under this severe treatment, I solemnly declare that thy sins are forgiven. And they who were at table with him, began to say within themselves, Who is this arrogant and presumptuous man, that not only transgresses our rules by permitting a harlot to touch him, but even presumes to say that he forgiveth sins, which is the peculiar prerogative of God himself? But, far from recalling what he had said, he openly confirmed the consolation that he before had given, and said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; and as the tenderness and love that thou hast shewn have in a convincing, though silent manner testified thy believing regards to me, under the extraordinary character I bear, go thy way in serenity and peace, and enjoy the comfort of Divine forgiveness,

\[ Therefore she has loved me much.\] As passionately as Clarius opposes this rendering, and after all the immense pains Grotius has taken to find a sense in that which our translation follows, I cannot but think the connection evidently requires that we should render \textit{therefore}, rather than \textit{for} or \textit{because}, how singular soever such a sense of the particle may be. And so it is, the \textit{Hebrew particle} that answers it, is used in \textit{Hos. ix. 15. All their iniquity is in Gilead; for there I hated them; or, therefore there I hated them.} For it cannot be supposed that Israel is said to \textit{sin in Gilead}, because he hated them there; but on account of the iniquity which they committed there, therefore it was that they \textit{there I hated them}. Our Lord by this answer plainly showed his knowledge, both of their thoughts, and of her character.

\[ Go thy way in peace.\] This was an usual form of dismissing inferiors, and was an expression of the friendship and good wishes of the person speaking: (Gen. xlv. 17. Exod. iv. 18. 1 Sam. i. 17. 2 Sam. xv. 27. Mark v. 34. Luke viii. 48. and Jam. ii. 16.) Compare Luke ii. 29. p. 74. There is an apparent propriety in the phrase here, considering what had happened to discompose the tender spirit of this humble penitent.
Reflections on the love we owe to God for pardoning our sins.

Sect. ix.

Ver. How joyful an assurance must this be to a soul thus bowed down and humbled in the very dust under a sense of sin! How light did the reproaches of men sit upon her when she heard these reviving words from the mouth of the great Saviour, who alone had authority to pronounce them!

Our hearts surely upbraid us with many and aggravated sins; but we hear the tidings of pardon: let us gladly embrace it; and acknowledging that not five hundred pence, nor even ten thousand talents, are sufficient to express the greatness of our debt; let us retain the remembrance of it, even when we hope that God has forgiven it; and let us labour, that the tenderness of our love, the warmth of our zeal and the steadiness of our obedience may in some measure be proportionable to it: and, blessed Jesus, how distinguished must they then be!

Let us with humble pleasure approach this compassionate Friend of sinners; who, though in one sense separate from them, yet thus freely and graciously encouraged the chief of them to apply to him, though he well knew that condescension would expose him to the censure of the self-conceited Pharisees. May God preserve us from that arrogant confidence in our own righteousness, which, while it leads us to despise some, perhaps much dearer to him than ourselves, would proportionably sink our value for the Saviour, and our love to him!

As for what remains, let the candour with which Christ accepted this invitation, and the gentleness and prudence with which he behaved at this ensnaring entertainment, teach us to mingle the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence and sweetness of the dove; and neither absolutely to refuse all favours, nor severely to resent all neglects from those, whose friendship might at best be very dubious, and their intimacy by no means safe.

To conclude; let us avoid that very ill temper which this Pharisee shewed in upbraiding this poor humble penitent with the scandals of her former life. Where we have reason to believe that sin has been lamented and forsaken, and consequently that God has forgiven it, let us cheerfully receive those whom our holy Master has not rejected; and if the remembrance of former irregularities cannot be entirely lost, let it only engage us to magnify the riches of Divine grace towards such persons, and to rejoice with them in the display of it.

Sect.
Our Lord, attended by some pious women, takes another progress, in which he casts out a demon; and, having vindicated himself from the blasphemous charge of a combination with Satan, warns the Pharisees of the danger they were in of committing the unpardonable sin. Luke VIII. 1—3. XI. 14, 15, 17—23. Mat. XII. 22—32. Mark III. 22—30.


And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching, and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with him.


Now, in pursuance of the great design which Jesus had been prosecuting in his ministry wherever he had been, it came to pass afterwards (or after the events related above) that he travelled through every city and village in those parts; preaching in every place, and publishing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, which he was now about to erect among the children of men; and the twelve apostles, whom he had lately chosen, were with him; as he thought it proper they should be for sometime, that they might be farther instructed for their work, and that their having been thus publicly seen in his train might promote their reception when they afterwards came to any of these places by themselves. And there were also some women with him who had been cured of grievous disorders brought upon them by evil spirits, and of other illnesses; [particularly] Mary, who was called Magdalene, from Magdala, the place of her residence; a remarkable person, out of whom had been cast no less than seven demons, who, probably for the sins of her former life, were suffered by God to agitate and torment her in such a manner as to render her a spectacle of great

a Called Magdalene, from Magdala the place of her residence.] As newInstance; נגדלה, Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus the Nazoree, so Magdala Magdalen, which we are used to render Mary Magdalene, might as well be rendered Mary the Magdalene, or Mary of Magdala, which was a town in Galilee beyond Jordan. See Mat. xv. 59.

b Out of whom had been cast seven demons.] This is supported by Gregory to have been only a proverbial expression to signify that she was a person of a very bad character, whom Jesus reclaimed; and Mr. L'Enfant advances the same interpretation, as agreeable to the Jewish style: but, as so much is spoken of dispossessions in the proper sense of the word by Luke, it is most natural to suppose this to be referred to here. Some have thought she was theunner mentioned Luke vii. 57, but there is no certain proof of it. And the conjecture of those who suppose her to be the sister of Lazarus, whose husband might have lived at Magdala, is rather more improbable; since when Luke and John mention Mary of Bethany, they never intimate that it was Mary Magdalene. See Cramer's Dictionary.

c Then
great horror. And there attended him besides, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, a steward in the
court of king Herod; who yet did not think
such an attendance beneath the dignity of her
family: and one Susannah, and many other [wo-
men]; who, being persons of some considerable
rank and circumstances in life, assisted him with
their possessions, which they cheerfully employed
to supply him and his disciples with necessaries,
as occasion required.

While he was making then this tour about
Galilee and the neighbouring parts, there was
brought to him one possessed by a demon[e], who
had been rendered by this means both blind and
dumb: and he immediately expelled the evil
spirit, and cured him that had been so miserably
afflicted by it; so that it came to pass, that when
the demon was gone out at the command of Jesus,
the person that but just before was blind and
dumb, both spake and saw[d].

23 And all the multitude of people round him,
perceiving he had healed the poor distressed
creature in an instant, were astonished at the
sight, and said, Is not this the Messiah, the long
expected Son of David?

24 But the Pharisees who were with him, and
particularly the scribes, who came down from Je-
rusalem, and still attended his progress to make
their remarks on what passed, hearing [this]
natural reflection of the people, and fearing lest
their own credit should sink among them as that
of Jesus advanced, gave the most malicious and
unreasonable turn to the matter which can be
imagined: for they said, This is so bad a [man],
and so notoriously transgresses the traditions of
the elders and the law of God e, that he is cer-

[e] Then there was brought to him one pos-
sessed by a demon.] This miracle appears
to have been performed on the morning of
that day on which Christ delivered the
parables of the sower, &c. (compare Mat.
xxiii. 1, & seq. sect. Ixv.) and on the evening
of which he crossed the sea, stilled the tem-
pest, and went into the country of the
Gadarenes, where he dispossessed the legion.
(See Mark iv. 35, & seq. sect. ixv.) This is
the reason of introducing it here, as most
crucial in the story, and no other story, not yet
inserted, can claim a place before it; there-
fore Matthew and Luke, in their different
order, are transposed to agree with Mark
on that great foundation laid down in note k
on Mark i. 18, p. 184.

[d] The blind and dumb both spake and saw.] We
have before observed that, &c. often
signifies both deaf and dumb (see note k on
Luke i. 22, p. 34.) but, as it is not said
that Christ gave this man his hearing, it is
plain he was not deaf. And indeed it ap-
pears worthy of remark that we hardly
ever meet with entire blindness and deaf-
ness in the same person.

[e] So notoriously transgresses the tradi-
tions of the elders and the law of God.] There
is sufficient reason to conclude that the
Pharisees must go on this principle in
this random charge, which had not the least
shadow of a proof; and it was usual with
them to esteem a contempt of their tradi-

ditions.

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and he called them unto him, and said unto them, [in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?] Every kingdom divided against itself [cannot stand, but] is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand, [Luke, but] falleth.] [Mark III. 23.—25. Luke XI. 17.]

26 And if Satan [rise up against himself and] tainly himself possessed by Beelzebub, and does not cast out devils but only by a secret combination with Beelzebub; who being the prince [or] chief of the devils', with a view to confirm his own interest, expels other inferior spirits under his command, at the word of this Jesus, who therefore deserves to be put to death as a magician (Exod. xxii. 18.) rather than to be thus extolled as the Messiah.

And, Jesus knowing their thoughts, though he was not within hearing of those reflections, called them to come near him, and said to them in the following parabolical expressions, before all the people, How can you possibly imagine that, in such circumstances as these, Satan should cast out Satan? It may surely be laid down as a maxim, That every kingdom divided against itself cannot long subsist in flourishing circumstances, [but] quickly sinks into contempt, and is brought to utter desolation; and every smaller society, if it be but a city, or a single family, divided against itself, shall not long stand, [but] falleth into inevitable ruin. And, therefore, 26 if Satan rise up against himself, as he certainly does

tions as equally criminal with the most express contempt of the law. It is also well known that they charged Christ both with sabbath-breaking and blasphemy.

1 Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.] There is no doubt but this was spoken by the Jews not merely in a general way of a prince of the devils, or of one of their chief, but in particular of him whom they considered as the prince of the powers of darkness: for in Mark it is τον αιχμαλώτην, though Matthew and Luke express it without the article; and the following words show he was supposed to be the same with Satan, the grand adversary. One of the titles given him was Beelzebub, or Belzebub; and a Philistine idol who had his temple at Lkron (and is supposed by some to have been the Grecian Pluto, Cereris, Hist. des Dogmes, p. 631.) was plainly called by this name (See 2 Kings i. 2, 3.) which is well known to signify The Lord of flies; this idol being worshipped, as some tell us, under the figure of a fly or beetle, as defending people from those insects; though others think it may allude to the vast multitude of flies with which the slaughter of their sacrifices was infected in the heathen temples, while (as the Jews report) no fly was ever seen to come upon the flesh of any sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem. (See Selden de His Syris Syriac, ii. cap. 6.) But why the Jews should speak of him under this title as the chief of the devils, it is difficult to say; unless (as Heimins conjectures, rather than proves) the Hebrew word Zebub signified a deadly kind of insect, whose sting was mortal, and which was therefore looked upon as a fit emblem of the mischief our hosts are commanded by this prince of the power of the air.—The title in the Greek is Beel-βηβος, Beelzebub, which signifies The lord of a dunghill, and seems to be a contemptuous change of the former name, by which it was intimated that the noblest of the heathen deities were fitter to dwell on a dunghill than to be worshipped in a magnificent temple.

27 Satan should cast out Satan.] This answer of our Lord demonstratively proves that Beelzebub and Satan are names for the same person; and, consequently, that Satan was considered as the prince of those devils who were cast out by Christ, and who are elsewhere represented as his angels; so that it must dispose every hypothesis inconsistently with this assertion. It may not be improper to add here, that the Jewish rabbis call every demon by the name of Satan, and often use the name in the plural number. So they call Sammael, which is but another name for Beelzebub, Rosh kol hazzatanim, the head or prince of all the Satans. See Cassaubon ad loc.
Christ vindicates himself against this impious charge.

**Sect. lxi.**

**Mat. XII. 26.**

does if he join with me to confirm a doctrine so evidently opposite to his nature and subversive of his kingdom; and if he assist in such a cause to cast out Satan; it will be evidence from hence that he is divided against himself; and how shall his kingdom subsist? It plainly follows that, in such a case, he cannot stand, but has contributed himself to put a speedy period to his own kingdom. But, as you never can suppose that such a crafty and sanguine spirit would in so weak a manner hasten his own confusion and defeat, you therefore, upon this account, must give up that uncharitable, inconsistent charge you have been ready to insinuate against me, and must appear to have been guilty of the most extravagant absurdity, because you scruple not to say that I cast out demons by the help of Beelzebub.

27 **And if** indeed you will be still so obstinate as to assert that I cast out demons by the assistance of Beelzebub, you may as well say that all miracles of this kind are thus performed; and I may particularly refer you to determine, by whom do your own children expel them, who practise exorcisms, and are approved and extolled by you on that account, though some of them do it in my name? Therefore they shall in this respect be your judges, and condemn you of a most partial and unequal conduct. But if you must allow that I cast out demons by the finger, [or] the power and Spirit of God, then it undoubtedly follows, the kingdom of God is indeed come unto you, as I assert; and all the doctrines that I preach are proved by this to be Divine, and consequently worthy of your most serious and obedient regard, since it plainly shews my superiority over all the infernal powers.

Otherwise,

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. **[Luke XI. 19.]**

28 But if I cast out devils by [the finger, or] the Spirit of God, then [no doubt] the kingdom of God is come unto you. **[Luke XI. 20.]**

—in such a cause to cast out Satan.] It is certain (as many good writers have observed) that the force of this argument consists in a tacit appeal to the genius and design of his doctrine; which evidently appeared so friendly to the interest of true religion, and so destructive to idolatry and vice in which the kingdom of Satan consisted, that he must really be his own enemy, and rise up for the subversion of his own cause, before he could become an associate with Jesus. See Archbishop Tillotson’s Works, Vol. III. p. 545.

3 By whom do your own children expel them, who practise exorcisms, &c.] For the proof of this fact, see Acts xix. 13. Mark ix. 38. Luke ix. 49. Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. viii. cap. 2, § 5. p. 420. Hackett, and Dr. Whitby’s note; but above all, that of Grotius on this passage. I do not see that there is any need of referring this to the apostles who had not yet been sent out; and if they had, they to be sure would be involved in the same censure with Christ. It is more natural to suppose that the disciples of the Pharisees are here probably meant by their children.

k While
Otherwise, it is evident I could not do this: for how can any one break and enter into the house of a strong man, and plunder his goods, while he is actually present to guard them, unless he first overpower and bind the strong man, who will be sure to do all he can to defend them! and then indeed he may plunder his house of whatever he pleases; but without this it will be utterly impossible to do it. And therefore it is plain, from all these instances of dispossession, that I have power over Satan to control and bind him, and consequently that I act by a Divine commission.

But still it is not to be thought, the contest will be carried on without an opposition from the enemy, nor can it fail of giving some alarm: for while a strong man, completely armed, guards his castle or palace from invasion and attack, his goods are in a profound peace, and his prisoners, hard as their situation may be, are afraid to make any attempt to regain their liberty; and such is the quiet which there seems to be while Satan reigns without any control. But when one stronger than he, or of more power than the warrior I have mentioned, invades his garrison, and conquers him, he takes away all his complete armory in which he placed his confidence, and distributes his spoils among his followers. So shall you see the infernal powers yet more completely baffled and spoiled by me, and my faithful servants adorned by the trophies won from them.

While therefore you are animated by such views, you ought not to allow yourselves even in a state of neutrality and indiffERENCE: for I must tell you, That he that is not cordially with me

k While he is actually present to guard them.] This the course of the argument plainly supposes; and the case in question proved the presence of Satan.

Luke xi. 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

Luke xii. 30. He that is not with me, is against me; and he that

I While a strong man, &c.] The reader will observe that (contrary to most others) I have introduced in this section, Luke xi. 14—25, as parallel to Mat. xii. 22—28, and Mark iii. 22—27. The reason is, because there appeared to me no certain evidence that the miracle and discourse recorded by Matthew were afterwards repeated at another time (see note a on Luke xi. 57, sect. ex), so I was not willing to insert so long a discourse twice: yet it is not impossible it might occur again; and if any, on the whole, judge it most probable it did, they may turn back from theene, and read these verses again.—I likewise thought that the discourse, with the additions from Luke, appeared most complete and beautiful.

m His goods are in a profound peace.] Our Lord here (as also Luke x. 17—20, sect. cvi.) evidently takes occasion, from having spoken of dispossession, to turn his discourse to that grand and complete victory over Satan, of which these miracles were a specimen; and these words refer not to demonimes, who were far from being in peace or quiet, but to the case of sinners, who by the arts of Satan are lulled into a state of security and confid ence, while in the hands of their greatest enemy, and in the way to final destruction.
The sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable.

324

Matthew xii. 30. To his ability to gather subjects into my kingdom with me, is but vainly and foolishly scattering abroad, and, however otherwise employed, wastes his time and labour in what will at last turn to no solid account. Much more criminal and fatal then must the character and conduct of those be, who with deliberate implacable malice oppose my cause and are resolved at all adventures to do their utmost to bear it down, as you are attempting to do by these vile insinuations which you have now suggested.

31 I therefore give you the most solemn and compassionate warning of your danger; for you are on the brink of a most dreadful precipice. That malignity of heart, which leads you to ascribe these works of mine to a confederacy with Satan, may incline you to pass the same impious sentence on the greatest and fullest confirmation, which is to be given to my gospel by the effusion of the Spirit on my followers: and therefore, to prevent, if possible, such guilt and ruin, verily I say unto you, That all other sins shall be forgiven to the children of men, and even [all] the other blasphemies with which they shall blaspheme; but the blasphemy against the Spirit of God, in this most glorious dispensation of it, shall not be forgiven to those impious and incorrigible men who shall dare to impute to diabolical operation those glorious works of Divine power and good-
world, neither in the world to come; [hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.] [Mark III. 29.]

Mark III. 30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

is not entirely hopeless: but whosoever shall maliciously speak any thing of this nature against the Holy Spirit, when the grand dispensation of it shall open in those miraculous gifts and operations, that will be attended with the most evident demonstrations of his mighty power, it shall never be forgiven him at all, either in this world, or in that which is to come: but he is obnoxious to eternal damnation, and must irrecoverably sink into it; nor will all the grace of the gospel, in its fullest display, afford a remedy for so aggravated a crime, or furnish him with means for his conviction and recovery.

This admonition he gave them with such repeated solemnity, because they had maliciously said, he hath an unclean spirit, and performs these miraculous works by the assistance of Beelzebub.

IMPROVEMENT.

How condescending was the conduct of the blessed Jesus while he dwelt among us! Though he was Lord of all, he not only waved the pompous manner of subsisting by continued miracles, but likewise declined to dwell with the rich and the great, with whom he could easily have secured to himself a constant abode. He chose a laborious itinerant course, and subsisted chiefly on the bounty of a few pious women, whose company and friendship he did not despise. That subsistence was most pleasing to him which was the greatest testimony of the respect and affection of his hearers, and at the same time gave the greatest opportunity to testify his own

q It shall never be forgiven him at all, either in this world, or in that which is to come.] It is observed both by Lightfoot and Grotius, that through a fond imagination of the final happiness of all the seed of Abraham, the Jews supposed, there were some sins that had not been forgiven here, that would be expiated by death and be forgiven after it; and that our Lord designed by this expression to assure them, that there was no forgiveness to be had for those that should be guilty of this sin, either before or after death; and that their expectations of forgiveness then would prove no other than a deceitful dream. (See Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. and Grotius in loc.) But it is clearly shown by Dr. Whitby, that this was used as a proverbial expression; and that it only signified, a thing should never be, when it was said, It shall not be, either in this world, or the world to come.—However, as some think that it refers to the Messiah's kingdom, which was often called the age to come, I have also hinted at that sense; which is indeed included in the other, but does not seem to me to be so properly applied here; for if our interpretation be right, the sin could not be committed till that age commenced.

The rich, and the great, with whom he could easily have secured to himself a constant abode.] Undoubtedly, to mention no more, the centurion (who had wealth and generosity enough to erect a synagogue at his own charge, Luke vii. 5. p. 294), would have been very willing to have received into his house a single Person of so extraordinary a character, so perfectly temperate, and so easy as to the common accommodations of life: but Christ came to bring the gospel to the poor; and the purposes of his mission required frequent removals.
Reflections on the triumph of Christ over Satan.

We have seen another triumph of Christ over the evil spirit, another of those glorious and delightful instances, in which the great Captain of our salvation, with superior strength, bound the strong man, and spoiled his goods. May the victory still be carried on to perfection! May his merciful alarms break that dangerous and fatal peace in which the slaves of Satan are for a while detained, that he may with greater advantage, and greater terror, plunge them into final and eternal ruin! And, in such a contest, may we abhor neutrality! With pleasure and zeal let us list ourselves under the Redeemer's banners, that we may share his trophies! And, while others are throwing away their time, their labour and their souls, may we, by gathering with him, secure to ourselves everlasting riches!

We must surely be astonished to hear of that perverse and malignant interpretation which these wretches put on such convincing miracles; and it must move our indignation to see the Son of God maliciously charged as an associate with Satan. If they have thus called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household? (Mat. x. 25.) Let us learn to imitate that meekness of wisdom, with which the blessed Jesus pursues his vindication. Oh that his followers had ever traced it! Yea, I had almost said, Oh that they had learned, even from the union of confederate enemies, the danger of that house or kingdom which is unnaturally divided against itself!

It is matter of great thankfulness thus expressly to hear that every other sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven; but awful to think that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is excepted. Let those, who, while they cannot deny the facts of Christianity, despise and oppose its doctrines, tremble to think how near they approach to the boundaries of this sin, which is perhaps more obscurely described that we may more cautiously avoid all such approaches. But let not the humble soul, that trembles at God's word, meditate terror to itself from such a passage; which, when viewed in its due connection, cannot, with any shadow of reason, be thought to belong to any, who do not obstinately reject the gospel and maliciously oppose it, when made known to them with its fullest evidence.
SEC. LXII.

Our Lord goes on to caution the Pharisees of the danger of such sinful words; and answers to the exclamation of the woman who eulogized the happiness of his mother. Mat. XII. 33—37. Luke XI. 27, 28.

Mat. XII. 33.

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit.

When our Lord had thus faithfully warned the Pharisees of the danger they were in of incurring unpardonable guilt, by blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, he proceeded to enforce the admonition in the following manner: Attentively consider what I have offered to you, and either lay aside your vain and hypercritical pretences to religion, or quit that maligndity and wickedness which render these pretences insolent and odious; either make the tree good, and shew it to be so by making its fruit also good; or else make, and allow the tree to be corrupt, and its fruit also corrupt, if it in fact appear to be so: for the tree is to be known by the fruit it produces, which is an infallible proof of what quality it is. (Compare Mat. vii. 17, 18, sect. xliii.) O ye abominable brood of vipers, ye perverted, venomous, deceitful creatures, how can you, who are so wicked yourselves, speak good things? It is surely a force upon nature whenever you do it; and you will easily return to such uncharitable and impious language as we have now been hearing from you; for the mouth naturally speaks out of the overflowing abundance of the heart. And thus, on the one hand a good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

54 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

55 A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

Make the tree good, &c.] The sense I have chosen is that which seems to agree best with what follows. I could not acquiesce in that of Mr. L'Enfant, who supposes it as if he should have said, Either allow me to be good, or prove the casting out devils to be evil; for that would suppose every one who cast out devils to be a good man. Zegerus and Gratius understand it as if our Lord said, "Since you cannot but allow that my life and the tendency of my doctrine are good, be not so mean as to suppose I am confederate with Beelzebub." And it is indeed very possible that this may be the sense.
he labours most artfully to disguise himself and his character, breaks out like you, in some unguarded moment, into such language as betrays the shame he would conceal. (Compare Luke vi. 43.—45, sect. liv.)

36 But take heed, how you suffer your tongues to run on in this profane and licentious manner; for I solemnly declare unto you, That in the awful day of the final and universal judgment, men shall give a strict and impartial account for every unprofitable, and much more for every pernicious word which they shall speak: and we be to them who have used that noble faculty of speech only to vain or to wicked purposes.

37 For let every particular hearer apply it to himself: it is not by thine actions alone, but in some degree by thy words, thou shalt at last be justified, or by thy words thou shalt be then condemned, as by the tenor of these, the disposition of thy heart is shewn and thy true character discovered.

And while he was speaking these things, a certain pious woman was so transported with a mixture of pleasure at hearing his words, and indignation at the unworthy treatment he met with from his adversaries, that she could not forbear lifting up her voice, and crying out from amidst the crowd, she said unto him, O thou Divine

---If any, on the whole, are dissatisfied with the account of things here given, I would beg leave to ask them, whether unprofitable talk be not a sinful wasting of time and whether that must not render a man in some degree criminal before God?

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Luke xi. 27. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast suck'd!
Divine Teacher, Happy is the womb of her that bare thee, and thrice happy the breasts which thou didst suck! With what unspeakable delight must thy blessed mother look on so illustrious a Son?

But he modestly and seriously replied, Nay, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God which I preach, and keep it in their hearts as a vital principle of holy obedience; for they will be entitled to eternal blessings, infinitely more valuable than any natural relation to me could give, or any opportunities of the most intimate converse with me, separate from such a practical regard to my instructions.

IMPROVEMENT.

Whose heart does not echo back the exclamation of this pious woman? Yet who does not too frequently forget that weighty and important answer which succeeded it? Let us not only hear, but keep the word of Christ; and we shall thus be happy in a nearer union with him than ever could arise from any natural relation to him, and shall ere long have opportunities of more noble and more delightful converse with him than those, with which the virgin Mary herself was honoured during the time of his abode on earth.

Let us especially attend to those instructions we have here received, and judge of ourselves by our fruits; never flattering ourselves that our hearts are good, if our lives are abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate: (Tit. i. 16.) And in particular let us remember, that not our actions only, but the fruits of our lips, are to be brought into the solemn account which we must give to the great Judge of all the earth; and that the day is coming, when all our idle and unprofitable talk, which has proceeded from the evil treasure of a depraved heart, will undergo a strict examination, and we must answer not for our actions only, but shall be justified or condemned by our words. And, if foolish and wicked speeches are to be accounted for in the day of judgment, let us set a watch on the door of our lips to prevent them; and labour daily to use our tongue so, that it may indeed be, as it is in scripture called, our glory. (Psal. xvi. 9. xxx. 12.)

For that purpose, let it be our great care to lay up a good store of Christian knowledge and experience in our hearts; that while too many are poisoning those that are round about them with erroneous principles and vicious discourses, the opening of our lips may be of righteous things; and we may still be ready, upon
upon all proper occasions, with freedom, variety and spirit, to bring forth good and profitable things from the good treasure of our hearts; which may be edifying unto those that hear us, and may go from one heart to another. So will the Lord himself hearken with pleasure unto what we speak, and exactly record it in the book of remembrance that is written before him; and, producing it at last to our public honour, will own us for his, in the day when he makes up his jewels. (Mal. iii. 16, 17.)

SECT. LXIII.

Our Lord upbraids the Pharisees with their perverseness in asking a farther sign; and delivers the parable of the relapsing demoniack. Mat. XII. 38—45. Luke XI. 16, 24—26, 29—32.

Mat. XII. 38.

THEN some of the scribes and Pharisees who were present, hearing how plainly Christ admonished and how severely he rebuked them, answered him, by diverting the discourse to another topic; and with a view to try him, demanded of him a sign from heaven, saying, Master, thou professest thyself a teacher of extraordinary authority, and we may justly expect some proportionable proof of it: now these supposed dispossessions which we have lately seen or heard of, are so liable to fraud and collusion, that we cannot fully acquiesce in them; but would gladly see a more remarkable and convincing sign from thee, and particularly some such celestial appearance as several of our ancient prophets gave.

But when the multitude was gathered in a crowd about him, eager to hear what Jesus would reply to this demand, and ready to conclude that he would now perform some wondrous and peculiar kind of miracle, he answered and said to them, This is an evil and adulterous generation,

a Some such celestial appearance.] The words of Luke express y' fix it in this sense; and Matthew, in another story of this kind (Mat. vi. 1. sect. lxxxvii.) expressly tells us they demanded a sign from heaven. (Compare also Mark viii. 11.) It is not therefore to be understood of a sign only of deliverance from the Roman yoke, or of the erection of the Messiah's temporal kingdom, as some have supposed, but rather of some miracle performed in the visible heavens, where, they seem to have thought, impostors had less power than on earth. (Compare John vi. 30.)—And they might probably conclude they had the better excuse for making such a proposal, as Moses, (Exod. ix. 22—24.) Joshua (Josh. x. 12.) Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 9, 10.) and Elijah (1 Kings xvi. 56—58. and 2 Kings i. 10.) had given such signs. (Compare Isa. vii. 11. and xxxviii. 8.) See Vitring. Observ. sacr. lib. 2. cap. 16.

b Adulterous generation.] This plainly signifies a spurious race, degenerated from the
there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah.

[LUKE XI. 29.] a very perverse and degenerate people, [that] amidst such convincing miracles as I am daily performing in the most public manner, still seeks after a farther sign: but no such sign as their bold curiosity prescribes shall be given them, unless [it be] that one yet greater miracle, which I may not improperly call the sign of the prophet Jonah, because it bears so great a resemblance to that miraculous occurrence that will be seen hereafter with respect to me. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, and was miraculously sent among them by means of an unparalleled deliverance from the most imminent danger; so also shall the Son of man, by a yet more surprising Divine interposition in his favour, be made a very illustrious sign to this generation.

MAT. XII. 40. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be for this generation.

MAT. XII. 41. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, that swallowed him; and yet afterwards came out alive and unhurt: so shall the Son of man, after he has been slain by the infidelity and cruelty of those to whom he comes, be part of three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and on the third day shall, with the ministry of an angel in a visible form descending from heaven, burst the bands of the piety of their ancestors. Compare Isa. lxv. 3, 4; Psa. cxliv. 7, 8; and John viii. 59, & seq.

c Unless it be the sign of the prophet Jonah.] As the resurrection of Christ was attended with the appearance of a descending angel, it was with greater exactness than is generally observed, the very thing that these Pharisees demanded, a sign from heaven.

d For as Jonah was a sign, &c.] The attentive reader may easily observe that some passages of the eleventh chapter of St. Luke are transposed in this section. But I will not insist on the necessity of doing it, since it is very possible the same words might be repeated again: but there is so very small a variation, and the discourse is so long, that I chose to unite all the three evangels, as far as might be, into one compound text. The reader who chooses to follow Luke's order exactly will find a memorandum, sect. ex. notae) of the place where this paragraph comes in according to that; and I must, on the whole, leave it among some other passages in the evangels, where it is neither possible nor important to determine the exact series.

e In the belly of the great fish.] It is no where said in the Old Testament, that Jonah was swallowed by a whale; and it is the less probable, as whales are seldom found in the Mediterranean, and as the gullet of a whale is said to be so small as not to be capable of receiving even the head of a man. It is therefore much more probable it was a shark, or some other great fish, which, it is said, the Lord had prepared to swallow up Jonah: (Jonah i. 17.) And the word ἄρην in Greek, (as well as TANIM in Hebrew) may signify any large fish, as some of the Greek lexicographers have observed.

f Part of three days and three nights.] It is of great importance to observe (as many good writers have done) that the easterns reckoned any part of a day of twenty-four hours for a whole day; and say a thing was done after three or seven days, &c. If it was done on the third or seventh day from that last mentioned. (Compare 1 Kings xx. 29. 2 Chron. x. 5, 12; and Luke ii. 21.) And as the Hebrews had no word exactly answering to the Greek ἄρην, to signify a natural day of twenty-four hours, the y use night and day, or day and night, for it. So that to say a thing happened after three days and three nights, was the same as to say it happened after three days, or on the third day. (Compare Isai. iv. 15, with v. 1. Gen. vii. 4—12. Ex d. xxiv. 18. and xxxiv. 28.) See the Miracles of Jesus Fancied, p. 6—8.
of death, and come forth from the tomb living and triumphant. And, by a natural consequence, the men of Nineveh shall rise up in the final judgment with this generation, and, by the circumstances of their case when viewed together, shall plead against it, and condemn it, as far more inexcusable than they; for they repented in the very dust at the preaching of Jonah, though he made them but a transient visit, and wrought no miracle in their presence to confirm his mission; and, behold, one much greater than Jonah is here, and you reject him, though he has been so long among you, and has performed a great variety of most surprising miracles before you.

And much more may it be concluded that the queen of Sheba, in the south country, shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and, by the signal instance, that she gave of her great desire to improve in knowledge, shall plead against the obstinacy and perverseness of this wicked age and condemn it; since, great as her rank and her affairs in life were, she came from the extreme boundaries of the earth, even from the remotest parts of the Arabian coast, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, that she might improve by his learned conversation (see 1 Kings x. 1, & seq.); and, behold, however contemptible he may appear in your eyes, one much greater than Solomon, both in dignity and wisdom, is here before you, and is daily conversant among you.

Take heed therefore how you behave to me, lest all your enquiries after the kingdom of heaven, and all your converse with me, serve only to aggravate your guilt and ruin. For, if speedy repentance in so many words, made it yet more expedient that by such phrases as these he should sometimes intimate it: and indeed his saying he was greater than Solomon, that most illustrious of all the royal descendants of David, was as plain an intimation as could well be given. —Here is another undoubted instance in which Luke has plainly inverted the order of our Lord’s words; for the connection cannot be secured without transposing the verses as they stand in him. The attentive reader will observe many more instances of the same kind, and see from hence how little ground there is for what some have supposed, that Luke’s account is so exact, that all the gospels should be regulated by his order. See note 8 on Luke i. 3, sect. 1. 41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here. [Luke xi. 32.] 42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. [Luke xi. 31.] 43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of
Then he saith, I will return into my house, from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. [Luke XI. 24, 25.]

Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits, more leprous does not prevent it, I foresee that (to borrow a simile from the late subject of our discourse) your case will be like that of a demoniac, who, after a little respite, falls into a more violent relapse: for, as it sometimes happens, that an unclean spirit, when he has gone out of a man, goes about, in a roaming discontented manner, through dry deserts and wild uncultivated places, seeking some rest to his own malignant nature; and, through the invisible restraint of Divine providence, he findeth none: Then he saith, I will return to my dwelling, from whence I came out; and resolves to make another attack on the person he had lately quitted: and it may be, when he comes to him, he finds, as it were, an habitation empty of any better guest, and even swept and adorned to receive him, that is, he finds the miserable sinner unaffected with his late affliction and deliverance and still a slave to those vices which rend him an agreeable dwelling for Satan: And then, by the just judgment of God on such an incorrigible wretch, he goes, and associates with himself seven other spirits.

Through dry deserts and wild uncultivated places.] Here is a plain reference to the common notion, that evil demons had their haunts in deserts and desolate places. (Compare Isa. xiii. 21, and Rev. xviii. 2.) Some may think that a desire of doing mischief might rather have prompted the evil spirit, of whom our Lord speaks, to have continued in some city, or other place of public resort: but as he may be supposed in this parable to apprehend that, after being driven out, he should for a while be under some extraordinary restraint, it seems to me a very natural and beautiful circumstance thus to represent this malignant being as impatient of the sight of mankind, and rather choosing to seek his rest in the prospect of a sandy desert, than in the view of any more agreeable scene which might renew his anguish, by presenting to him the memorials of divine goodness to the human race. Another explication has been given to this passage, and Dr. Whitby and some others interpret it of the deities being cast out of Judea, yet finding no rest in the deserts of heathenism, because there also the apostles cast them out, which drove them to return again to the Jews, and to make them worse than before: but, though it is possible that our Lord's comprehensive mind might have some view to this, his hearers could not understand it thus; and perhaps, after all, the circumstances might be merely parabolical and ornamental.
other spirits which are yet more wicked and mischievous than himself, and, entering in, they dwell together there; so that the last condition of that man is much worse than the former. Thus also will it be to this wicked generation; instead of growing better, they will grow seven times worse than before, as both the natural and the judicial consequence of their rejecting the methods of Divine Grace for their recovery; till, as if they were possessed by a multitude of devils, they are madly hurried on to their irrecoverable ruin in this world and the next.

**Improvement.**

Let us, to whom the revelation of the gospel is so clearly made, fear, lest these dreadful things should come upon us, and the abuse of our advantages should render us an easy prey to Satan, and a fit habitation for the powers of darkness. Let those particularly fear it, who, having been brought to some serious impressions and some external reformation, are tempted to relapse into former vices, which would render their latter end far worse than their beginning; (2 Pet. ii. 20.) God has permitted some such awful instances to occur; and unhappy wretches, perhaps, some of them the children of religious parents too, who were once not far from the kingdom of God, have so abandoned every principle of religion, and every sentiment of wisdom and virtue, that it seems as if seven devils had possessed them, and were driving them headlong to destruction.

May we, instead of demanding farther evidence of Christianity than the wisdom of God has seen fit to give us, make it our care to hear and obey and diligently improve the light, we have received! May we be brought to a sincere and lasting repentance by the preaching of Christ and his apostles, lest the Ninevites rise up in judgment against us and condemn us! May we own the superior wisdom of this Divine Teacher, this better Solomon; and say, as the queen of Sheba to the Jewish prince, (1 Kings x. 8.) Happy are these thy servants, who stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom! for thou speakest as never man spake (John vii. 46.); and in thee all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid. (Col. ii. 3.)

1 Thus also will it be to this wicked generation. They who have read the sad account Josephus gives of the temper and conduct of the Jews after the ascension of Christ, and just before their final destruction by the Romans, must acknowledge that no emblem could have been more proper to describe them. Their characters were the vilest that can be conceived, and they pressed on to their own ruin as if they had been possessed by legions of devils, and wrought up to the last degrees of madness.
Where there is light it must not be concealed.

But oh, how many are curious to know what little concerns them, and are fond of improving their own wit, and trying that of others by hard questions, while the far more obvious and important points of wisdom are neglected as beneath their regard; as if everything were more necessary than being wise to salvation! We need not travel to distant climates to learn this heavenly philosophy; no, it is nigh us, even in our mouth; and we are, on that account, so much the more inexcusable, if it be not also in our heart. (Rom. x. 8.)

SECT. LXIV.

Our Lord declares his resolution of persisting in his work, urges the admission of the light he was dispersing, and declares his obedient disciples dearer to him than the nearest relations could otherwise be. Luke XI. 33—36. VIII. 19—21. Mat. XII. 46, to the end. Mark III. 31, to the end.


No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel; but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.


Our blessed Lord, in the conclusion of this excellent discourse, which was occasioned by the perverseness of the Pharisees, who had been impiously reflecting on his miracles and asking for a farther sign, assured them that he was not thus to be diverted from his work, but, notwithstanding all their opposition to it, yet would he still go on to bear his testimony to the truth; and to engage them to a free admission and improvement of the light which was then shining round them, he addressed the following exhortation to them: You have indeed endeavoured to oppose me with the greatest obstinacy and perverseness, nevertheless you shall not silence me; for no man having lighted a lamp, putteth it in a bye place, or under a bushel, to conceal its rays; but rather sets it on a stand, that they who come in to the house may see the lustre that it gives: and thus, according to the charge that I gave formerly to my disciples, (Mat. v. 16. sect. xxxvii.) I too will take all opportunities of publishing the important message that I bring, and making my light to shine before men; and do you see, that, what I offer to you be received as it ought, and guard against those prejudices which would lead you to exclude it. For

In the conclusion of this excellent discourse Luke has inserted here the following passages, which are delivered in words parallel to Mat. v. 15. and vi. 22, 23. (See the paraphrase and notes there, p. 204, 226.) Yet they appear in this connection to have a different sense, which I have expressed at large.
The great advantage of a well informed judgment.

For the eye is, as it were, the lamp of the whole body: if thine eye therefore be clear, and free from any vicious humour, that would obstruct the sight, thy whole body also will be enlightened; but if [thine eye] be distempered, thy whole body also will be proportionably darkened, and no other part can supply the defect: and so it is with respect to the judgment, which is to the mind, what the eye is to the body. See to it therefore, lest that which is as the light in thee, be itself darkness; which it will be, if those perverse maxims be adhered to, on which you now go, in rejecting my miracles and the doctrine confirmed by them. (Compare Mat. vi. 22, 23, sect. xli.)

It may indeed cost you some pains to reform your judgment, but the pleasure and advantage will be an abundant equivalent for all the labour that you take in doing it. For though the case that I but just now mentioned is so sad, yet, on the other hand, if thy whole body in consequence of a clear eye, and thy whole mind, by means of a rectified judgment, be enlightened, having no part remaining dark through distemper or prejudice, (being [thus] all enlightened, the benefit of it will be such, that it will be as when a lamp lights thee by its sprightly lustre, and thou goest on with security and pleasure in those paths.

b The eye is the lamp of the whole body.] Nothing is more common with the finest ancient writers than by an ob insigne figure to call the eye the lights of the body, as our Lord here has done.—I render ἔμπνευσθ. lamp, because it had been so translated in the verse before, and it did not seem necessary to change it.

c If thine eye therefore be clear.] See note b on Mat. vi. 22, p. 226.

d For if thy whole body; it or γυμνοι to εις. This is an unusual rendering of the particle γυμνοι, but appeared to me necessary; for this verse is not introduced as an immediate consequence from the foregoing, but both of them are collateral inferences from ver. 34, as the intelligent reader will easily observe. And if it be admitted that νεφελος, as well as γυμνοι, therefore, is sometimes used with such a latitude as that the former may be understood to introduce a reason for, and the latter to introduce a consequence from something not immediately preceding; as also they are sometimes used promiscuously; it will, I think, clear the connection in some places, where it will otherwise give us a great deal of perplexity, and I fear, after all our fine-spun reasonings, but very little satisfaction. (See Luke xx. 37, 38. Rom. i. 16, 17 seq. and Heb. ii. 9, 12 seq. Greek; and many other places.) Compare note i on Mat. xii. 8, p. 270.

e Being thus all enlightened.] By allowing these words, ἐπερευραμένον, to be thus included in a parenthesis, we prevent the absurdity of supposing, as our translation would lead one to imagine, that our Lord says, If thy whole body be full of light, the whole shall be full of light. Else the clause should be so rendered as to show that the following words make a part of what our Lord asserts of the enlightened body; it shall be all as full of light as when a lamp, &c.

f By its sprightly lustre.] This seems to be the force of the word ἐμπνευσθαι which signifies a very strong and vivid flame, and is indeed most commonly applied to that of lightning, being here only used in the New Testament for any other flame. (See Mat. xxiv. 27, xxviii. 3. Luke x. 16, xvii. 24. and Rev. iv. 5, v. 5. xi. 19. xvi. 18.)

—It may perhaps be an oblique hint of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light: but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee, be not darkness.

If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole, shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.
paths which would otherwise be full of uncertainty and danger.
And as he was yet speaking these lively and important things to the people, who in vast multitude were gathered about him, behold, there came unto him, just then, his mother, and his brethren, or near kinsmen; who standing without and apprehending the danger to which he exposed himself by such free reministrances and admonitions as these, sent to him, to call him away from so dangerous a situation; and for this end, desired earnestly to speak with him, as about some affairs of importance. And, as the multitude sat round about him, there was no room for his relations to get near him; and, notwithstanding all that they could urge of a peculiar interest in him, the people were so eager in attending to him, that none of them were willing to give place, and they could not come at him on account of the crowd. Therefore one of the people said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without at some distance, enquiring for thee, and earnestly desiring to see thee, and speak with thee: what therefore must be done? Wilt thou go out to them, or give orders to the people to make way for them to come hither to thee? But he, to encourage those that were truly serious in their attendance on his preaching, answered and said to him that told him, Who do you think is my mother? And who are those whom you imagine I consider as my brethren? And looking round on them that were sitting about him to hear his word, and stretching out his hand with an affectionate regard, especially towards those, that were his constant followers and professed disciples, he said, What kindness or relations have I, that are nearer to me or more esteemed

the celestial original and vigorous active influence of that lastre, which Christ diffused to illuminate and guide the mind.

And as he was yet speaking, &c. Matthew is so express in connecting this story with the preceding discourses (not to insist on Mark's following the same order too) that it is absolutely necessary to transpose Luke viii. 19. & seq. unless we suppose that it happened twice, and that perhaps on the same day; for Matthew assures us, that the parable of the sover, (to which Luke also joins it) was delivered this day, Mat. xiii. 1—5.

h Who is my mother? &c. To suppose that our Lord here intends to put any slight on his mother would be very absurd: he only took the opportunity of expressing his affection to his obedient disciples in a peculiarly engaging manner; which could not but be a great comfort to them, and would be to Susannah, Joanna, Mary Magdalene, and the other pious women, who sat near him, (Luke viii. 2, 3. p. 319, 320,) a rich equivalent for all the fatigue and expense which their zeal for their heavenly Master occasioned. And as this seems to have been towards the beginning of their progress, it is observable that our Lord appears to have been peculiarly concerned for their encouragement. See Luke xi. 27, 28, p. 328, 329. 
Reflections on the use we should make of the light we enjoy.

Sect. Lxiv.

estaemed than these! Behold my mother and my brethren here. For these that hear the word of God, and practise it, are considered and acknowledged by me as my mother and my brethren; nor do I thus regard these only that are now before me, but I declare the same too of all others of their character; [for] whosoever shall do the will of God, my heavenly Father, even this very person, of whatever place and family and station he be, is regarded by me as my brother, or my sister, or mother:1 for this pious disposition will render such dearer to me than any of the bands of natural relation, if separate from real holiness, could possibly do.

Improvement.

So may it be our care to do the will of God, that we may be thus dear to our Redeemer, who ought by so many tender bonds to be dear to us; and who, by such gracious and indulgent declarations, as these which we have now been reading, is drawing us as with the cords of a man, and with the bands of love!

Still does the light of his Divine instructions shine with the brightest lustre, and diffuse itself around us! Let us open the eyes of our mind with singleness and simplicity to receive it; and make it our care to act according to it. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, (Hos. vi. 3,) and thus with cheerfulness shall we reap the fruit of a well informed mind and a well regulated life!

May we be delivered from all those false maxims which would darken our hearts amidst all this meridian lustre, and turn our boasted light into darkness! Would to God there were not renewed instances of this kind continually occurring among us; and that we did not daily meet with persons whose pretended wisdom teaches them to forget or despise the gospel, and so serves only to amuse their eyes, while it leads their feet to the chambers of death!

Sect.

1 This very person is my brother, or my sister, or mother.] This possibly might be intended as an awful intimation to some of his near relatives, to take heed how they indulged that unbelief, which so long after prevailed in their minds; (compare John vii. 3-5. sect. xcviii.) For in this case the nearness of their relation unto Christ according to the flesh would be no manner of advantage to them; but those that should hold my mother and my brethren. [Mark iii. 34.]

50 For [Luke, my mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it;] and] whosoever shall do the will of [God] my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and [my] sister, and mother. [Mark iii. 35. Luke viii. 21.]
Christ preaches to the multitude out of a ship.

SECT. LXV.

Christ, teaching by the sea-side, delivers the parable of the sower, and assigns the reason of his speaking to the multitude in parables.


MAT. XIII. 1.

IN that day a Jesus, going out of the house, into which, at the importunity of his friends, he had retired for a while, sat down by the side of the sea of Galilee, and began again to teach. And such great multitudes of people were again gathered together about him, and came in crowds from almost every city round about to hear him, that they began to press upon him, as they had done before in the former part of the day (see Luke viii. 19, p. 347,) so that, entering into a ship for the convenience of being better heard, and less incommoded by them, he sat down on the vessel in the sea, at a little distance from the shore; and the whole multitude stood by the sea upon the shore, shewing the utmost eagerness to hear whatever he should say.

And, to make his instructions the more agreeable to them, and the more deeply to impress them on the minds of honest and attentive hearers, he spake to them by a parable b concerning a sower, which shall be now related; [and] taught them also many other things in parables; and beginning

MAT. XIV. 2.

MARK. IV. 2. And the sower spake by a parable, and taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine; [MAT. XIII. 3.—LUKE VIII. 4.]

2 On that day.] Matthew is the only evangelist who expressly fixed these parables to the day on which the preceding occurrences happened: I say, fixed them to it, for though the phrases, וְנַחֲלַת הָעַלֶּפֶּה, on a certain day; וְנַחֲלוּ הָעַלֶּפֶּה, in those days, be very ambiguous in their signification, (see Mat. iii. 1, and note c, p. 93,) I cannot apprehend any thing more determinate than this of וְנָחֲלַת הָעַלֶּפֶּה, on that day. The day in which Luke introduces this discourse, as if it was delivered at the beginning of the progress Jesus made before the passages that we have mentioned in the preceding sections (sect. lxii. & seq.) is not enough to fix the time when this discourse was made; and we have already shewn, in several instances, that it is no unusual thing with Luke to neglect the order of time, and sometimes only to relate a fact as happening on a certain day. (See Luke v. 17, and note a, p. 244, and compare Luke viii. 22, vi. 12, xi. 14, and xx. 1.) Matthew might know the fact we have now before us more circumspectly than Luke, though the latter's account be exactly true so far as it goes; a reflection which we have frequent occasion to make with respect to all the evangelists.

b A parable.] The word, according to its Greek etymology, properly signifies a comparison or simile; in which sense it is used here and in most other places; though sometimes it appears to be particularly used for an inductive apophasis or fable. (Compare Ezek. xvii. 2 & seq.) And, as these often were expressed in poetical language (see Judg. xiv. 7—15), the word parable sometimes signifies a sublime discourse, elevated beyond the common forms of speech, though no simile be used. (Num. xxvi. 7, xxvi. 15, Job xxiv. 1, xxiv. 1, and Psal. lxvii. 2.) And, as short parables after grew into proverbs, or were alluded to in them, hence the word parable is sometimes used for a proverb. Mic. ii. 4, and Hab. ii. 6.

c The
He delivers the parable of the sower.

Hearken with peculiar attention to what I am now going to say, that you may thus be taught to hear my other discourses with improvement, and may not through negligence, inconstancy, or carnality of mind, lose the benefit of my repeated instructions. Behold, at the spring of the year, a sower went forth to sow the ground with his seed.

And, as the ground lay near a beaten path, it happened that, while he was sowing, some of the seed was scattered, and fell by the way side; and lying there uncovered, it was either trodden under foot by passengers, or picked up by the birds of the air, who presently came and devoured it.

And some of it fell on stony soil, upon a rock that lay but just beneath the surface of the ground, where it had not much earth to cover it; and immediately it sprang up, and appeared green, because it had no depth of earth to make its way through. But its verdure was very short lived; for when the sun shone hot upon it, it was presently scorched by the warmth of its beams; and withered away, almost as soon as it was sprung up, because it had no room for taking root in such a shallow bed of earth, and wanted sufficient moisture to nourish it.

And some more of the seed being thrown near the hedge, fell among the briars and thorns there; and when it began to shoot out of the ground, the thorns sprang up with it, and grew so much faster, as not to leave it either room to grow or nourishment to support it; and so they choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

And the rest of the seed fell on good ground, and yielded fruit, which, being well rooted and nourished, grew up and increased to its full proportion; and the ears filled, and produced a rich and

The benefit of my repeated instructions. As our Lord afterwards explains all the parts of this parable, I thought it sufficient to give this general account of its design in as few words as possible. Dr. Clarke, by taking the contrary method in his paraphrase (though in this he be followed by others,) both renders the apostle's question as to the meaning of this parable very unnecessary and occasions a needless and disagreeable repetition.

At the spring of the year. Many circumstances below make this probable; and indeed I do not find that in Judges they sowed even when sooner; but to conclude from hence, as Sir Isaac Newton does (in his Discourse on Prophecy, p. 153.) that this parable was delivered in the spring, is very precarious. One might as well argue from that of the fishes, delivered the same day, that it was harvest.
and plentiful increase, some of them thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred [fold]. [Mark. XIII. 8. Luke, VIII. 8.]

Luke VIII. 8. And when he had said these things, he cried out with a louder voice than before, and said unto them, He that hath ears to hear these important truths, let him hear and regard them with the most diligent attention, and seriously reflect upon that instructive moral, which is contained in the parable I have now been delivering. And when the assembly was broke up (after Christ had delivered many other similitudes of this kind to them, which will be mentioned afterwards), when he had parted with the multitude, and was alone in a retired place, the rest of his disciples, with the twelve, who had been with him while he spake these things, came and asked him [concerning] the parable of the sower, saying, We desire thou wouldest more particularly explain to us what may the meaning of the several circumstances of this parable be? [and] give us leave to ask thee, Why dost thou preach in such a manner to the multitude, and speak to them in parables, which probably so few of them can understand?

And he replying, said unto them, I thus express myself in parables, because, though it is granted, through the Divine goodness, to you, whose hearts are open to receive the truth in the love of it, to know and understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which have been long concealed; yet it is not granted to others, who are prejudiced against them, but they are justly suffered to continue unacquainted with them: and therefore to them that are without, and who are strangers, through their own neglect and folly, to what they might before have learned, all [these] things are now involved in parables and figures; which,

\*An hundred fold, &c.] Such an increase, even in those fruitful countries, was not very common, but however sometimes happened. See Gen. xxvi. 12. [Reflect upon that instructive moral.] This solemn proclamation was sufficient to declare that they also were to regard the following similes as intended to convey some useful instructions, and not as mere matter of amusement.

\*His disciples.] This is a very just translation of the phrase σοι μου διδαχαι, which frequently is used in the best authors, for the disciples, or followers of the person it refers to; and as it thus agrees with Matthew, so we may fitly understand it of those who attended Christ in his progress with the twelve apostles. And in this way the style appears more natural and easy than if we read it as it stands in our translation, where it sounds somewhat harsh to speak of those that were about him, when he was alone. All these things are now involved in parables and figures.] Here your is plainly put for εριδι: I therefore render it all things are in parables. See Mat. vi. 16. x. 16. \*Mark i. 4. Luke ii. 13. xxiv. 19. John i. 6. and elsewhere.
12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand:

Mark IV. 12. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand: lest at any time they should be converted, and their hearts hardened.
and their sins should be forgiven them. [Luke VIII. 10.]

Mat. XIII. 14. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, 'By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.'

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see;

The sound of them, but not understand their true intent and meaning; lest at any time they should be converted, and [their] sins should be forgiven them, which to many of these people they never shall.

And thus in them is the prophecy of Isaiah most exactly fulfilled (Isa. vi. 9, 10.) which indeed was originally intended to include them, and saith, "By hearing ye shall hear (or you may still go on to hear) with eagerness, but you shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, or you may still go on to see, but you shall not perceive! For, like a wretch who has besotted and stupefied himself with riot, the heart, or intellectual faculty of this people is, as it were, grown stiff with fatness, and they hear with heavy ears, and draw up their eyes as if they were more than half asleep; so that one would imagine they were afraid lest at any time they should happen so to be roused, so as to see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal and save them. I therefore justly leave them to their own obstinacy, and direct thee, O Isaiah, to methods which I know will increase it."

But happy indeed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear: you have not only greater opportunities of instruction than others, but greater integrity and seriousness in attending to them: and I congratulate you on so happy an occasion. For verily I say unto you, That many of the most holy prophets, and most singularly righteous men, under the Jewish dispensation, have earnestly desired to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to

Seeing you shall see, but you shall not perceive.] This is a just translation of the original, both here and in Isaiah; and is another considerable argument for the interpretation here given of the whole context.

A pious and learned friend, by whose kind animadversions I have been led to insert some additional notes in this work, has urged several arguments to prove that this clause should be rendered, seeing, &c. you will not perceive. But on the maturest review of this passage, both in Isaiah and the several places where it occurs in the New Testament, I cannot apprehend that it was spoken merely by way of complaint, but think it plain that it was intended also as a prediction: (compare Mark iv. 12, Luke viii. 10, John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26, 27, Rom. xi. 8.) Now in prediction we generally render the future form, "such or such a thing shall happen," though we only mean to express the certainty of the event, without denying the freedom of the moral agents concerned in it, or distracting from it in any degree.

[Green stiff with fatness.] This is the proper English of ἐπιπροσκία, and alludes to a notion the ancients had, that a great quantity of fat about the heart stupefied both the intellectual and sensitive powers. Compare Deut. xxxi. 29, xxxii. 13. Psal. cxix. 70, and Isa. vi. 19.
Christ explains the parable of the sower.

**SECT. LIV.**

Mat. xv. 17. Let not the grace, dispensations of the Divine blessing, render you singularly useful in this world, and proportionably happy in the next. (Compare Luke x. 23, 24. sect. cvi.)

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Mat. xii. 12. Let us hear with fear and trembling these awful declarations from the lips of the compassionate Jesus himself. Here were crowds about Christ, who indulged such prejudices, and attended with such pernicious dispositions, that in righteous judgment he took an obscure method of preaching to them, and finally left many of them under darkness and impenitency to 

Let us take heed lest the bounties of Divine providence should be thus abused by us, as a means of casting us into a stupid insensibility of the hand and voice of the blessed God: or we may otherwise have ground to fear lest he should leave us to our own delusions, and give us up to the lusts of our own hearts. And then the privilege of ordinances, and of the most awakening providential dispensations will be vain; seeing we shall see, and not perceive; and hearing we shall hear, and not understand.

It is our peculiar happiness under the gospel that we see and hear what prophets and princes and saints of old, desired to see and hear, but were not favoured with it. Let us be thankful for our privilege, and improve it well; lest a neglected gospel by the righteous judgment of God be taken away and our abused seasons of grace, by one method of Divine displeasure or other, be brought to a speedy period. But if by grace it is given to us to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, let us learn a thankfulness in some measure proportionable to the corrupt prejudices which have been overborne, and the important blessings which are secured to us.

**SECT. LXVI.**


**MARK IV. 13.**

A ND when the twelve apostles, in a retired place (as we observed above, Mark iv. 10. p. 341), asked Jesus the meaning of the parable iv. 13. of the sower which he had delivered to the multitude see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.
Christ explains the parable of the sower.

how then will ye know all parables?

Matt. XIII. 18. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

Luke VIII. 11. Now the parable is this: The seed [which the sower soweth] is the word of God. [Mark IV. 14.]

Mark IV. 15. And these are they by the way-side; where the word was sown, but [when any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then] Satan [the wicked one] cometh immediately, and taketh away the word [which was sown in his heart, [Luke, lest they should believe, and be saved:] this is he which received seed by the way-side. [Mat. XIII. 19. Luke VIII. 12.]

16 And these are they likewise which [received the seed] on stony ground, [Luke, on the rocks:] who when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [Mat. XIII. 20. Luke VIII. 13.—]

17 And have no root in themselves, and so [Luke, believe, and] endure but for a time; afterward...

Know ye not the meaning of this easy and familiar parable, so nearly referring to the prophetic language? (see Jer. iv. 3. and Hos. x. 12.) How then will you understand all the other parables that I have spoken, some of which are much harder than this?

I shall however yield to your request, and shew myself on all occasions ready to instruct you: hear ye therefore, according to your desire, the explication of the parable of the sower. Now the meaning of the parable is this. It is intended to represent the different success of the gospel in the world: for the seed [which] the sower I spoke of sowed, is the word of God, which I am employed to preach, and which will ere long also be committed to you: but too much of our labour will be lost on three bad kinds of hearers, whom I described in the parable by different kinds of unfruitful ground.

And, in the first place, these are they whom I described as receiving the seed by the way-side, where the word is no sooner sown, but the effect of it is presently lost, and their true character may thus be represented to you: when any one hears of the word of the heavenly kingdom, or of the gospel of the grace of God, and through a careless inattention understands [it] not; then Satan, that wicked one, who is the great enemy of God and souls, flying as eagerly as a bird to his prey, comes immediately, and catches away the word that was sown in his heart, lest they who have heard it should believe, and be saved; and as nothing is like to be long remembered which is not well understood, all trace of it is quickly lost out of such a mind, as grain scattered in the road: this, I say, is he, that received the seed by the way-side in the parable.

And in like manner, in the next place, these are they who were described as having received the seed in stony soil, or on a rock under a very shallow bed of earth: such, I mean, who having heard the message of pardon, life and glory, which the word of the gospel brings, immediately receive it with a transport of joy, and feel their natural passions elevated and enlarged at the report of such agreeable news; But as they have no root of deep conviction and real love to holiness in themselves, they have no true impression of the power of it on their hearts, and so believe...

sect. lvi.

Mark IV. 13.

Mark IV. 15.
it only in a notional, not a vital manner, [and]
endure in the profession of it but for a little while;
[and] afterwards in a time of sharp trial, espe-
cially when any domestic oppression or public
persecution arises on account of the word, they
are presently offended, [and] apostatize from that
warm and eager profession which in times of
less difficulty they were so forward to make.

And, in the third place, these are they, whom I
described by telling you, that they received seed
among thorns: even such as heard the word, per-
haps with great constancy and the appearance
of serious attention; [but] almost as soon as they
have heard [it] go out of the assembly, and, im-
merging themselves in secular affairs, permit
the cares of this world, and the artful delusion of
riches a, or perhaps the pleasures of [this] animal
life, or the desires of some other things, which
equally tend to alienate the soul from God, to
enter [into their minds] and take up all their
thoughts and time to such a degree as to choke
the word, and so it becomes unfruitful: [yea,]
they themselves are choked, as it were, with these
fatal incumbrances b, and whatever purposes or
faint efforts they may make towards a partial
reformation, they bring no fruit to perfection,
but remain destitute of every degree of genuine
and prevailing piety.

And once more, these are they, who were said
to have received the seed into good ground: even
such as do not only hear the word with attention
and simplicity of mind, but understand what is
spoken and receive it without prejudice and op-
oposition; and when they depart, are solicitous to
retain [it] in an honest and good heart, bringing
forth the good fruit of substantial holiness, in
various degrees, with patience and perseverance,
some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred
fold,

a The artful delusion of riches.] This
phrase, αματις καὶ απιθανή, is very elegant,
and admirably expresses the various artifices
by which people in the pursuit of riches
exclude themselves from day to day in put-
ting off religious cares, and the confounding
disappointment, which often mingles itself
with their labours, and even with their success.
23. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17. 2 Tim. ii. 4.
and iv. 10.
b They themselves are choked, &c.] So
Luke expresses it, perhaps to intimate the
uneasy situation of the mind while clogged
and straitened with such incumbrances as
these, and rendered, as it were, unfit to
breathe its own native air, and to delight
itself with celestial and eternal objects.—
Choking arises from anything which straitens
the gullet, or wind-pipe, and so obstructs
the passage of food or air. And thus young
plants or corn, may properly be said to be
choked by thorns, which do not leave them
room to grow; and the word, which would
exercise its vital power and principle, is
represented as choked when thus pressed with
secular cares prevailing in the mind.

13, 19 And these are they which [re-
ceived seed] among thorns; such as hear
the word, [Luke, and when they have
heard, go forth,) and the cares of this world,
and the deceitfulness of riches, [Luke, and
pleasures of this life,] and the lusts of other
things, entering in, choke the word, and
it becometh unfruitful; [Luke, yea, they are
choked, and bring no fruit to perfection.]—
[Mat. xiii. 22. Luke VIII.
14.]

20 And these are they which [re-
ceived seed into] good ground; such as hear the word,
[and understand,] and receive, [Luke, and
keep it in an honest and good heart,] and
bring forth fruit [Luke, with patience], some
thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.
[Mat. xiii. 23.—
Luke VIII. 15.]
fold, both to their present joy and to their future glory.

And he said farther to them, I appeal to yourselves, and urge it as a proper consideration to engage you to communicate the light you have to others, Is a lamp brought into a room, to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? [and] not to be set on a candlestick?

LUKE VIII. 16. No man when he hath lighted a candle, cov¬ereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.—[MARC IV. 22]

MARK IV. 23. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he said unto them, Take heed [therefore] what [and how]

covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a couch.] Mark expresses it as a question, and Luke as a direct exclamation. I have given it in both the forms, as what seemed most effectually to secure the credit of both the evangelists: and I humbly submit it to better judges, whether, in some of these instances, Christ might not immediately repeat the thought a second time in nearly the same words, in order to fix some very memorable passage on the minds of his hearers, who to be sure needed line upon line, and precept upon precept. In this view he will appear, if less like a public orator, yet more like a father instructing his children; and perhaps if more of this familiar and condensing method was practised in our sermons, though the delicacy of a few might be less amused, the souls of the people might be more edified; and consequently the end of Christian ordinances (which is by no means the applause of these who administer them), might be more effectually answered.

b Nor any thing hid, which shall not be made known and published.] Though a prospect of the final discovery of the great day would contain a strong argument, both in compassion to others, and from a prudent regard to their own happiness, to engage his disciples to make a faithful report of the gospel committed to their trust; yet I think the words will contain an important sense, without supposing them to refer to that. Compare Mat. n. 26, 27, sect. lxxv. and Luke xii. 2, 3, sect. ex. in which two places the same words seem, as often elsewhere, to have a different sense.

to him hear; and if you have intelligent powers, let it be your peculiar care to exert them to this important purpose.

And he said also to them, Do you above all take heed therefore, and carefully attend to what you
Reflections on the care we should take how we hear.

Sect. lxxxvi.

You hear from me, [and] how you hear it: for in this sense I may say, as formerly on another occasion, (Mat. vii. 2, p. 231, and Luke vi. 38, p. 289), The measure with which you mete to others, shall be used to you; and to you that attentively hear, more shall be given; and those who are most diligent in teaching others shall be taught most themselves. For, as I said before in this discourse, (Mat. xiii. 12, p. 342), to him that improves what he hath, more shall be given; but from him that acts as one who hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which for the present he hath, [or] seemeth to have; but which he shall soon find was not accurately speaking, his own, and must be strictly accounted for to the real proprietor.)

IMPROVEMENT.


Let us apply to ourselves this charge of our blessed Redeemer, and take heed how we hear. Especially let us be very careful that we despise not him that now speaks to us from heaven; and remember the authority, which his exaltation there gives to the words which he spake in the days of his flesh.

Mat. xiii. 18 & seq.

Let us attentively hear the parable of the sower and its interpretation. Still is Christ by his word and ministers, sowing among us the good seed. Still is the great enemy of souls labouring to snatch it away. Let us endeavour to understand, that we may retain it; and to retain, that we may practise it. Still do the cares of this world press us; still do its pleasures solicit us; still do our lusts war in our members; and all unite their efforts to prevent our fruitfulness in good works: but let us remember, that with having our fruit unto holiness, everlasting life is connected as the end; and that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Rom. vi. 22, and Gal. vi. 9.)

17 Let us therefore be concerned that the seed may take deep root in our minds, that we may not rest in any superficial impression on the passions; but, feeling the energy of that living principle, may flourish under the circumstances which wither others, and may

c To you that hear, more shall be given.] I know there may be some room to doubt whether these three verses in Mark, at the close of this section, were spoken to the disciples apart, or to the multitude; but I think these words make the former much more probable.

i Seemeth to have.] I know even exxiv. seemeth to have, is sometimes a pleonasm, which signifies to have; yet the paraphrase shows it is not necessarily so here, which is also favoured by Luke xvi. 12, sect. cxxiv. (See also 1 Cor. iii. 18. Gal. vi. 3. and James i. 26.) However, as I confess it may possibly be a pleonasm, if any chuse to take it thus, then the last clause, which is included in a parenthesis, must be left out.

a The
Christ delivers the parable of the tares.

Our Lord delivers the parable of the tares in the field; and afterwards explains it at large to his disciples. Mat. XIII. 24—30, 36—43.

Mat. XIII. 24.

Now to return to the story of our Lord's teaching the multitude from the ship: he likewise at the same time proposed another parable to them, to intimate that persons of various characters should come into the gospel-profession; but that there should be a final separation between them in the other world, however they might be blended together in this. And he taught them, saying, the kingdom of heaven, or the success of the gospel dispensation, may be compared to that which happened to a man who had sown good seed in his ground: But one night, while the men who were set to watch it slept, an ill-natured neighbour, who was his enemy, with a malicious view to spoil the crop, came and sowed a quantity of tares among the wheat, which had just been thrown into the ground, and went away without being discovered. But afterwards, when the blade was sprung up, and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared among the ears of wheat in a manner easily to be distinguished. And the servants of the proprietor of the estate came in a surprise, and said to him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed of pure wheat in thy field? whence then hath it these tares, which now appear mingled with the crop? And he said unto them, Some ill-natured and malicious person in the neighbourhood has undoubtedly done this, taking advantage of your absence or negligence. And the servants, willing to make...

\[a\] The kingdom of heaven.] That this is frequently to be understood of the gospel dispensation has been observed before in note h on Mat. iii. 2, p. 96.

\[b\] May be compared to that which happened to a man.] Or may be illustrated by the following similitude. See note i on Luke vii. 32, p. 507.

\[c\] The proprietor of the estate.] So «οικοδόμος; seems to signify in this connection. He is supposed to be the master of the field, and of some lodge, or farm-house, in which these servants dwelt.
The explication of the parable of the tares.

sect.
lixvii.

Mat. XIII. 29.

make the best amends they could, said to him,
Wilt thou then have us go directly to root them out, and gather them up before they get any farther head? But he said, No, I do not think that proper; lest while you endeavour to gather up the tares, you should, before you are aware, root up some of the wheat also with them: It will be better to permit both to grow together till the harvest come; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles, that they may afterwards be burnt for fuel; but gather ye the wheat into my barn, that it may there be ready for my use.

36 Then Jesus, after he had spoken some other parables, having dismissed the multitude, went from the vessel where he had been preaching into an house, to refresh himself a little before he crossed the lake: and his disciples who constantly attended him, came to him, saying, We desire thou wouldest explain to us the parable of the tares in the field, for we do not perfectly understand it. And he answered and said unto them, He, in the parable, that sowed the good seed, is intended to represent the Son of man, the great preacher of the gospel, which is ordained as the most illustrious instrument for the reformation and happiness of mankind. The field is indeed the whole world, in which the gospel is to be preached, and not to be confined to the Jewish nation alone: the good seed are the children of the kingdom, or those truly pious men who, being formed on the model of the gospel, and as it were assimilated to it, are the heirs of future glory, as well as entitled to the present privileges of my church: but, on the other hand, the tares are wicked men, who are indeed the children of the wicked one, though many of them may profess themselves my disciples, and for their own unworthy

\[d\] May afterwards be burnt for fuel.] This plainly proves that the word tares, which we render tares, does not exactly answer to that vegetable among us, which is a kind of pulse too good to be used merely for fuel.

\[e\] After he had spoken some other parables.] Some of these are contained in the intermediate verses (ver. 31—35); but I apprehend the explication of the parable would appear with some peculiar advantage thus immediately after it.

\[f\] A little before he crossed the lake.] I am sensible that Mark iv. 36, may seem some objection to this; but the reader may see in my paraphrase there, sect. lxix. that I apprehend it may be reconciled with this interpretation and order of the story; yet I acknowledge it possible that the house here spoken of might be on the other side of the lake, and that they might go into it the next day.

\[g\] Shall
The wicked shall at last be separated from the righteous.

39 The enemy that sowed them, is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered, and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

worthy ends pretend a great zeal for my cause and church. The enemy that sowed them is the devil, who studies by all means to corrupt men’s principles and debauch their lives, and puts those on a hypocritical profession of religion who are utter strangers to its power. The harvest I mentioned is the end of the world, the great day of judgment and retribution; and the reapers are the angels, who are to be employed in the services of that day. As therefore the tares in the parable are ordered by the owner of the field to be gathered together, and burnt in the fire; so likewise shall it be at the end of this world. The Son of man shall then send forth his attendant angels, and they, in obedience to his command, shall gather out of his kingdom all things which have been an offence to others, even all those that practise iniquity, and thereby bring a reproach on their profession, and lay stumbling-blocks in the way of others: And these blessed spirits, as the executioners of the divine vengeance, shall cast them into hell, the furnace of unquenchable fire: and dreadful indeed will their condition be; for there shall be lamentation, and gnashing of teeth for ever, in the height of anguish, rage, and despair; a despair, aggravated by all the privileges they once enjoyed, and the vain hope which, as my professed disciples, they once entertained. But then shall the righteous be publicly owned and honoured, and with a joyful welcome be received into the heavenly world, where they shall shine forth with divine radiance and glory, like the sun itself, and be fixed for ever in the kingdom of their Father, to enjoy the transforming visions of his face.

This misery, or this felicity, is the end of all the living; nor can I ever declare a truth of greater importance to you. See to it therefore, that you regard it with becoming attention; and every one who hath ears to hear, let him hear it, and govern his life by its extensive influence.

IMPROVE-

1. Shall send forth his attendant angels.] The reader will observe how high an idea our Lord here gives of himself, when he speaks of the angels as his attendants, who were at the last day to wait on him, and at his order to assemble the whole world before him.

2. Gnashing of teeth.] Since what is here spoken of is supposed to pass in a furnace of fire, it is strange that any should have imagined that σκίλημα the σκίλλειν signifies the knocking, or, as we commonly express it, the chattering of the teeth, through excess of cold. Yet some have been weak enough to argue from hence that (according to the Mahometan notion) the alternative extremities of heat and cold should constitute the torment of the damned. See Arch-bishop Davy’s Sermons on Hell, sermon iii. p. 14.
Oh that these important instructions might, as it were, be ever sounding in our ears! It is matter of great thankfulness that this earth, which might have been abandoned by God as a barren wilderness, is cultivated as his field, and that any good seed is to be found in it; but grievous to think how many tares are intermingled, so as almost to over-run the ground, and hide the wheat from being seen. Let not a forward zeal prompt us, like these over-officious servants, to think of rooting them out by violence; but let us wait our master's time and be patient till the day of the Lord.

The separation will at length be made; nor shall one precious grain perish. Awful important time! when the angels shall perform their great office with a sagacity too sharp to be eluded, and a power too strong to be resisted! Gather not our souls, O Lord, with sinners! but may they be bound up in the bundle of life! that when the day cometh, which shall burn as an oven, and when the wicked like chaff shall be thrown in to be consumed, we may survey the execution of the Divine judgment with awful triumph; being owned by God as his while he is making up his jewels, and spared by him as his obedient children. (Mal. iii. 17, and iv. 1.) Then shall we not only be spared, but honoured and adorned, and shine forth like the sun in our father's kingdom; for these vile bodies shall be fashioned like to the glorious body of our Redeemer (Phil. iii. 21), and our purified and perfected spirits shall be clothed with proportionable lustre, and reflect the complete image of his holiness. Amen.

SECT. LXVIII.

Our Lord adds other parables relating to the speedy progress of the gospel and the importance of the blessings it proposes. Mark IV. 26—34. Mat. XIII. 31—35, 44—53.

Mark IV. 26. And after Jesus had delivered the foregoing parable, he went on with his discourse to the multitude, and farther said, So is the kingdom of God, and such the nature of the dispensation of the gospel in its progress, that it is like the growth of vegetables, and may fitly be illustrated by the case of a husbandman: for it is as if a man should throw his seed upon the earth; and after it is sown, should take no farther thought about it, but sleep by night, and rise by day, and apply himself to other business; and in the mean time
The parable of the grain of mustard-seed.

93 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear.

94 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

Mat. XIII. 31. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying,

And he made a pause in his discourse, and then said, I am thinking, whereunto shall we compare the kingdom of God? or with what parable shall we place it in such a point of light as farther to illustrate it.

After which reflection, he proposed another parable to them, saying, The kingdom of heaven, of which I am speaking, or the interest of the gospel in the world, is like a grain of mustard seed, which

For the earth, by a certain curious kind of mechanism, which the greatest philosophers cannot fully comprehend, does, as it were, spontaneously, without any assistance from man, carry it through the whole progress of vegetation; and produces first the blade, then the ear, and afterward the full grain in the ear. But at the proper season for it, as soon as the fruit is ripe, he immediately puts it in the sickle, because the harvest is come; and all that remains is to receive the bountiful provision which the great Lord of all has produced by his own power. By such insensible degrees shall the gospel gain ground in the world, and ripen to a harvest of glory: and therefore let not my faithful servants be discouraged if the effect of their labours be not immediately so conspicuous as they could desire; a future crop may spring up, and the Son of man will in due time appear to gather it in.

By a curious kind of mechanism, &c.] The word artificium, which is generally in good authors applied to artificial machines, so naturally suggested this thought, that I could not forbear hinting at it. The reader may see a very elegant illustration of it in Dr. Watts's Philosophical Essays. No. ix. § 2.

b Let not my faithful servants be discouraged, &c.] It cannot be the design of this parable to encourage private Christians to imagine that religion will flourish in their own souls without proper cultivation; nor to lead ministers to expect that it will flourish in their people while they neglect due application in private as well as public. I hope therefore the reader will acquiesce with me in the paraphrase given above; supposing that our Lord meant to intimate that his apostles and other ministers were not to estimate their usefulness merely by their immediate and visible success; but might hope that by their preaching a seed would be left in the hearts of many which might afterwards produce happy fruit. On these principles, I doubt not but our Lord's preaching greatly promoted the signal success of the apostles (to which he might in part refer, John iv. 38, p. 170), and I hope the remark may sometimes be applicable to our labours, especially with respect to those who, have enjoyed a religious education, and being restrained from grosser irregularities, have not been so far as others from the kingdom of God. There can be no reason to interpret this (as Grotius and Dr. Clarke have done) of Christ only: he does not go away and sleep; and he perfectly knows how the seed springs up: on the other hand every faithful minister may be said to put it in his sickle, as having his part in the final harvest. (See John iv. 36, p. 163.)
which a man took and sowed in his field to raise and propagate the plant: It is, I say, like this grain, which indeed, when at first it is sown in the earth, is very small and inconsiderable, and [one of] the least of all the seeds, that are cast in the ground: But when it is sown some time in the earth, it grows up to a surprising degree, and becomes greater than all other herbs; yea, I may even say, it becomes a tree, and shoots out great branches, so large and thick, that the birds of the air may build their nests in it, and come and lodge in its branches1, [and] harbour under its shadow. In such a remarkable manner did our Lord intimate, that his gospel should prevail amidst all opposition; and, inconsiderable as its beginnings were, should spread itself abroad through the whole world, so as to afford weary and fearful souls a grateful and secure retreat.

He also spake another parable to them, to the same purpose with the former, which, like the rest, was taken from a very familiar circumstance daily occurring in life: The kingdom of heaven, said he, or the cause of the gospel, is like a little leaven, which a woman took and covered up in three measures of meal; and though it seemed lost for a while in the mass of dough, it secretly wrought through it by a speedy though insensible fermentation till at length the whole was leavened. Thus shall the gospel spread in the world, and influence and assimilate the temper and conduct of men.

All these things Jesus spake to the multitude in parables; and with many other such parables spake he the word unto them as they were able to hear and receive [it;] well knowing that so many enemies were then hovering round him, that had he declared the mysteries of his kingdom in plainer terms, he would have been in continual danger, and must, without a series of repeated miracles, have been cut off by their malice: and upon this account, without a parable he spake not any thing in all that he delivered to them on that day;
day; That so it might be seen that passage was remarkably fulfilled in him, which was spoken by the prophet (Psal. lxxviii. 2), and that he might with the utmost propriety adopt those words XIII. 45 that Asaph had delivered, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables, I will give vent to dark sayings of old, even to things which have been hid from the foundation of the world.

For thus did Jesus teach important truths that were before unknown, in manner something obscure, though to the attentive mind peculiarly impressing.

And after he had sent away the multitude, and was retired from them, he freely expounded all these things to his disciples when they were alone with him.

And when he had given them the forementioned explication of the parable of the tares, he again added some other parables to the same purpose, to promote the diligence, zeal and resolution of his disciples, in searching into and teaching these great and important truths, in which the glory of God and the salvation of souls were so much concerned. Particularly, he said to them, The happiness to which the kingdom of heaven, or the gospel-dispensation, is designed to conduct men, is like an immense treasure hid in a field, which when a man has found, he hides and covers up again with all possible care; and, in the transport he is in for joy of it, goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field at any rate, as being sure that it will abundantly answer the price.

Or again, to represent the matter in a like instance, that I may fix it yet more deeply on your minds; The kingdom of heaven is in this respect like, or may be illustrated by the similitude of a merchant, who goes about from one country to another, seeking the largest and most beautiful pearls, and other fine jewels; Who finding one

**MARK IV.—34.**
And when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

**MAT. XIII. 44.** Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

**45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls;**

**46 Who when he had**

---

*c That it might be fulfilled.] So many scriptures are thus quoted by way of allusion, that I cannot think it necessary to suppose, as some late ingenious writers have done, that these words did not originally belong to the seventy-eighth Psalm, but are a fragment of some other, describing the manner in which the Messiah was to preach. (See Jeffrey's Review, p. 117.) They have a plain connection with the following verses, and might, perhaps, be a kind of preface to all Asaph's psalms, in which there are some dark sayings, though the greatest part of the seventy-eighth is very clear.*

*Fix it yet more deeply on your minds.] Considering the many trials they were shortly to expect, it was proper the thought should thus be inculcated upon them by a variety of figures.*

*Beautiful pearls.] The sacred writers elsewhere compare and prefer wisdom to jewels. See Job xcviii. 15—19; Prov. iii. 15; and viii. 11.*

*But*
The parable of the net gathering all sorts of fish.

47 But see to it, that you are in good earnest in your religion, and do not impose upon yourselves by an empty profession: for, to add one parable more, which I shall again borrow from an object with which some of you have been very conversant: The success of the kingdom of heaven in the world is like that of a net thrown into the sea, which gathered in fishes of all sorts; mixed and undistinguished here are the characters of those who profess the gospel, which, as it is preached promiscuously to all, gathers in persons of all sorts, and hypocrites as well as true believers are brought into the visible church. But an exact survey will finally be taken of the whole; and so it will be shewn at last how great a difference there is between them by the assignment of their state: for at the end of the world the angels shall come forth in the general resurrection and separate the wicked from among the just, with whom they often have been joined before, even in the same religious society and in the participation of the same external privileges; and they shall cast them into a furnace of fire, the seat of the damned; where their torments shall never end, but there shall be incessant wailing, and gnashing of teeth, for rage and despair.

Then Jesus saith unto them, Have ye, with the key to them which I before gave you, understood all these things? They say unto him, Yes, Lord, we clearly understand them. And he said had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

48 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind;

49 Which, when the fishermen perceived that it was full, they dragged to the shore, and sitting down there, to survey the draught that they had made, gathered the good into proper vessels, but threw away the bad, as not worth their regard. So mixed and undistinguished here are the characters of those who profess the gospel, which, as it is preached promiscuously to all, gathers in persons of all sorts, and hypocrites as well as true believers are brought into the visible church. But an exact survey will finally be taken of the whole; and so it will be shewn at last how great a difference there is between them by the assignment of their state: for at the end of the world the angels shall come forth in the general resurrection and separate the wicked from among the just, with whom they often have been joined before, even in the same religious society and in the participation of the same external privileges; and they shall cast them into a furnace of fire, the seat of the damned; where their torments shall never end, but there shall be incessant wailing, and gnashing of teeth, for rage and despair.

Then Jesus saith unto them, Have ye, with the key to them which I before gave you, understood all these things? They say unto him, Yes, Lord, we clearly understand them. And he said had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yes, Lord.
52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old,
said to them. See therefore, that as you understand them, you make a good use of them, for your own advantage, and that of others: for every scribe who is disciplined in the mysteries, and has attained to the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven, or every faithful minister who is fit for his work, is like a housekeeper, who lays in a variety of goods for use, and keeps them in such order, that he readily brings forth out of his store things new and old, as the several occasions of life require, dispensing them in such a manner as may best suit the case of those who are under his care.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, which he added to those he had spoken in public, he departed thence that evening, to shun the farther inopportune of the people, and crossed the sea with some remarkable circumstances, which will be mentioned below.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us be concerned to gather up these fragments, that nothing may be lost; and to lay them up in our memories and our hearts, that, according to our respective stations in life, we may have them ready for use.

Let us remember that sometimes the growth of piety in the heart is like that of vegetables in the earth. The seed of the word may for a while seem lost; or when the fruit appears, it may advance and ripen but slowly. Let not ministers therefore too confidently conclude they have laboured in vain, and spent their strength for nought, because the fields are not immediately white to the harvest, but with believing hope and humble patience let them recommend the seed that they have sown to Him, who by the secret energy of his continued influences, can give at length a sure and plentiful increase.

When Jesus took to himself his great power, and reigned, the gospel, which had gained so little ground under his personal ministry, ran, and was greatly glorified in the hands of the apostles. The grain of mustard seed shot up and branched forth into a spreading tree, and birds of every wing took shelter there; (Oh that there had been none of the ravenous and the obscene kind! Thus when the Lord shall please to hasten it in his time, a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation, (Isa. lx. 22.)

Let us pray that the triumphant progress of his kingdom may come. In the mean time let it be our desire that the principles of
Jesus takes ship in the evening to cross the sea.

**SECT. LXVIII.**

The gospel may, like a sacred kind of heaven, diffuse themselves through our whole souls; that all our powers and faculties, that all our thoughts and passions, may be, as it were, impregnated and elevated by them. Let us remember the value of the blessings it proposes; and regarding Christ as the pearl of great price, and heaven as that immense treasure in which alone we can be for ever rich and happy, let us be willing to part with all to secure it, if we are called to such a trial.

It is not enough that we are nominal Christians, or possessed of the common privileges of the church: the day of final separation will come, and the angels employed in the work will not overlook us, but conduct us to the abodes of the righteous or the wicked. Oh that we may not then be cast with abhorrence into the furnace of fire! But now seriously realizing to ourselves this awful day, of which our Lord has given such repeated prospects, may we so judge ourselves that we may not then be condemned of him!

**SECT. LXIX.**

Our Lord, having given some remarkable answers to some who seemed disposed to follow him, passes over the lake, and stills a mighty tempest, as he was crossing it. Mat. VIII. 18—27. Mark IV. 35, to the end. Luke VIII. 22—25. IX. 57, to the end.

**MARK IV. 35.**

AND the same day when the even was come, when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, Luke he went into a ship with his disciples; and he

**MARK IV. 35.**

NOW in the evening of the same day which they had been relating were delivered, when Jesus saw great multitudes still waiting about him, purposing for a little while to retire from them, he came out of the house.

2 In the evening of the same day, Or, that very day, when it was evening: for these are the express words of the evangelist: εἰ δὲ εὐθείας ταύτας, ἀλήθεία γεγοναί; and indeed they are so express, that I am amazed any critics, who do not suppose he was mistaken, can pretend it was not the same day; which yet Dr. Clarke does, as if the phrase meant nothing more than one day towards evening. I dare not take so great a freedom with the sacred author, and have therefore been obliged to transpose, though not to contradict, Matthew. — This indeed appears one of the busiest days of Christ's life, as all the events and discourses recorded from his miraculous cure of the demoniac who was blind and dumb (sect. lxxi. p. 320) happened in it; nevertheless, I see no absurdity in supposing that all these things might pass in less than twelve hours. Compare note c on Mat. xii. 22, p. 320.

b Great multitudes still waiting about him. They sometimes staid with or near him several days together: (compare Mat. xv. 32. sect. lxxvii.) And it seems that now they staid a while after Christ had dismissed them, perhaps with a prayer or benediction (Mat. xiii. 36, p. 350.) for, on his coming down again to the shore, the disciples joined with him in persuading them to disperse; which, when they saw him determined to cross the sea, they would the more readily do: for so we may conclude from what Mark says above, ver. 56, that just as he took shipping, they (that is, Jesus and his disciples) sent them away. And this appears to me to be the easiest way to reconcile this difference, which is none of the least.
A certain scribe declares his readiness to follow him.

359

he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake.]  
[MAT. VIII. 18.—LUKE VIII. 22.—]

And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship.

MAT. VIII. 19.  
And [it came to pass, that as they went in the way,] a certain scribe came, and said unto him, [Lord and] Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. [LUKE IX. 57.]

They took him as he was in the ship.] This may seem an objection against the solution proposed in the last note; but I think the turn given in the paraphrase may remove it. If any are not satisfied with that answer, they must suppose that Christ's going into an house, mentioned by Matthew, was some time after; which seems not so natural a sense of Matthew's words. (See Mat. xiii. 56, with note i, p. 350.) But had that appeared to me the meaning of them, it would only have occasioned the alteration of a clause or two in the paraphrase; for it would have been improper to have divided the explication of the parable of the tares from the parable itself.

As they went in the way.] As this and the next story are inserted by Matthew between his account of Christ's giving commandment to cross the lake, and his entering into the ship to do it (see Mat. viii. 18—23.), I cannot but conclude they both happened at this time; and consequently, that when Luke introduces it by saying it was as they went in the way, his meaning must be at large, one day as Christ and his discipiles were walking, and not (as Sir Isaac Newton supposes) as they went on in that journey in which the Samaritanus had refused him a lodging. The following words would indeed have been proper on that occasion: but they had also an universal propriety, as Christ had no house or stated lodging of his own, and was now going over to a place where we do not find he had any acquaintance. But if any think St. Luke's expression too strong to bear this interpretation, they must, if they will not impeach St. Matthew's account of it, conclude that this little occurrence happened twice, as it is very possible it might.

Concluding from the tenor of some of them.] The parables of the mustard-seed and the leaven were both spoken before the multitude (Mat. xiii. 31, 34, p. 353, 354.) and they were both so plain that the disciples did not ask Christ to expound them; as indeed one can hardly imagine how any explication could have made them more intelligible.—The scribe forsaking Christ, on the declaration he made of his destitute circumstances, makes it evident he was animated by these views.

sect. ixix.

Mark

VIII. 19

And first it came to pass, that as they went in the way from the house out of which he came, to the shore were he proposed to embark, a certain scribe, pleased with his entertaining parables, and concluding from the tenor of some of them, as well as from the zeal with which the people flocked about him, that he would soon become a mighty prince, on declaring himself the Messiah, came with all the appearance of profound respect and said unto him, O thou great Lord [and] Master, who hast another kind of authority than we scriptures can pretend to (Mat. vii. 29, p. 240.) I beseech thee to give me leave to attend thee in thy passage, for I am determined that I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest, and
and devote myself entirely to the service of thy kingdom. And Jesus, knowing the motives which engaged him to this resolution, saith unto him, Do not flatter yourself with the expectation of any temporal advantages from such an attendance; for I plainly tell you, that whereas (not to speak of domestic animals, which are under the care of man) even the very foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, for themselves and their young; yet the Son of man, successful as his kingdom must at length be, does now appear in such low circumstances, that he has not so much as a place where he may lay his head: he knows not one day where he shall find food and lodging the next; and his followers must expect no better a condition. A declaration sufficient to deter a person who sought nothing but his present interest and advantage.

21 And to another of his disciples, who had for some time attended his discourses, he said follow me statedly, as these my servants do, that thou mayest be trained up to take thy part with them in the ministry of the gospel. But he said unto him, Lord, I will most gladly do it; yet I beg thou wouldst first permit me to go home and bury my aged father, to whose remains I am going to pay my last duty. But Jesus, who thought it proper on this occasion to make an extraordinary trial of his faith and obedience, said again unto him, Follow thou me immediately and leave the dead to bury their dead: let those who are themselves spiritually dead, perform the rites of funeral; yea, let the dead remain unburied, rather than disobey my word when I give thee so great a commission; or than neglect it but one day when I say, as I now do, Go thou and preach this gospel of the kingdom of God, which

\[\text{To go home and bury my aged father.}\]

Some think that this expression only intimates, his father was so old that he could not live long; but Christ's answer seems to take it for granted he was already dead.

\[\text{Go thou and preach the kingdom of God.}\]

As our Lord called him now to follow him, we must conclude that this commission which he gives him to preach was not directly to be put in execution. The circumstance was plainly extraordinary, and might turn on reasons unknown to us.

Christ might, for instance, foresee some particular obstruction that would have arisen from the interview with his friends at his father's funeral, which would have prevented his devoting himself to the ministry; to which he might refer in saying, Let THE DEAD bury their dead. I see no reason to suppose any regard to the priests being forbidden some usual ceremonies of mourning, which some have thought to be intended here.

\[\text{At}\]
Another desires first to settle his affairs at home.

Luke IX. 61. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go and bid them farewell which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Mark. VIII. 25. And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him:

[Luke, and they launched forth: ] [And there were also with him other little ships.]


And, at a certain time another also said, Lord I will presently follow thee; but permit me first to go and settle the affairs of my family, and take my leave of them which are at my house, as Eliesha was permitted to do when called in so extraordinary a manner to the prophetic office.) 1 Kings xix. 20.) And Jesus said unto him, Take heed that no fond affection for any, who may stand related to thee, nor any solicitous concern about thy temporal affairs, prevent thee from executing the important purpose thou hast formed of devoting thyself to my service; for no man having once laid his hand on the plough, and afterwards looking back, is fit for the service of the kingdom of God; as indeed, if the work of ploughing the ground require that a man should look before him and resolutely mind what he is about, you may easily imagine that the duties of a gospel minister will require a much more steady attention and more firm resolution.

And now, as it was said before that Jesus was about to cross the lake, when he was entered into the ship, his disciples followed him; and they directly launched forth, even as many as could conveniently get a passage in that vessel, or any others that were thereabouts; for they were all desirous to attend him; and several other little ships were also with him. And as they were sailing over the lake, Jesus laid himself down in the

h At a certain time.] This probably happened at another time; for it would have been very improper to have asked permission to go and bid his domestics farewell, when Christ had just made such an answer to the former: but the story is so short, and so much resembles the former that I chose (as St. Luke also does) to join them together. Nor do I think it any reflection on the evangelists, that they did not follow the order of time provided they do not asert a regard to it where they vary from it.

i Permit me first to settle the affairs of my family, and take my leave, &c.] In this latitude I doubt not but the phrase ἀπαθεῖναθεὶς τῶν ἱππῶν μοι is to be taken here, though it has something of a different signification, Luke xiv. 53. sect. cxxi. Intending to give up his possessions, he probably designed to order how they should be distributed among his friends; as Heinsius has very well explained the passage.

k No man having laid his hand on the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.] Hesiod has given it as the character of a good ploughman, that he keeps his mind intent on his work, that he may make a straight furrow and does not allow himself to gaze about on his companions. (Hesiod. Frg. lib. ii. ver. 61—63.) Our Lord, on the like obvious principles, may use the phrase of one that looks behind him while his hand is on the plough, as a kind of proverbial expression for a careless irresolute person, who must be peculiarly unfit for the Christian ministry. How happy had it been for his church had this lively admonition been regarded, without which it is impossible ἢπεοί οὖν τόν νόμον τῆς ἀληθείας, το δέον, or rather direct the word of truth aright, 2 Tim. ii. 13. See Beza, Observ. cap. vi. p. 28—32.

1 A great
A violent tempest having arisen, is stillled by Christ.

MAT. VIII. 24. And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, Lord, save us, for we are perishing. And he saith unto them, Why are you fearful? O ye of little faith? Are not all the winds subject unto my power? And rising up, he rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. And the sea, being now calm, they did wonder at the stillness of the sea. And they said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? And this is the first of the miracles which he did in the presence of his disciples. [LUC., as they sailed, he fell asleep; and there came down a [great] storm of wind on the lake; and there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full;] [LUC., and they were in jeopardy.] [MARK IV. 37. LUC. VIII. 23.]

MARK IV. 38. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow; and his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, Master, is it no manner of concern to thee that we are all of us in the utmost danger, and hast thou no regard to what we are exposed to in such a terrible extremity as this? Lord, save us, for we are just perishing! And he saith to them, Why are ye so exceeding timorous, O ye of little faith? Can you imagine that God would suffer me to be lost in a tempest, or that I would consult my own safety in the neglect of yours? Where is your faith? and how is it that you have no faith in exercise on such an occasion, when you have had so many signal evidences both of my power and my tender care? And then rising up, with an air of Divine majesty and authority he rebuked the winds and the raging of the water, and said to the sea, as a master might do to a company of turbulent servants, Peace, be still: and he had no sooner spoken, but the wind rested, and there was presently a great calm. And the men that were with him were greatly amazed, and struck with such a reverential awe that they feared exceedingly, saying, to each other, What a wonderful person is this, who has not only power over diseases, but commandeth even the most tumultuous elements, the winds and the sea; and amidst all their rage and confusion they humbly obey him, and are immediately composed at his command!

IMPROVE-

1 A great agitation in the sea.] Σείστημι properly signifies a mighty agitation; probably it was something of a hurricane.

2 Fatigued with the labours of the day.] This we may reasonably conclude from a review of the preceding sections. See also the latter part of note a, in the beginning of this section.
IMPROVEMENT.

How great and glorious does our blessed Redeemer appear, as having all the elements at his command, and exercising his dominion over the winds and seas! He stills the very tempests when they roar, and makes the storm a calm, (Psal. cvii. 29.) He silences at once the noise and fury of the tumultuous waves: and, in the midst of its confusion, says to the raging sea, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed, (Job xxxviii. 11.) Who would not reverence and fear him! Who would not cheerfully commit themselves to him! Under such a protection, how courageously may his church ride through every storm and weather every danger! Christ is still with her, and she is safe even while he may seem to be sleeping. Blessed Jesus! that power of thine which here commanded the tempest into a calm, can easily silence all our tumultuous passions, and reduce our souls to that blessed tranquillity in which alone we can be capable of enjoying thee and ourselves.

May we still be applying to Christ with such importunate addresses; and, sensible how much we need his help, may we cry out, Lord, save us, or we perish! And may it be the language, not of suspicion and terror, but of faith; of a faith determined at all adventures to adhere to him, whatever dangers are to be encountered, or whatever advantages are to be resigned!

Did his compassion for us, and his desire of our salvation, engage him to submit to such destitute and calamitous circumstances, that when the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, the Son of man himself had not a place where he might lay that sacred head which with infinite mutual complacency and delight he had so often reposed in the bosom of the Father! May our zeal and love animate us cheerfully to take our part in his indigence and distress, if he calls us to it! May no considerations of ease or interest, or even of human friendship, lead us to turn a deaf ear to the calls of duty; or suffer us, when we once have engaged in his service, to think of deserting it, lest on the whole we should be judged unfit for the kingdom of God! May thy grace, O Lord, animate our souls, that nothing may prevent our faithfulness unto death, and so deprive us of that crown of life which thy grace has promised to such a character! (Rev. ii. 10.)
Christ arrives at the country of the Gadarenes.

SECT. LXX.

Christ being arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, dispossesses two demoniacs; and permitting the evil spirits to enter into a herd of swine, is desired by the inhabitants to withdraw; and so returns to the western side of the sea. Mat. VIII. 28, to the end. IX. 1. Mark V. 1—21. Luke VIII. 26—40.

MARK V. 1.

AND after they were thus delivered from the danger of the storm, they came over to the other side of the sea of Tiberias, and arrived at the country of the Gadarenes; a territory belonging, [or] at least adjacent to that of the ancient Gergesenes, or Girgashites, (see Gen. x. 16. xv. 21. Deut. vii. 1. and Josh. iii. 10) which is situated over-against Galilee; being that tract of land which fell to the half-tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, and was afterwards called Tra-chonitis.

2 And when he was landed out of the ship, he was no sooner got ashore, but there immediately met him two men, possessed with demons, coming out of the sepulchres, which were in a burying-place near the city, whether they had fled as to a place affording them some shelter, and suiting their gloomy imaginations; and they were both of them exceeding fierce and mischievous, so that no one could safely pass by that way: and [one of these was] a certain man of the city with an unclean spirit, that had been known to be possessed with demons for a long time; Who was so terribly outrageous that he wore no clothes, nor would abide in any house, but had his dwelling sometimes in the burying ground, among the tombs; and sometimes in a desart, or a common, that

3 There met him two men. Mark and Luke mention only one, who probably was the fiercer of the two; but this is no way inconsistent with the account that Matthew gives. I cannot but observe here, that Mark tells this story in all other respects so much more circumstantially than Matthew, that it abundantly proves that his gospel was not (as Mr. Whiston maintains in his Harmony) an abridgment of Matthew. The same remark may arise from comparing Mark v. 29—13 with Mat. ix. 18—26. and Mark ix. 17—27, with Mat. xvii. 14—18, and some other parallel passages; not to mention histories recorded by Mark, and not to be found in Matthew. See Mr. Jones's Vindication of St. Matthew's Gospel, chap. vii. and ix.

b Coming out of the sepulchres. Grotsius supposes that the demons chose to drive the men that they possessed among the tombs, to confirm some superstitious notions of the Jews relating to the power of evil spirits over the dead. The heathens had undoubtedly such notions; but I rather think, with Eisner, the demoniacs chose the caves of this burying-ground as a kind of shelter; and he has shown that wretches in extremity sometimes did the like. See Eisner. Obscr. Vol. I. p. 60—68.

A desart,
He is there met by two exceeding fierce demons. 365

would bind him, no not with chains:—[Luke VIII.—27.] 4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him. 5 And always night and day he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran, and fell down before him, and worshipped him; [Luke VIII. 28.—] 7 And cried [Luke, out] with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? [Luke, I beseech thee.] I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not: [art thou come hither to torment us before the time?] [Mat. VIII. 29. Luke VIII.—28.]

Luke VIII. 29. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit, [and said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.] For oftentimes it had caught him; and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was that lay near it; and was under so strong an operation of the diabolical power, that no one could confine him even with chains: For he had often been bound with fetters and chains; yet in a most surprising manner the chains were broken asunder by him, and the fetters were beaten to pieces; and, after all the methods that had been taken with him, no one was able to tame him, either by force or entreaties, or any kind of exorcism that had been tried upon him. And he was always night and day upon the mountains, and among the tombs, crying out in a terrible manner: and, when there was no body else to spend his rage upon, cutting himself with sharp pieces of the stones he found there.

And when he saw Jesus afar off, the demon that possessed him was so over-awed, that he immediately ran and fell down upon his face before him, with all the appearance of the greatest reverence, and worshipped him: And crying out with a loud voice, he said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I am not come here to enter into any contest with thee, and I beseech thee by God, whose Son thou art, that thou dost not exert the power which thou hast to torment me: I know there will be a season, when thou wilt have an ample triumph over me; but art thou come hither to torment us before the time allotted for our final punishment? And this he spoke, as he was actuated by the demon that possessed him, who was afraid of being driven away: For Jesus was so moved with pity and compassion at the sight of such a miserable spectacle, that he already had commanded the unclean spirit, [and] said with an air of authority to him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. For (as it was observed before) it had often seized him in a most violent manner; and notwithstanding he was bound with chains, and kept under the closest confinement in fetters, yet none of them were strong enough to hold him, but he would still break loose; and having broke and torn all the bonds that they

c A desert, or a common, that lay near it. So it is said by Luke, ver. 29, that he was driven into the wilderness.

d Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? Here was such a reference to the final sentence which Christ is to pass upon these rebel spirits in the judgment of the great day, to which they are reserved (Jude ver. 6.) as could not be dictated by lunacy; and it is much to be questioned whether either the person speaking, or any of the hearers, but Christ himself, understood the sense and propriety of it.
The demons beg, not to be sent out of the country.

30 And Jesus asked the evil spirit that was in him, saying, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion; for we are many. And this reply was not without some reason, because the evil spirit, that possessed the man, had many others with him, and a multitude of demons had entered into him, and had been suffered to unite their malice and power in harassing and tormenting the wretched creature.

31 And as they found that Jesus was determined to dislodge them, they earnestly entreated him that he would not send them quite away out of the country; hoping, that if they had permission to hover still about it, they might do something to obstruct the progress of the gospel, against which their chief efforts were centered: [and] particularly were importunate, that he would not command them to go out into the bottomless abyss, the prison in which many of the fallen spirits are detained, and to which who may, like these, have been permitted for a while to range at large, are sometimes by divine justice and power remanded. (Compare Rev. xx. 1—3. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude ver. 6. and see Grotius in loc.)

Mark V. 11. Now there was there within their view, at a considerable distance from them, on the mountains near the sea-shore, a great herd of many swine feeding on the mountain; for, unclean as those animals were, the Jews in that country bred up great numbers of them out of regard to the gain of such merchandise, which they sold to the Roman soldiers and other Gentiles, who were very numerous

My name is Legion, for we are many. There is no need of concluding from hence that the number of these evil spirits was exactly the same with that of a Roman legion, which was now upwards of six thousand. (See Pitra, Lex. de Legione.) It was a phrase that was often made use of to express a great number; (see Lightf. Hor. Heb. on Mark v. 9.)—It is observable that Luke here adds, that many demons were entered into him; so that it is evident he thought it not merely a lunacy, but a real possession. Probably a band of evil spirits united in the vexation of this wretched creature; but, in what manner and order, it is impossible for us to say, who know so little of invisible beings.

That he would not send them out of the country. It seems from Dan x. 13, 20, that different evil genii preside over distinct regions by the direction of Satan their prince. These, who perhaps were spirits of distinguished abilities, might be appointed to reside thereabouts, to oppose as much as possible the beneficial designs of Christ; and having made their observations on the characters and circumstances of the inhabitants, they might be capable of doing more mischief there than elsewhere, and on that account might desire leave to continue on the spot.

Which
12 And all the devils besought him, saying, [if thou cast us out.] send us [or suffer us to go away] into the [herd of] swine, that we may enter into them. [MAT. VIII. 31. LUKE VIII.—32.]

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave, [and said unto them, Go.] And the unclean spirits went out [LUKE of the man.] and enter into the [herd of] swine: and [behold], the [whole] herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were choked in the sea, [and perished in the waters:] and they were about two thousand. [MAT. VIII. 32. LUKE VIII. 32.]

which they sold to the Roman soldiers, and other Gentiles, &c.] The laws of Hyrcanus had indeed prohibited the Jews from keeping swine (which shows it had been much practised among them); but these Galileans who had so many Gentiles in the neighbourhood, having long been under Heathen government [Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xv. cap. 7. (al. 11), § 3; S. Bell. Jud. lib. i. cap. 20 (al. 15), § 2], and living in the extreme part of the country, presumed to do it, scandalous and illegal as the employment was. See Miracles of Jesus vindicated, p. 34, 35.

In to prove the reality of a diabolical agency in these cases.] The cavils against this miracle are equally malicious and weak. Our Lord's permitting the evil spirits to enter into the swine was not properly sending them into these beasts; or if he had done it, the punishment to the owners would have been just: or had it been less apparently so, his extraordinary character as a prophet, and the proof he gave of a Divine co-operation, would have set him above our censure in an action, the full reasons of which we might not perfectly have known. But though this action is to me very satisfactory, it is not necessary to have recourse to it: for this action evidently appears both wise and gracious; insomuch as it unanswerably demonstrated at once the malice of Satan and the extent of Christ's power over him. No miracles are more suspicious than pretended dispossessions, as there is so much room for collusion in them; but it was self-evident that a herd of swine could not be confederate in any fraud: their death, therefore, in this instructive and convincing circumstance, was ten thousand times a greater blessing to mankind than if they had been slain for food, as was intended.

1 The whole herd ran violently down a precipice into the sea.] This story is an unsuiterable demonstration of the error of the hypothesis advanced by the author of the late Enquiry into the Case of the Demons. &c. (mentioned before in note e on Luke iv. 33, p. 191.) That innumerable writer is forced to suppose these swine frightened by the two madmen, and so driven down the precipice: but, not to mention the absurdity of supposing their lunacy thus to rage after Christ had spoken the healing word, one might venture to appeal to any body that has observed what awkward evolutions some are to drive, whether it would be possible, with a miracle, for two men to drive twenty, and much less two thousand of them into the water. It is a pitiful thing to see a writer of such a character reduced to so hard a shift. He seems indeed to think the common notion of
suffocated in the sea, and perished in the waters; being in number about two thousand.

And the swine-herds, seeing what was done, fled in great amazement, some one way and some another, and told all the story, both in the city and country; and circumstantially related what had happened to the two demoniacs, and how the demons had been ejected from them. And when the people heard it, they were so much impressed with the report, that they went out in crowds to see what was done, and to satisfy themselves, on the testimony of their own senses, as to the truth of so unparalleled a fact. And when they came to Jesus, and saw the demoniac (even him that had been tormented by the legion, and out of whom the demons were departed) calmly sitting at the feet of Jesus to receive his instructions, and now decently clothed and perfectly composed, as being restored to his right mind, they were struck with such a mixture of astonishment and reverence, that they were afraid of conversing with so great a Prophet, and dreaded the farther effects of his power. (Compare Luke v. 8, sect. xxxiv.) And they also who were present, and had seen all that passed from the beginning, gave them a particular account of [it] and told them, more largely than the swine-herds had done, by what means the demoniac had been recovered; and also told them concerning the swine, how they had been so strangely destroyed by the apparent agency of those evil spirits by which the men had before been possessed.

And behold, all the inhabitants of the whole city of Gadara, as the rumour increased, came out to meet Jesus; and indeed the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about flocked to see so wonderful a person: and when they saw him, they presently began, with all submission, to entreat him that he would please to depart from them of possessions absurd and dangerous, and certainly opposes it with a very good design: but it is hard to say, how Christ could have encouraged that notion more than by his conduct on this occasion; and I doubt not but this extraordinary occurrence was permitted chiefly to prove the reality of these possessions, and will always be effectual for the conviction of every impartial enquirer.

k And were all suffocated, and perished in the waters.] The display of the malignity of these demoniacs, in this instance, served to illustrate the value of every miracle of this kind, and to display the grace as well as power of Christ in every dispossession; in which view this circumstance appears to have been determined with great wisdom and goodness, though folly and perverseness have so strangely disguised it.

1 The whole city of Gadara. Josephus describes it as very considerable a place; it was by the righteous judgment of God, the first Jewish city that fell into the hands of the Romans in the fatal war under Vespasian, and suffered great extremities. Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. iv. cap. 7. (al. v. 3.) § 3. 4. See Wits. de Decem Trib. cap. 8. § 2.

14 And they that fed the swine. [Luke, when they saw what was done, fled, and told [every thing] in the city, and in the country; [and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils,] And they went out to see what it was that was done. [Mat. VIII. 35. Luke VIII. 34, 35.—] 15 And they came to Jesus, and see [the man] that was possessed with the devil, and had the Legion, [out of whom the devils were departed,] sitting [at the feet of Jesus,] and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid. [Luke VIII. 36.]

16 And they [also] that saw it, told them [by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed,] and also concerning the swine. [Luke VIII. 36.]
The demonic desires to go with him, but is sent home.

would depart [Luke, from them] out of their coasts; [Luke, for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.] [Mark V. 17. Luke VIII. 37.]

Mark V. 18. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil, [out of whom the devils were departed.] prayed him that he might be with him.

Luke VIII. 38. —

19 Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord [God] hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. [Luke VIII. 38, 39. —]

20 And he departed, and began to publish [throughout the whole city, and] in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel. [Luke VIII. 39.]

Mat. IX. 1. And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

Mat. IX. 1. And Jesus, having entered into the ship, departed thence as soon as the demoniac was dismissed: and, leaving those ungrateful people who had no greater value for his presence, he passed over the sea of Galilee, and shortly after came to his own city of Capernaum, where he had dwelt after his leaving Nazareth. (See Mat. iv. 13, p. 182.

And much more decent, and, all things considered, more likely. They were probably a licentious sort of people, and might naturally, from what they saw, fear some further chastisement from so holy a Prophet.

Gladly
Reflections on the power of Christ over Satan.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had passed over again in the ship to the other side of the lake, he was no sooner landed, but a great multitude gathered to him; [and] the people most gladly received him; for they expected his speedy return, and were all impatiently waiting for him: and he continued some time on the sea-coast, teaching and working miracles.

Mark V. 21. And [it came to pass, that] when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him; [and the people gladly received him; for they were all waiting for him:] and he was nigh unto the sea,

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark V. 3, 13. From the remarkable story which is here before us, we must surely see the most apparent reason to adore the good providence of God, which restrains the malignant spirits of hell from spreading those desolations among beasts and men, which would otherwise quickly turn the earth into a wilderness, or rather into a chaos. But what matter of joy is it to reflect, that all their fury and rage is under a Divine control, and that they cannot hurt even the meanest animal without permission from above!

The unhappy creature, whose state is here described in such lively colours, is an affecting emblem of those who are in a spiritual sense under the power of Satan. Thus do they break asunder the bonds of reason and gratitude, and sometimes of authority and even of shame; and, thus driven on by the frenzy of their lusts and passions, they are so outrageous as to injure others and to wound themselves. Human attempts to moderate and reform them may be vain; but let us remember that the Almighty Saviour has a voice, which can put this worst kind of demons to flight, and restore those that have been agitated by them to their right mind, so as to place them at his feet in holy composure, and in calm rational attention.

We see here a legion of devils trembling before the Son of God, confessing his superior power, howling as it were in their chains, and entreating the delay of their torments. And can human pride stand before him, and rebellious mortals triumph over him? Happy souls, that are listed under his banners! They shall share the victories of the great Captain of their salvation, and the God of peace shall bruise Satan under their feet shortly. (Rom. xvi. 20.)

But oh, how stupid and how wretched were those Gadarenes who preferred their swine to their souls, and besought him to depart out of their coasts, whose presence was their defence and their glory! May Divine grace preserve us from a temper like theirs! And

Gladly received him.] This Grodus has observed to be the meaning of the word (συνέκατα), and in this sense it may likewise be understood, Acts xv. 4, and xviii. 27.
may those of us, who have ourselves experienced the restoring power of Christ and his gospel, be engaged to adhere to our great Benefactor and gratefully to devote those powers to his service, which he has rescued from dishonour, mischief, and ruin!

SECT. LXXI.

Christ, being entertained at Matthew’s house, justifies his conversing with publicans and sinners; and vindicates his disciples for not keeping so many fasts as the Pharisees and the disciples of John did. Mark IX. 10—17. Mark II. 15—22. Luke V. 29, to the end.

LUKE V. 29.

AND Levi made him a great feast in his own house: Mark, and it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat, he beheld, a great company of publicans, and sinners came, and Mark, sat also together with Jesus and his disciples, and others; Mat. for there were many, and they followed him. Mat. IX. 10. Mark II. 15.

LUKE V. 29.

NOW, after Jesus had continued for a while on the sea-shore (as was observed, Mark v. 21,) he entered into Capernaum: and Matthew, or Levi, who dwelt there, and who had some time since been called from his former office of a publican into the number of his stated attendants (see sect. xlv. p. 249), desirous at once to shew his respect to Christ, and to give his former companions and acquaintance an opportunity of enjoying his instructive conversation, made a great entertainment for him in his own house; and it came to pass that, as Jesus sat at table there, behold, a great number of the publicans, and such as had the general character of sinners, being invited by Matthew, came, and sat also at the table with Jesus and his disciples; and several others at that time were present; for there were many of the character above described in Christ’s train (compare Mat. xi. 12, and Luke xv. 1), and they followed him with great eagerness, being charmed with the condescension with which he

1 A great entertainment for him in his own house. Nothing has perplexed the generality of harmonists more, and nothing has thrown the authors of them into greater inconsistency with the sacred writers, than the taking it for granted, that Matthew made this entertainment on the very day that Christ called him to attend upon him. The early harmonists of Tatian and Arnobius very justly separated them. (See Chemist, Harm. cap. 43.) And, to the many convincing arguments which Mr. Jones has brought to prove, that they ought to be separated (which see in his Vindication of Matthew, p. 139—137), I will add, that it seems to me very evident, they were not both on the same day, from this consideration (so obvious, that I wonder none should have mentioned it): so many things happened before the calling of Matthew, that the day must be far advanced, and there could not have been time to prepare a great feast, and invite a number of guests, at least till supper (see sect. xlv.); and so many things happened after the feast (see sect. lxxii.) that we cannot suppose them to have been crowded into the little remainder of the evening after supper; on which account it is certain the feast was after the day of his calling, perhaps, (as it seems by the intermediate stories) some months after, when he had made up his accounts, and regularly passed his business into other hands, which, to be sure, from a principle of justice, as well as prudence, he would take care to do.
he treated them, while many others shunned them with abhorrence.

\[\text{But when the more reserved and stricter sort of people in that place, and in particular their scribes and Pharisees, who pretended to be most exact and scrupulous in their conduct, saw him thus openly converse and eat with publicans and sinners, they were offended, and murmured at his disciples on that account, saying, Why do you, who should be examples to others, eat and drink in such scandalous company as this? [and] especially, how is it, that your Master, who sets up for such an extraordinary Prophet, will allow himself to do it? for, while our traditions teach even the students, and much more the teachers of the law, to avoid all commerce with such polluted and infamous persons, you see that he publicly eats and drinks with a considerable number of publicans and sinners, as if there were no scandal in being accounted their friend and companion.}\]

\[\text{Mark IV. 17. And Jesus, having heard that they were so offended at [it] answered them, saying, They that are in perfect health have no need of the converse and advice of the physician, but those that are sick; and therefore, out of compassion to their need of him, he visits and converses with them, though it cannot otherwise be agreeable to him to do it: and I act on the same principles: for I am not come to call the righteous, as you arrogantly imagine yourselves to be, but such poor sinners as these, to repentance and salvation. But, if you are offended at it, you may go your way, and would do well to set yourselves to learn the meaning of that instructive [scripture,] (Hos. vi. 6.) which I cited on a former occasion (see Mat. xii. 7, p. 270), and which you Pharisees are so ready to forget, "I require mercy, and not sacrifice." For, had you understood this saying, you would have seen that a ceremonial institution of Divine authority, and much more a mere human tradition, is to give way to the great duties of humanity and charity, even where men's bodies, and much more where their souls are concerned.}\]

\[\text{Another occurrence which happened at the same time, and bore some resemblance to the former, was this, The disciples of John the Baptist, who had himself lived so austere a life, and was now in a calamitous state of confinement, as well as the disciples of the Pharisees, used to fast often; and the latter particularly twice a week; compare}\]

\[\text{Mark II. 18. And the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees, used to fast: and [the disciples of John] coincide and say unto him, Why do we the disciples of John, and [Luke, likewise the disciples] of Christ's eating with sinners.}\]

\[\text{MARK II. 17. When Jesus heard it, he [Luke, answering] saith unto them, They that are whole, have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.}\]

\[\text{MAT. IX. 12—13, LUKE V. 31, 32.}\]

\[\text{MAT. IX. 13.—But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.}\]

\[\text{MARK II. 18. And the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees, used to fast: and [the disciples of John] coincide and say unto him, Why do we the disciples of John, and [Luke, likewise the disciples] of Christ's eating with sinners.}\]
Why his disciples did not fast, as John's did.


19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber [mourn and] fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. [Mat. IX. 15. —Luke V. 34.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. [Mat. IX. 15, Luke V. 35.

Luke V. 36. And he spake also a parable unto them, No man putteth pare Luke xviii, 12, sect. cxxxix]. Now, seeing Jesus at a publican's table on a festival occasion, surrounded with so many of his stated followers, some of the disciples of John come and say unto him, Whence is it that we the disciples of John, and also those of the Pharisees, have frequently our days of solemn devotion, in which we fast, and make many prayers and supplications to God for ourselves and the people? whereas thy disciples fast not at all, that we can perceive; but, on the contrary, eat and drink freely, though thou professest a righteousness superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees. (Mat. v. 20, sect. xxxviii.) And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber, who are invited to attend the nuptial ceremony, with any decency mourn [and] fast, while the bridegroom is yet continuing with them? As long as they have the pleasure of the presence and company of the bridegroom among them, they cannot reasonably be expected to fast, and every one would then account it to be out of season. Now, my presence and converse renders this a kind of festival to my disciples: for as John taught you but a little before his confinement, I am the great Bridegroom of my church; you cannot, therefore, in reason expect I should command them to fast now, or that they should do it without such a command. But, I assure you, the days will quickly come, when, as your master is separated from you, so even I, the bridegroom, shall be taken away from them; and then they must expect to undergo a great deal of hardship, and particularly shall be obliged frequently to fast in those days; as those whom I have mentioned, might do, if their festival was interrupted by the removal of their beloved friend, whose joys they were sharing. (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 11; 2 Cor. xi. 27.)

Nor do I now think fit to lay such rigorons commands upon them, because prudence will require me at present to accommodate their trials to their strength. And, farther to illustrate this,

b I am the great bridegroom of my church.] Some have supposed there is, in this similitude which Christ has used, a reference to the book of Canticles; and it is possible there may. See Carp. Defence of the Hebrew Bible, p. 220, 221.) There is no doubt a reference to what John had lately said to his disciples so expressly on that head. John iii. 29, p. 153.

vol. vi.

c If their festival was interrupted, &c.] our Lord seems here, with a beautiful propriety seldom observed, to suppose some hostile invasion to happen during the time of a nuptial feast, in which the bridegroom should either be slain or taken prisoner, which would damp all the joy of his friends, and change the scene into lamentation, fasting, and mourning.

New
374 Regard must be had to the mutual agreement of things.

37 And again, on the same principles, no wise man puts new wine into old bottles, where the leather is weakened and almost worn out, (compare Josh. ix. 4, 13, and Psal. cxix. 85) ; for else, if he should, the fermentation of the new wine will soon burst the bottles, and so the wine will be spilled, as well as the bottles destroyed : But new wine must be put into new bottles, and by this means both are preserved. Now, as in the ordinary affairs of life, common sense dictates a regard to the mutual agreement and disagreement of things, it is necessary that I should attend to them in my conduct towards my disciples; and, as they have not been inured to such severities as you and the Pharisees have long practised, I do not therefore choose immediately to impose them, lest otherwise, to the great detriment of the world, they should be discouraged from attending upon me.

And you cannot surely blame me for this, when

37. And no man putteh a piece [of new cloth upon an old garment;] if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new, [and put in to fill it up,] agreeth not with the old, [Mark] but taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.] [Mat. IX. 16. Mark II. 21.]

38. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. [Mat. IX. 17. Mark II. 22—]

The proper meaning of the words *παράβολα ἀποφάσασθαι*, by which *new cloth* is here expressed in the original, is cloth that has not passed through the fuller's hands, and which is consequently much harsher than what has been often washed and worn; and therefore, yielding less than that, will tear away the edges to which it is sewed. This sense Albert has vindicated from exceptions not worth mentioning here. See Albert. Observ. p. 71—76.

e As you and the Pharisees have long practised] That the Pharisees used to fast twice a week is plain from Luke xviii. 12; and, no doubt, their young people were trained up to it. But it may be objected, that John's disciples were not so trained up, and consequently might have answered, that the disciples of Christ might as well, and as soon as they, have been brought under such severities and restraints. But the truth is, it was not divinely required of the one or the other. The character and circumstances of John laid them under some engagements not common to Christ's disciples, as he intimated; and, considering where and how the Baptist appeared, it is very probable many of his stated disciplines were Essenes, who (as it is well known) were a kind of hermit Jews, educated in great abstinence and more frequent fastings than any of the rest of them. See Prideaux's Connection, Part II. p. 538.) And if so, nothing could have been more convincing than this reasoning.
when you consider, how difficult it is to alter the ways of living, to which people have been accustomed, even in less things than these now in question. As for instance, though some may be fond of new wine, while it is yet fermenting in the vessel, yet those that have been used to drink another sort, will have no liking to it: and no man who has generally drunk good old [wine] that is well ripened and refined, will immediately choose to drink new; for he says, The old is better, as being both more pleasant and more wholesome. Judge then how fit it is that I should not oblige my disciples to a new course of severities at once, but gradually form their characters to what the honour of their future profession and the usefulness of their lives may require.

**Improvement.**

There is no reason to wonder that Matthew should gladly embrace so proper an opportunity of introducing other publicans and sinners into the presence of that condescending Saviour, from whom, though he once was numbered among them, he had received grace and the apostleship. Let us with pleasure observe how ready our blessed Lord was to receive them. Surely, whatever offence the proud Pharisees might take on such an occasion, 30 Jesus will appear peculiarly amiable in such a circle as this. Compassionate Redeemer! thou didst, as the great Physician of souls, willingly converse with objects that must have been most hateful to thy pure and holy nature! May we, each of us, have a due sense of the malignity of sin, that fatal disease of the soul, that we may with a becoming temper apply to Christ for a cure! May we also, like him, be willing to condescend to the meanest and vilest, if it may be the means of winning them over to true religion and happiness! ever preferring mercy to sacrifice, and choosing rather to govern ourselves by the dictates of a benevolent heart than by the maxims of proud and censorious men.

Christ would not discourage his disciples by over-rigorous institutions: and it is not that his religion should be burdened with them. He suits the duties of his people to their circumstances, and kindly proportions their work to their strength, with a tender regard to their weakness, till by degrees they may be fitted for the more difficult and humiliating services. From his example, and the whole genius of his gospel, let us learn to make all proper allowances to those about us, that we may teach them, and train them up as they are able to bear it; not crushing them under any unnecessary load, nor denying them any indulgence which true friendship will permit us to grant them; lest the good ways of God should be misrepresented, disgraced, and abandoned, through our
our imprudent, though well-meaning, severity: a caution to be peculiarly observed in our conduct towards young persons; and not to be forgotten with respect to those who, like the disciples here in question, are training up for the ministerial office.

SECT. LXXII.

Christ, having in the way cured a woman by the touch of his garment, raises the daughter of Jairus from the dead, and afterwards performs some other miracles. Mat. IX. 18—34. Mark V. 22, to the end. Luke VIII. 41, to the end.

MAT. IX. 18.—

WHILE he was speaking these things to them in Matthew's house, behold a very remarkable circumstance happened, which opened the way to one of the most signal miracles which Christ ever performed: for, though it was an uncommon thing for persons in an elevated rank of life to pay any regard to him (see John vii. 48), there came a certain ruler of the synagogue in that city of Capernaum, whose name was Jairus: and when he was entered into the room where Jesus was, and saw him, he fell down at his feet with the profoundest humility, and worshipped him in the presence of all the company, and entreated him to come immediately to his house: for he had one only daughter, about twelve years old, and, having in the bloom of life been seized with a very dangerous distemper, she then lay, to all human appearance, at the very point of death. And he applied himself to Jesus with the utmost importunity, and earnestly entreated him, saying, My dear little daughter is in the last extremity, [or] is perhaps, as she was just expiring, when I left her, even now dead; [I beseech

MAT. IX. 18.—

WHILE he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler of the synagogue, whose name was Jairus: and when he saw him, he fell down at his feet and worshipped him; [Luke, and besought him, that he would come into his house:]

MARK V. 22.——

LUKE VIII. 42.——

For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying.

MARK V. 23. And he besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death, [or is even now dead:] I pray

a While he was speaking these things to them in Matthew's house. These words fix the order of this section so plainly, that it is surprising Mr. Le Clerc should suppose that many events happened between the discourses recorded just above, and this application of Jairus to Christ, which St. Matthew so strongly connects. That critic is driven to the hard expedient of paraphrasing this clause thus: "While he discoursed with them on the same subject, which he had been upon, the beginning of the year," which is extremely unnatural, and, so far as I can recollect, quite unexampled in any author ancient or modern. (See Le Clerc's Harmony, p. 197.) Had he thought of what is suggested above, sect. lxxi. note a, p. 571, to prove Matthew's feast did not immediately follow his calling, he would have seen this criticism as unnecessary as it is forced.

b Or is perhaps, even now dead. It is certain, from Mark's expression, exousias eph, which is literally rendered, is in the last extremity, as well as from the message relating to her death, which both he and Luke afterwards mention, that the young lady was not dead when her father came out; and consequently that Matthew's phrase, aeth NoOaoua (if not Luke's auv
A woman meets him, as he went, that had a flux of blood.

pray thee come and lay thine hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live. [MAT. IX.—18.]

MAT. IX. 19. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. [LUKE, But as he went,] [much people followed him, and thronged him.] MARK V. 24. LUKE VIII.—45.

MARK V. 25. And [behold] a certain woman [which was discussed with] an issue of blood twelve years. [MAT. IX. 20. LUKE VIII. 49.]

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all [her living] that she had [upon them, neither could be healed of any] and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; [LUKE VIII.—43.]

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched [LUKE, the border of his garment: [MAT. IX. —20. LUKE VIII. 44.—] 28 For she said [within seech thee] therefore, that thou wouldest be pleased to come, and lay thine hands on her, that she may recover; and I doubt not but, extreme as the case is, thou wilt interpose in her behalf, she shall live.

And Jesus arose and followed him, and [so did] his disciples. Now, as he was going to the ruler's house, much people followed him to see the event; and they pressed upon him in such a manner that he could not walk without some difficulty.

And behold, among those that were crowding about him, there was a certain poor unhappy woman who had been long afflicted with a grievous disorder, having laboured under a flux of blood for no less than twelve years: And she had suffered a great deal from the many physicians she had consulted, by disagreeable medicines and uneasy restraints, as well as by the great expense she had been at in applying to them: for indeed she had wasted all her substance, and spent all that she had upon them: but her distemper was so inveterate, that she could not be healed by any; and, on the whole, she was not at all the better for their prescriptions, but rather grew worse, and weaker than before; And, having heard of Jesus, and the extraordinary cures he had wrought, being ashamed publicly to mention her case, she came in the crowd behind him, and touched the fringe which, according to the Divine commandment (Numb. xv. 38, and Deut. xxii. 12), he were upon the border of his garment. For, as she knew that many had been for

which Mark and Luke make use of upon this occasion, and pleads that 

is to be taken in this extent. She had been given over when her father left her, and actually was dead before he could return; and he might therefore, when he applied to Christ for his miraculous assistance, be ready to fear she was by this time dead, and might accordingly express himself in such a manner as to intimate his apprehension of it. Nor is it necessary, after all, that we should understand the phrase in Matthew as implying she was now actually dead; for when does not only signify what is now come to pass but what is just at hand (as may be seen in Phavorinus); and so it may imply no more than that she was considered as just dead, and that there was no hope of her recovery but by a miracle.

e. Spent all but the she had upon them.] The ingenious Dr. Freind imagines that he discovers something remarkable in the difference of those seemingly synonymous terms which Mark and Luke use of upon this occasion, and pleads that 

in the former, signifies to spend away; whereas 

in the latter, signifies a more gradual consumption of her stock, by taking a little at a time from it; (see Dr. Freind's History of Physic, p. 57.) But, with submission to so great a name, I am not satisfied of the justice of the remark, since, on the one hand, 

is used in a better sense, 2 Cor. xi. 15. (and 

in Luke xiv. 28, is the necessary expense of building as a prudent man would compute it); and, on the other hand, 

plainly signifies to destroy or consume; however that destruction or consumption be accomplished. (See Luke xiv. 53, and 2 Thess. ii. 8.) Nor does it seem altogether certain that a had upon in speaking of others of the faculty is any sure diagnostic of a physician's writings.

I shall
fore been healed by touching him (see Luke vi. 19. p. 283. she had such a firm persuasion of the virtue that was in him, and of his power to
cure her, that she said within herself, If I may but touch any part of his clothes I shall be re-
covered." And immediately on her having done it, the fountain of her blood that issued from her
was at once staunchened and dried up; and she felt such an unusual vigour and flow of spirits, that
she plainly perceived in her body that she was healed of that wasting and dangerous distemper
with which she had been chastised for so long a time.

And upon this she would have retired unob-
served: but Jesus, who had secretly performed the
cure by the concurring efficacy of his will,
immediately knowing in himself that healing vir-
tue was gone out of him, thought fit on this occa-
sion to shew that it had not escaped his notice,
as well as to illustrate and commend the faith of
the patient; and therefore he immediately turned
himself about in the crowd, and, looking round
him, said, Who is it that has just now touched my
clothes? And all the rest that were near him
denying it, Peter, and his disciples that were
near him, said unto him, Sir, h Thou seest that the multitude are crowding around thee, and press
thee on every side, and dost thou say, Who has
touched me? One might rather ask, Who that
has walked near thee has not done it? or which
way is it possible, in such a crowd as this, to
avoid

Luke
VIII. 45.

[within herself.] If I
may touch but his
clothes, I shall be
whole. [MAT. IX.
21.] 29 And straight-
way the fountain of
her blood was dried
up; and she felt in
her body that she
was healed of that
plague. [LUKE VIII.
—45.]

And Jesus im-
mEDIATELY knowing in
himself, that virtue
had gone out of him,
turned him about in
the press, and said,
Who touched my
clothes? [LUKE VIII.
—45.]

When all denied, Pe-
ter, and [his disciples]
that were with him,
said [unto him,] Mas-
ter [thou seest] the
multitude throng thee,
and press thee, and say-
est thou, Who touched
me? [MARK V. 31.]

I shall be recovered.] It is in the ori-
ginal ευαίσθησαν, I shall be saved; and
there are many other places in which the
word is used in the same sense; as to be
sure it may with great propriety be applied to
a rescue from any imminent danger or
pressing calamity, especially in an extra-
ordinary way. Compare Mark v. 23. vi.
John xi. 12, and Acts iv. 9.

[Of that disease with which she had
been chastised, &c.] This being the plain
meaning of ματαιος here, I did not think it
necessary to render it plague or scourge,
as I have done in some other places.

[To show that she had not escaped his no-
tice.] And perhaps also to prevent a super-
stitious regard to any thing which might
look like a relic of his, and from which
weak people might, without any warrant,
have expected benefit.

[All denying it.] The phrase not ne-
necessarily implying that the woman herself
denied it, it would be unjust to suppose she
was base or foolish enough immediately
to deny what she had done; especially as
the next moment we find her owning it at
large with all possible candour.

h Peter, and his disciples—said unto him,
Sir.] Our English word Master, which we
indifferently apply to almost any man to
whom we speak, whether learned or un-
learned, and which modern usage in com-
municating generally applies to in-
erioris, does by no means answer either
to the Greek διδασκαλος, which signifies
teacher, and would be most literally ren-
dered διδαχτες (a word just of the same
import in its original language,) or to
μανδρα, the word here used, which de-
notes at least a presiding authority. I have
therefore here chose to render it Sir; and
should think ἄνδρα might as well be ren-
dered Rabbi, as by any other word I
can recollect. It is no wonder that titles
of honour and respect cannot be perfectly
translated from one language into another,
considering the diversity of ranks and of
ceremonies in different nations.
And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

MARK V. 32. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. LUKE VIII. 47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came fearing and trembling, and falling down before him, she told him all the truth; and declared unto him before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. [MARK V. 33.]

MAT. IX. 22. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; [go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.] And the woman was made whole from that hour. [MARK V. 34. LUKE VIII. 48.]

MARK V. 35. While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, certain which said [to him.] Thy daughter is dead: Why troublest thou the Master any further? [trouble him not.] [LUKE VIII. 49.]

avoid it? And Jesus said, I am well aware that somebody here has touched me, not merely by accident, but on some important design: for I perceive that a healing virtue and efficacy is gone out of me, and am not ignorant of the particulars of the cure it has produced.

And upon this he looked round about again, to see her who had done this; and directed his eye towards her with some particular regard. And when the woman saw that she was not concealed from his all-penetrating view, knowing (as we before observed) what a marvellous work was wrought in her, she came fearing and trembling, lest he should be displeased with this surreptitious method she had taken; and falling down before him, she candidly told him all the truth; [and] declared to him before all the people, without any reserve, for what reason she had thus touched him, and how she had been immediately healed by that touch, of the grievous distemper she had been so many years afflicted with, which no force of medicines could remove or abate.

But Jesus having thus turned about and seen her, instead of reproving her with the severity she expected, said to her, in a most gentle and condescending manner, Daughter, take courage, and be comforted, for I am not offended with thee: I know the sincerity of thy faith, in the regard which thou hast shewn to me, though mingled with some infirmity; and it has made thee well, and fitted thee for a cure thou couldst not otherwise have received: and therefore go home in peace and cheerfulness; for I dismiss thee with my blessing (see note l on Luke viii. 50, p. 317,) and assure thee thou shalt continue to be free from any return of thy distemper. And accordingly the woman was perfectly well from that hour, and the malady never returned upon her as long as she lived.

In the mean time, while he was yet speaking to the woman, [some] messengers came from [the house of] Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, whom we mentioned above: and they said unto him, Thy daughter, in whose behalf thou art applying to Jesus, is now actually dead, and consequently beyond the reach of prayer and of help: why therefore dost thou trouble the great Master in our Israel to come any farther? Do not trouble him.
**A message comes to Jairus, that his daughter is dead.**

**Mark V. 36.**

> hiπὶ to come into the house of mourning, where he can only renew their sorrows by the lateness of his arrival there. _But as soon as Jesus heard the word which was spoken_ by these messengers in which they related this melancholy news, _he says to the afflicted ruler of the synagogue, Be not discouraged by these mournful tiding; and notwithstanding they have brought thee such a sad account, be not afraid, as if there were no hope; only believe in the Divine power and goodness operating by me, and I will answer for it, that desperate as thy daughter's case may now appear to a human eye, she shall still be recovered._

**Luke VIII. 51.**

> And when he came to enter into the ruler's house, he permitted none of the company to follow him in, except his three most intimate friends, Peter, and James, and John the brother of James, whom he was pleased to distinguish on this, as he did afterwards on other occasions; and these with the father and mother of the deceased maiden were the only persons whom he permitted to be eye-witnesses of the miracles he was about to perform. _And, as she was an only daughter, all their relations and friends who were present wept bitterly, and lamented her: and, as soon as Jesus was entered, he saw the tumult and the crowd of people who wept and cried out aloud_; and there were also the flute-players, as usual on such occasions, _making a mournful noise with their._

---

1 Why dost thou trouble the Master any farther? Do not trouble him._ As several persons came, one might say, Why dost thou trouble him? as Mark has it; and another, as Luke, Do not trouble him. I am sensible the mention of both together is no ornament to the story: and perhaps it might have been as agreeable to our taste and manner had both been expressed by saying, Messengers came, who would have persuaded him not to have given Jesus the trouble of coming._

2 _Not always to be so translated: (see 1 Cor. xiii. 1, Gr.) And as the word howling is seldom used among us but in the case of brutes, or where great contempt is designed, I rather chose to drop a little of the emphasis of the word, than to shock a compassionate reader by so harsh an expression._

3 _The flute-players, as usual on such occasions._ It is well known that musical instruments were used by the Jews as well as the heathens in their lamentations for the dead, to soothe the melancholy of surviving friends by soft and solemn notes. There were persons who made it their business to perform this office, and to sing to their music. (See Jer. ix. 17, xlvi. 36, 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, and the notes of Drusius and Wofius in this place.) Many have observed that flutes were used especially on the death of children, and larger and louder instruments on the death of the adult.

---

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe, [and she shall be made whole.] [Luke VIII. 50.]
Christ, having come to the house, raises her to life.

Mark V. 39. And when he was come in, he saith unto them,
[Give place, and] [Luke, weep not:]

40 And they laughed him to scorn, [Luke knowing that she was dead.] But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. —[Matt. IX. —24, 25. —Luke VIII. 53, 54.—]

41 And he took [her by the hand, and called, saying] unto her, Talitha cumi, which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise. [Luke VIII. —55.]

42 And straightway [Luke, her spirit came again, and she arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. [Matt. IX. —25. Luke VIII. 55.—]

43 And [he] commanded that something should be given her to eat. [Luke VIII. —55.]

Luke VIII. 56. And her parents [and they all] were astonished with a great astonishment: but with his usual modesty, and strictly charged them,

m With his usual modesty.] It is well perfect decorum our Lord conducted him-worth the reader's observation, with what self on this occasion; and how entirely he appears

VOL. VI.

Z 7
Christ restores two blind men to their sight.

sects. lxxii.

Luke VIII. 56.
Mat. IX. 26.

them, that they should tell no man the particulars
of what was done, nor make it their business to
blaze abroad an event which would of itself be
come more public than he would have desired.
And indeed it soon did so; for such numbers
knew that she was really dead, and saw her alive
again, that the fame of it, as of a most illustrious
and extraordinary miracle, went abroad into all
that country; and, being made the common sub-
ject of discourse, greatly increased the reputa-
tion he had before acquired by so long a series
of wonders that he had wrought among them.
27 And as Jesus passed on from thence out of the
ruler’s house, Two blind men, who had heard of
his being there, and waited for his coming out,
followed him, as he went through the street, cry-
ing out, with great importance, and saying, O
thou Son of David, have compassion on us in the
miserable darkness that distresses us, and restore
to us that precious sight which we have lost.
28 And he took no notice of them as he walked on;
but when he was come into the house to which he
was going, the two blind men, by his permission,
came unto him: and Jesus says to them, Do you
indeed seriously believe that I am able to do this?
They say unto him, Yes, Lord, we have not the
least doubt of it. Then he touched their eyes,
and said, Since you have that persuasion, be it
unto you according to the sincerity of your faith.
30 And immediately they both found that their eyes
were opened, and they saw strongly and distinct-
ly. And Jesus gave them a strict charge, that
they should not report it publicly abroad, and
should tell no man of the cure they had receiv-
ed. But they were so transported at what he
had done for them, that when they were gone out,
they were not able to refrain from publishing the
miracle, but immediately began to spread his
fame over all that country.
32 And when he had thus cured the two blind
men, just as they went out of the house where
Jesus

appears master of himself, and superior to
any views of human applause. Dr. Lord-
ner has illustrated this with a just and lively
spirit of criticism. See his Answer to Wool-
ston, p. 89.

Jesus gave them a strict charge, that
they should tell no man.] Our version is more
literal, but the sense is perfectly the same.
I intended the variation only as a specimen
of several of the like kind, which I think
might be made in a manner which would
better suit the genius of our language,
though (perhaps through an excess of ten-
derness) I have not often ventured to take
even such little liberties as these. See Mr.
Pope’s note on Homer’s Iliad, Vol. II. Book
vi. ver. 665.
Jesus was, behold, they brought to him a dumb person, who had been for some time deprived of his speech by being possessed with a demon. And when by the victorious word of Jesus the demon was expelled, the man, who had so long been dumb, spake readily and distinctly; and the multitudes were astonished, saying, It was never seen so, even in Israel itself, though it be a people among whom God has wrought such unparalleled wonders. But the Pharisees continued their senseless and blasphemous charge against him as a magician; and, not being able to deny facts that were so notorious, in order to prevent the effect which they might have upon the people, they said, He certainly casts out these inferior demons by a wicked confederacy with Beelzebub himself, the prince of the demons, whose interest gains far more than it loses by dispossession wrought by such a hand.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

We have here a scene of complicated wonders, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance. Any single story of this kind might justly move our admiration; but when we are reading the life of Christ, such a constellation of miracles rises, that the number renders us less sensible of the lustre and glory of each.

We may observe in the story of the distempered woman a mixture of weakness and of faith. She could not reasonably think to steal a cure, without the knowledge of him by whom it was wrought; or imagine a charm in the garment that Christ wore, which could produce so glorious an effect, independent of his agency and will. Yet she acted as if she had thought thus; and a compassionate Redeemer commended her faith, and excused her infirmity. Such candour should we exercise towards those in whom we find anything truly valuable; not despising the day of small things, but ready to encourage and support the weak, and to commend whatever good we may discover in them.

We have already beheld Christ frequently giving sight to the blind, and casting out evil spirits: but we have here a second instance of his power over death, and behold one under its dominion hearing
Christ goes again to Nazareth, and preaches there.

SECT. LXXII.

ing the voice of the Son of God! In how majestic, and yet in how gentle a manner, does he address himself to this admirable work!

54 Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise. And immediately she heard and obeyed. Thus shall he, with equal ease, call forth myriads of his saints, who now seem perished in the dust: and it may be said with regard to them also, in reference to that day, They are not dead,

55 but sleep. The maiden, of whom we here read, arose only to a dying life; a life which needed the support of food, and was in no respect more noble or more secure than that of other mortals: but we look for a better resurrection, in which all the infirmities of the body shall be left behind in the grave; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. (Rev. xxii. 4.)

Mark V. 39

In expectation of this, let us restrain immoderate sorrow when our pious friends are taken away: let us not make too much ado on the occasion, nor allow ourselves to be thrown into a tumult of passion, even when our children are stretched on the bed of death; but believing in Christ, and governing ourselves by his precepts and maxims, let us in humble resignation, and submissive, though mournful silence, wait the issues of his providence and grace; since he knows how, as in this instance, to over-rule the calamities of our families to the good of our souls, and even to strengthen our faith by those exercises, which might seem most likely to overthrow it.

SECT. LXXIII.

Christ reneweth his visit to Nazareth, where he is again rejected by the inhabitants; and thence takes a circuit through the neighbouring country. Mat. XIII. 54. to the end. IX. 35. to the end.

Mark VI. 1.

AND Jesus, when he went out from thence, and was departed from Capernaum, where he had raised the daughter of Jairus and performed the other miracles which have just been mentioned, came again into his own country and town of Nazareth, and there renewed the gracious proclamations which they had several months before so ungratefully rejected; and his disciples, as usual, followed him thither.

2 And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue, as he had formerly done, though

a And he went out from thence.] These words of Mark do plainly shew, that this visit to Nazareth is to be placed here: I say, to Nazareth, that being called his own country, by way of distinction from the rest of Galilee, and particularly from Capernaum, whence he now went out. See Luke iv. 23, p. 179.

b And
He is despised at Nazareth as a carpenter's son.

sect. lxxiii.

Mark VI. 2.

though they had then attempted in a tumultuous manner to destroy him on the same occasion: (sect. xxxii. p. 180.) And many of his townsmen hearing him, were struck with amazement and said, as several had done before, From whence hath this man, whose birth and education we know, this wisdom which he manifests in these excellent discourses, and the power of performing these mighty works? And what supernatural wisdom is this which is given to him, that even such amazing miracles as these are done by his hands? Is not this Jesus, the man who but a while ago wrought among us as a carpenter, and was the son of Joseph the carpenter? And is not his mother, who is called Mary, still living? And [are not] our neighbours, James and Joses, and Simon and Judas, whom we all know and daily converse with, his brethren or near kinsmen? And are not all his sisters, or kinswomen, here at Nazareth with us? From whence then hath this man all these extraordinary things which furnish him for this illustrious character, which he assumes superior to that of the greatest teachers and princes of our nation? And they were of Amazement in him, and stumbled at the poverty of his education and family; so that they paid very little regard to what he preached.

But Jesus said unto them, This is indeed a most unreasonable treatment that I meet with from you: but it is obvious, even to a proverb, That a prophet is nowhere less esteemed than in his own country, and among his nearest relations, even in his own family; who form their judgment of him as a former marriage, or the children of some brother or sister of Joseph or Mary, is not material. Every one knows, that it was common with the Jews to use the name of brethren in a larger sense, and to apply it to cousins and near kinsmen, as well as those that were brethren in the proper sense of the word.

And and said, as several had done before. Luke plainly asserts, that visit to Nazareth which he mentions, to have been before many occurrences which Mark tells us happened before this. It is evident therefore they are different visits; nor is there any difficulty in supposing, that some now present, who perhaps had not heard him before, might repeat so natural a reflection as this. Compare Luke iv. 22, p. 178.

Wrought amongst us as a carpenter. The Jews tell us, he made tables and yokes. Their custom required, that all parents should teach their children some trade; and probably the poverty of the family engaged Christ, while he was at home with his parents, to work at his. See Crotius on Mat. xiii. 55.

His brethren or near kinsmen. Whether they were the children of Joseph by
him by the mean appearance which they remember he made formerly in private life, and are regardless therefore of the excellence of his doctrine, and of the plainest evidences of his Divine authority and mission.

5 And this was verified in their conduct to him: for notwithstanding all that he had done in other places, they were so strongly prejudiced against him by the meanness of his outward circumstances, that they were openly regardless of the favour of his presence, and would not come to him for help; for which reason he could not there have any opportunity to exercise his power, or to do any miracle of note 8, excepting only that he laid his hands upon a few sick people, and cured them; [but] he did not perform many mighty works among them, on account of their unbelief.

6 And he wondered at the continuance of their infidelity, especially considering the many additional evidences they had received of his Divine power in his late signal operations.

Mat. 9. 55. And upon this Jesus left them; 8. and departing from Nazareth went round about to all the neighbouring cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good news of the kingdom which God was about to erect; and wherever he came, he gave abundant testimonials of the truth of his doctrine, by healing every disease, and every malady among the people.

36 And beholding the multitudes which flocked around him, he was moved with tender compassion for them, because they were faint with the fatigue of frequent journings, and exposed to continual

(though our translation is more literal;) for a prophet may be, and often is, affronted at a distance from home; as Christ himself found by frequent experience. (Compare John iv. 44. p. 173, and Luke iv. 24, p. 172.)—I have rendered the last words, κα τινες ἤτοι καταquite ἑαυτοῦ, even in his own family; as not often has such a signification, and here seems most forcible if it be so interpreted.

8 He could not there do any miracle.] We are not to understand these words so strictly, as if the power of Christ was here disannulled; but only, that as they brought but few sick people to him for a cure, he did not judge it convenient to obtrude his miracles upon them, and so could not honourably and properly perform them. On the same principle it is, that faith in some cases, though not in all, is made the condition of receiving a cure: (compare Mark ix. 23; Mat. ix. 28; and Acts xiv. 9.) And Christ saw it proper to make it so here; as he well might, considering what they must undoubtedly have heard of him from other places, and what they had confessed themselves but just before, of mighty works being wrought by his hands: which shews indeed, that their unbelief did not so much consist in a doubt of his miraculous power, as of his Divine mission, which to any unprejudiced person's mind that power so abundantly proved. In this view therefore it is hard to say, how he could with honour and decency have lavished away his favours on so unworthy a people.

8 Jesus left them.] So far as we can learn from the gospel history, he never after this returned any more to Nazareth.
Reflections on the treatment Christ met with at Nazareth.

continual danger, as sheep that had no shepherd to feed them with spiritual food, or to watch for the safety and edification of their souls. Then, as he intended immediately after this to send out his twelve apostles, he said to them and his other disciples, to quicken their devotion and zeal, The harvest of souls to be gathered in is indeed great, but the faithful labourers who assist in it are few: And therefore let me urge you to make your importunate supplications to the great Lord and Master of the harvest, that he would by the secret but powerful energy of his spirit on men's hearts, conquer their natural disinclination to this excellent work, and so thrust forth a sufficient number of active indefatigable labourers into his harvest, by whom it may successfully be carried on, to his own greater glory, and the edification and salvation of souls.

IMPROVEMENT.

Since the blessed Jesus vouchsafed to renew his visit to Nazareth, where they had attempted to murder him on his first preaching among them, let us not be weary of well-doing, nor refuse to renew our attempts on the most obstinate sinners, where the interests of their immortal souls are concerned.

But though they were astonished at his wisdom, and could not but allow the mighty works that he had wrought; yet these ungrateful creatures went on to reject him, and in so doing were condemned out of their own mouth: nor can we be at any loss for instances of those who in later ages have fallen under the like condemnation.

He is spoken of as the carpenter; which intimates that he once wrought at that mean employment. What amazing condescension was this in the Son of God, and the Heir of all things, by whom also the worlds were made! (Heb. i. 2.) Yet surely while the hands of Christ were employed in these daily labours, his soul was rising in holy

1 Faint and exposed.] Though the learned Eisner has taken a great deal of pains to prove in his note on this text, (Observ. Vol. i. p. 49, 50) that τελωματα signifies scattered, or wandering; yet I still choose to render it, they were faint: which sense of the word is sufficiently vindicated by Walsius, (in loc.) and Albert, (Observ. p. 76, 77), and is established by the use of it in other places of the New Testament. Compare Mat. xvi. 32; Mark viii. 3; Gal. vi. 9; and Heb. xii. 3, 5.—But I think Eisner has advanced enough to justify the rendering of τελωματα, exposed to every invading danger, as sheep are when thrown up or abandoned by their shepherd.

2 Thrust forth labourers into his harvest.] The word ἐκθέτω so plainly imports this, that I am sorry I retained our less emphatical translation in the first edition. Whoever considers the immense difficulties and oppositions with which every minister of Christ's kingdom was sure to encounter in those early days of it, will see the necessity of some unusual energy and impulse on the mind to lead any to undertake it.

3 Having
The twelve apostles are prepared for their mission.

sect. lxxiii.
Mark VI. 5.

Holy contemplations and devout affections. So may we intermingle pious meditations with our secular cares, and have our conversation in heaven, while our dwelling is on earth!

How much did these Nazarenes lose by their obstinate prejudices against Jesus! How many diseased bodies might have been cured, how many lost souls might have been recovered and saved, had they given him a better reception! May Divine Grace deliver us from that unbelief, which does as it were disarm Christ himself, and render him a savour of death, rather than of life, to our souls!

Mat. IX. 35

Still he continued his gracious labours, and, when rejected in one city, went and preached in another; still surrounded with a crowd of admirers, whom he viewed with tender regard. Let his ministers, learn of him, tenderly to pity those, who are faint and exposed to danger, and are as sheep having no shepherd. The extreme necessities of his churches in many places are but too apparent: let us earnestly pray, that God would behold them with compassion; that he would graciously provide for their instruction, and would thrust forth such labourers among them as may be diligent and faithful in their work, and prove the happy instruments of gathering in fruit to everlasting life. (John iv. 36.)

sect. lxxiv.

Our Lord sends forth his apostles with a commission, and gives them instructions to preach the gospel. Mat. X. 1—15. Mark VI. 7—11. Luke IX. 1—5.

Mat. X. 1.

AND Jesus having called his twelve disciples together, whom (it has been observed before, Luke vi. 13, p. 280.) he had chosen some time since to be his constant followers and attendants, and who were named apostles from their mission; he endowed them with the gift of working miracles, and gave them power and authority over all kinds of demons, [or] unclean spirits, to cast them out of those unhappy persons whom they had possessed, and to cure every distemper, and every malady, how malignant and dangerous soever.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first of them, who was one of the most early followers

a Having called his twelve disciples together.] There can be no room to doubt that this is the proper place of the mission of the apostles, considering its connection with the preceding stories in all the evangelists that mention it.

MAT. X. 1.

AND when he had called [Luke, together] unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power [Luke, and authority over all devils or] unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. [Mark VI. 7, —Luke IX. 1.]

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon,
Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

followers of Christ, and the first that was called to a stated attendance upon him (p. 184), and whose remarkable zeal and piety rendered him a kind of leader among them, was Simon, who is also called Peter, as Christ had honoured him with that surname, (see John i. 42, p. 125): and Andrew his brother, who was called the same day with him: James [the son] of Zebedee the fisherman, and John his brother, that beloved disciple; who were also called at the same time with the two former, as they were fishing at the sea of Galilee, (p. 185): Philip of Bethsaida, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus;

5 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

These twelve disciples Jesus sent forth by two and two, that they might be agreeable companions and assistants to each other in their work; and he commanded them [Luke], to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

b The first, Simon, who is called Peter. The reasons assigned in the paraphrase are so apparently sufficient to account for Peter's being named first, that it is strange any should have attempted to prove from this text the authority of Peter over his brethren, when we never find it declared by Christ, or claimed by Peter, or owned by any of the rest of the apostles, but rather find so many scriptures which appear to look a contrary way. See Mat. xxiii. 8—12. Acts xv. 15, & seq. 2 Cor. xii. 11. and Gal. ii. 11.

c Simon the Canaanite, a native of Cana.] The reader may see an illustration of this title and that of Lebbeus, sect. ii. p. 282, note f and g.

d By two and two.] It is obvious this would conduce to the confirming of their testimony, as in the mouth of two witnesses every word is established (Mat. xviii. 16.) as well as make their mission much more comfortable than if each had been sent alone. Mr. Fleming has taken pains to shew, that there was great wisdom in joining them together in such pairs as are here intimated, on account of the resemblance or contrast of their characters. The discourse is very ingenious; but the memoirs of some of the apostles are so short, that much of it is uncertain conjecture, rather than convincing argument. See Fleming's Christol. Vol. ii. p. 167, & seq.

e Which he himself purposed shortly to visit.] Our Lord was now entering at least on the third year of his ministry, and therefore purposed to take a larger tour than he had formerly done; concluding, that the fame of so many miracles would make way for his being heard with greater regard than before. (Compare sect. xxxi. p. 172, and sect. xxxvi. p. 194.) The time they had spent with him in an immediate attendance on his ministry, since their first call to the work, would no doubt conduce much to their fitness for it; and the notice taken of them by multitudes who had often seen them near Jesus would promote their acceptance in it. See Mark iii. 13, 14, p. 281.

5 Proclaim
They are to visit the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

and, in confirmation of it, to heal the sick, and
exert the other miraculous powers which he had
given them. And upon this occasion he made
an excellent discourse to them, saying, In this
circuit which I now send you, do not go into the
way of the Gentiles; for the glad tidings of the
gospel are not yet sent to them: nor enter into
[any] city of the Samaritans, if you should be
obliged to pass through their country; though
I once did it, and preached among them with
considerable success. (See John iv. 40, 41,
sect. xxx.) But my message is chiefly to be
delivered to the Jews (compare Mat. xv. 24.
and Rom. xv. 8): and therefore go ye rather to
them, the poor lost sheep of the house of Israel,
who are generally wandering in the paths of
error and sin; yet they shall receive this farther
token of my regard, that the first notices of my
7 kingdom shall be sent to them. And as ye go
from one place to another, wherever you come
proclaim this good news, saying, with that
ardour and zeal which becomes my heralds,
The long expected kingdom of heaven is
approaching; prepare yourselves therefore to re-
ceive the blessings of it. And that a declaration
of so great importance may not want suitable
testimonials, and the meanness of your personal
appearance may not render the truth of it sus-
ppected (as any proper occasion offers), heal the
sick, cleanse the lepers, yea, raise the dead,
and cast out demons: for such a power I have given
to you, and see that you exert it in a manner
most honourable to yourselves and me; [and as]
you have received it freely, freely give unto
others the assistance which it enables you to
impart, and scorn the thought of making any
gain of those for whom these works of mercy
and power are performed.

Mark
VI. 8
And he commanded them, that they should take
nothing for [their] journey, except only a staff,
which

1 Proclaim— with that ardour and zeal
which becomes my heralds.] This is the
proper import of the word κοιμάω, which
is derived from κοίμος, a herald. Probably
they were to make this proclamation with
a loud voice as they passed through the
streets of the towns they went to; as Jonah
delivered his message to Nineveh. See
Jonah iii. 4.

2 Raise the dead.] Though many ancient
writers have not this clause, and though we
do not find that the apostles exerted any
such power whilst Christ lived; yet since
the oldest versions have it, and it is certainly
much easier to drop than to insert a clause
by accident, I chuse, with Dr. Whitby,
to retain it, though there are great authori-
ties on the other side. It is to me very
evident that some passages in this discourse
refer to events which did not immediately
take place. See Mat. x. 18, 21, 29, in
the next section.

Except
They are directed to take nothing with them for their journey. 391

[LUKE, and he said unto them.] [Provide] no bread, no money, neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; [MAT. X. 9. LUXE IX. 3.]

MAT. X. 10. Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats [LUKE, a piece.] neither shoes, [but be shod with sandals.] nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. [MARK VI. 9. LUXE IX. 5.]

11 And [he said unto them.] Go forth therefore with a holy alacrity; and into whatever city or village you enter, make it your first business to enquire who

which they had in their hands: and, to prevent any solicitude as to the means of their support, he said unto them, Disburden yourselves of all anxious cares on this occasion, and provide neither bread, or any other kind of food for your subsistence, nor money to purchase provisions; neither gold, nor silver, nor brass coin, in your purses: Nor even take so much as a scrip to carry any manner of provisions for [your journey]; nor think it needful you should have two coats a piece, or any change of raiment; nor what might seem more necessary still, even another pair of shoes, any stronger than ordinary, but be shod just as you are with sandals; nor yet take any staves, but only those that you are used to walk with. For the labourer is surely worthy of his food: and as you may freely accept the necessary supplies of life when offered by those to whom you preach, so you may cheerfully trust the Providence of God to take care of you while engaged in so good a cause; and he would rather support you by a miracle, than suffer you to want what shall be necessary for your sustenance.

11 And he farther said unto them, Go forth therefore with a holy alacrity; and into whatever city or village you enter, make it your first business to enquire who in it is of a worthy character for hospitality

h Except only a staff, which they had in their hands.] There is no difficulty thus to reconcile this clause with what is said in Matthew (ver. 10), that they should not provide a staff (as it is there expressed in the original, ἄξονα ἀπαντωστόν); for many copies read it in the plural number, ἄξονα ἀπαντωστάν, nor yet staves; which reading is confirmed by Luke (ver. 3), where it is so expressed. Nor is there any need we should suppose, with Huxley, that it is put for εἰρήνα here in Mark, as if they were commanded to take nothing with them, not even so much as a staff. For all that Christ intended was, that they should so entirely depend upon the providence of God, that they should set out with nothing but the staff in their hands; and that, however common it might be for those who were to travel a long way to be provided with two staves as well as with two coats, they need not be solicitous to have another ready in case one should fail.

k Nor shoes, but be shod with sandals.] I apprehend the word ἀκρωτία, shoes, must here signify a kind of short boote, which they used in long journeys, that covered the whole foot and small of the leg; whereas their sandals were pieces of strong leather, or wood, tied under the sole of the foot by strings, and something resembling modern clogs. See Calmet's Dictionary, Vol. II. p. 615, on the word sandals; and Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. on Mat. x. 10.

l He would rather support you by a miracle, &c.] Our Lord intended this mission in part, as an initiation into their apostolic work; and it was, no doubt, an encouragement to them during all the remainder of life to recollect the singular care which Providence now took of them, though they had abandoned their families, and with them the means of subsistence, and went out wholly unfurnished for such an expedition. In this view Christ leads them to recollect it, Luke xxi. 35, sect. cxxvii.
hospitality and piety; for I would not have you endanger your own reputation, by taking up your lodging in any disreputable family: And whatsoever house you thus enter into, continue there till you leave the place; that you may not seem to have too great a regard to the little circumstances of domestic accommodation, which it is beneath your character as my ministers to be very solicitous about.

12 And, as an early intimation of the friendly intention of your visit, when you first enter into any family, salute it in a courteous and religious manner, saying, according to the usual custom of friends when they enter the dwellings of each other, "Peace be upon this house." And if the family be worthy the Divine regard, your good wishes for its peace and prosperity shall come upon it; and I will make the blessing that you pronounce effectual: but if it be not worthy, even then your kind wishes for its peace and happiness shall not be lost, but shall return unto you in blessings on your own heads, as being the genuine workings of that pious and benevolent temper which God always approves and rewards.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor in an obedient manner hearken to your words; as for such unhappy persons, when you come out of that house or city in which they dwell, shake off the very dust of your feet, as a testimony against them, or as a token that you look upon them as devoted by God to destruction, and therefore desire to separate yourselves entirely from them, that you may not be partakers of their plagues. (Compare Rev. xviii. 4, and Acts xviii. 6.)

15 And indeed you have reason to do it: for verily I say unto you, That whatever profession they who in it is worthy; and [Luke, whatsoever house ye enter into,] there abide, [till ye depart from that place.]—[Mark vi. 10. Luke ix. 4.]

12 And when ye come into an house, salute it:

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that house, or city, shake off the [Luke, very] dust of your feet, [for a testimony against them.]—[Mark vi. 11.—Luke ix. 5.]

15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable

m Peace be upon this house.] This custom of saluting friends after this manner is still retained among the Turks and other eastern nations; and I thought it not improper to express it for the illustration of what follows.

n Your peace shall come upon it.] This is one of those many passages in which (as the grammarians speak) the imperative is put for the future; that is, Let it come, for it shall come: (so 1 Cor. xvi. 22.) And perhaps many seeming imprecations in the Old Testament may most easily be accounted for, by such an explication, as prophetic predictions of what should happen to the enemies of God and his people.

* Shake off the very dust of your feet, &c.] The Jews thought there was something of so peculiar an holiness in the land of Israel, that when they came home from any heathen country they stopped at its borders and wiped the dust of it from their shoes, that the sacred inheritance might not be polluted with it; nor would they permit herbs to be brought to them from their neighbours, lest they should bring any of the dust of their land upon them. So that the action enjoined to the apostles here was a lively imitation, that when the Jews had rejected the gospel, they were no longer to be regarded as the people of God, but were on a level with heathens and idolaters. See Mr. Fleming's Christol. Vol. II. p. 160.
they may make of their regard to the true God, and however they may continue to boast of their national privileges, it shall be more tolerable not only for the generality of Gentile sinners, in the day of final judgment, but even for the natives of the land of Sodom and Gomorrha, those monsters of unnatural wickedness who were consumed with fire and brimstone from heaven, than for the inhabitants of that wretched city; for the people of Sodom and Gomorrha never sinned against such extraordinary light and such singular favours as they.

---

**Improvement.**

What abundant reason is there for humble thankfulness that the ambassadors of Christ were thus sent forth to preach the gospel, and that at length their number was increased, and their commission enlarged; so that instead of their being thus confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, their instructive line is gone out through all the earth, and their words have resounded even to the end of the world; (Psal. xix. 4;) May the purport of their message be seriously attended to! since it will so certainly be a savour of life or of death, of eternal salvation or aggravated condemnation and ruin.

Let us tremble to think, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for those by whom the gospel is rejected: and let us earnestly pray that Divine Grace may enable us to receive it in the love of it, and to obey the truth, that we may be saved; (2 Thess. ii. 10.)

They who have the honour in this respect to succeed the apostles as ministers of this gospel, may learn most useful instructions from this discourse of our Divine Master. Let them speak and act as the messengers of peace and the friends of mankind, who cordially wish well to all around them; and gratefully acknowledge the kindness which, as faithful labourers, they have justly deserved. Let them shew a true greatness of mind in an apparent superiority to temporal interests and present gratifications; easy in whatever accommodations they find where Providence leads them; and forgetting themselves, to remember their Master, and the souls he has committed to their care.

Let them faithfully warn all around them of the importance of their eternal concerns, and of the unutterable danger of receiving the grace of God in vain, that, whether men will hear or forbear, they may be clean from their blood. And, while we preserve such a temper and conduct, we may cheerfully hope that God will be with us in the way that we go, and, how precarious soever our circumstances may seem, will give us food to eat, and raiment to put on. May
May we all have this token for good, that God will take care of our interests; even the consciousness of our being faithfully engaged to promote his glory, and our joyful readiness to spend and be spent for the service of souls! (2 Cor. xii. 15.)

SECT. LXXV.

Our Lord faithfully warns his apostles of the danger and opposition they might expect to encounter in his service. Mat. X. 16—28.

Mat. X. 16.

WHEN our Lord had thus instructed his apostles as to their behaviour and office in general, he went on faithfully to lay before them the difficulties and trials they were to expect in the execution of it; and added, Behold, I send you out as so many innocent and defenceless sheep, in the midst of a whole multitude of fierce and ravenous wolves, who will not fail to watch every opportunity to attack and even devour you: be ye therefore continually on your guard against them, and labour to approve yourselves prudent as serpents, in avoiding unnecessary dangers; but far from imitating the malignity and revengeful nature of that animal, maintain at all times a holy simplicity of soul, and be harmless and inoffensive as doves, those gentle creatures who are innocent and loving to a proverb. But be upon your guard against the men of the world with whom you converse, that you do not by any inadvertency give them advantage against you; for they will seek occasions of mischief, and betray you to the councils, and deliver you up to the sanhedrim and other inferior courts of judicature, and will also scourge you in their synagogues. And, in some cases, the persecution shall be carried yet farther; for you shall be brought before governors and kings on my account, for a witness.

17 But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues:

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, that ye may give a perfect answer for the word of life.
They must expect to be hated of men for his sake.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.

For the aposltes were several of them obliged to appear before princes, and were severely prosecuted by their malicious enemies before Herod, Agrippa, Felix, Festus, Nero, Domitian, &c., as we learn from sacred or profane history.

For the honour of the cause you assert.] Persons of so low an education as the apostles generally were, might have been much terrified at the thought of appearing before such great personages; and might have feared, lest, in the hurry of their spirits, they should have been betrayed into any impropriety of language or behaviour, by which the cause of the gospel might have suffered: so that nothing could have been more suitable than the promise which our Lord here makes them, which was sufficient to prevent a thousand anxious apprehensions.
They should be faithful still in preaching the gospel.

men for the sake of my name; when your calling yourselves by it shall appear, to your enemies themselves, the only crime chargeable upon you: but be not discouraged at these trials; for he that courageously endures to the end, shall on the whole be saved; and whatever extremities he may suffer in this world, God will not only deliver him from the destruction that shall come upon the wicked, but will amply repay his fidelity in the next. (Compare Mat. xxiv. 13. and Rev. ii. 10.)

23 But I say not this to encourage you to rush upon martyrdom, before you have a plain and lawful call to it: for, on the other hand, it will rather be your duty to prolong such useful lives to the utmost limits you lawfully may, and when they persecute you in one city, to flee to another: and though this may contract the time of your abode in each, be not discouraged at that, which may, on the whole, be no inconvenience; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have had time to finish [your progress through] all the cities of Israel, and to preach the gospel in every place, until the Son of man shall come in a yet more awful appearance, to fulfil your prediction concerning the manifestation of his kingdom and to take vengeance on your cruel persecutors.

24 And as for the unkind usage I have warned you to expect, you have no reason to be surprised at it; for, as I have formerly observed (Luke vi. 40, sect. liv). The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord: It is abundantly sufficient, if the disciple be as his teacher

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord:

25 It is enough for the disciple, that he be as his master and the servant

---

f You shall be hated of all men for the sake of my name.] They who believed the testimony of the apostles, as multitudes did, could not but ardently love them, as their fathers in Christ; (see Gal. iv. 15.) This therefore is plainly one of those many scriptures in which the universal term all is to be taken with great restrictions. See John xii. 32. Phil. ii. 21. and Rom. v. 18.—As there seems in this text a peculiar emphasis in the phrase, for the sake of my name, I choose in this edition to render it more literally than in the first; though (as I had there observed) it is apparent that the name of a person is sometimes put for the person himself. See note on John ii. 23. sect. xxiv.

g Until the Son of man shall come.] I do not find that the apostles met with any persecution in this first progress, from which they soon returned to Christ, and told him all that they had done, (see Mark vi. 30. and Luke ix. 10, sect. lxxviii.) and therefore, as well as for many other reasons, I cannot understand the coming of the Son of man to signify his overturning them in this journey before they came to the end of it: nor does it appear natural, with Dr. Sykes (in his Essay on the Truth of Christianity, p. 85, & seq.) to refer it to Christ's coming to judgment. It is rather, as Mr. Whiston observes (in his discourse of Prophecy, p. 63), to be explained of their being driven out of Judea by persecution, so that they had not time to visit all the parts of it before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, which is often called the coming of the Son of man. See Mat. xxiv. 27, 37, 39, 44. and Luke xviii. 8.
They should not be afraid of men, but of God.

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

teacher, and the servant as his lord, and in such a circumstance the disciple and the servant have cause for thankfulness rather than complaint.

If then, as you have already heard and found, they have called me, who am the Master of the family, Beelzebub, and reviled me as a magician, whom they should have received as the Messiah (see p. 321), how much more will they be likely thus to abuse his domesties, whose character and station are so much inferior to his?

Since therefore you have my example before you, and suffer in my cause, fear them not, but courageously sustain the utmost efforts of their rage; and assure yourselves that I will support you till you have finished your testimony: for there is nothing now hid, which shall not be revealed: nor has any thing passed in secret between us which shall not be universally made known. See to it then, that you remember to what purpose I have admitted you to so great an intimacy with me, and discoursed so largely concerning my kingdom; and what I say to you in darkness, speak [it] in the light of open day; and what you hear as it were whispered in the ear, proclaim publicly with a loud voice as from the house-tops.

And though the boldness of your testimony may indeed at length cost you your lives, yet be not afraid of them who can only kill the mortal body, and cannot kill or hurt the immaterial soul, which will still survive in all its vigour while its tabernacle lies in ruins; but much rather fear, lest, by being unfaithful in so important a trust, you should incur the displeasure of him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell, and has power to fill the separate spirit with anguish, or at the final judgment to re-unite it to the body, and condemn both to everlasting misery in that infernal prison.

h Cannot kill the soul, &c.] I have paraphrased the words so, as to illustrate the certain argument they contain to prove the existence of the soul in a separate state, and its perception of that existence; else the soul would be as properly killed as the body. Grotius has an excellent note here.

VOL. VI. 35
How apparently fit is it, that this eternal and almighty God should be the object of our humble fear, and that in comparison with him we should fear nothing else! All the terrors of the world are disarmed by this; and by this are its flatteries also disarmed. In whatever stations of life we are fixed, let this engage us to be faithful to God in them: so shall we be most truly faithful to ourselves!

The apostles were exposed to peculiar dangers and trials; but all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect some degree of persecution, (2 Tim. iii. 12.) let us therefore arm ourselves with the same mind, that we may bear it with a truly Christian fortitude. May Divine grace teach us to mingle the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove, and to shelter ourselves from the ill usage of a perverse and sinful generation, so far only as we can do it without offering any violation to our consciences!

It is indeed matter of great lamentation, that the sentiments of benevolence and goodness, which seem so natural to the human mind, and are always so ornamental and delightful, should prevail no more: and it is shameful that the name of religion, so well calculated to cultivate these sentiments, should be made use of as an engine to destroy them; and instead of cementing kingdoms and families in closer and more affectionate bonds, should inspire them even with mortal animosity. Let us bless God for our public liberties; and earnestly pray, that where persecution reigns in its utmost terror, the wrath of man may praise him, and the remainder of that wrath be restrained! (Psal. lxxvi. 10.)

The ill usage which the blessed Jesus endured from an ungrateful world, may surely prevent our being surprised or offended, if we meet with some share of it too. May we be willing to suffer with him, that we may at length reign with him! (2 Tim. ii. 12.) And if by unexpected revolutions in providence we should be called out to the severest trials, may the spirit of glory and of God rest upon us! and may we not account even our lives dear unto us, that, approving our fidelity to him, we may finish our course with joy! (1 Pet. iv. 14. and Acts xx. 24.)
They are encouraged to rely upon the providence of God.

SECT. LXXVI.

Our Lord concludes his charge to his apostles with an assurance of God's providential care for their encouragement; and with a promise of abundant future rewards to all that should faithfully serve him, or assist others in his work: and, after this, they separate from one another and go to different parts to preach the gospel. Mat. X. 29. to the end. XI. 1. Mark VI. 12, 13. Luke IX. 6.

Mat. X. 29.
ARE not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

a Not one of them shall fall to the ground, &c.] Some have supposed, there is a reference here to the two birds which made a part of the leper's offering. (Lev. xiv. 4—7.) As if the sense of what our Lord expresses were, that providence determines, which of those two insignificant animals shall live, and which be killed. But as the words are capable of a more extensive sense, and our Lord elsewhere mentions five sparrows just to the same purpose, (Luke xii. 6, sect. exi.) I see no reason for paraphrasing them with any particular view to that rite. They are a full proof of the universality of the Divine Providence; but the singular interpositions of it in favour of good men, may in a much more convincing manner be argued from the prayers and praises offered in scripture with regard to particular events, and the promises of temporal blessings made to those that fear and serve God. Nor can I think we are much concerned to determine how far any of these are miraculous, and how far the result of general laws settled in an exact congruity to the temper and conduct of every individual affected by them, which an omniscient God foresaw, and which his perfect schemes might easily provide for, by methods unspeakable. It is plain, Homer thought Divine Providence interested itself in the lives of brute animals. See Hom. lib. xv. ver. 275. See also Grorius, in loc.

b To
Christ is not come to send peace, but a sword.

sect. ixxvi.

Mat. X. 32.

membered and acknowledged hereafter: whatsoever, therefore, shall courageously confess me before men, be he ever so mean in the eyes of the world, I also will not fail to confess him in all the glories of my final appearance, not only before the assembled world, but even in the immediate presence of my Father in heaven, to whose everlasting favour all my faithful servants shall be introduced: But whatsoever shall renounce me before men, as ashamed or afraid to acknowledge his relation to me, I will also renounce him before my Father in heaven as a mean and unworthy creature, who has forfeited all claim to my patronage and favour in that awful day.

33 But whenever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34 Think not that I came to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; when the circumstances of the family were such, that

6 To send peace on the land in which we dwell.] That the word γῆ often signifies some particular land, and especially Judæa, rather than the whole earth, is undeniable plain: (compare Mat. xxvii. 35, and Luke iv. 25.) And I have given it that turn here, because there was no part of the world where Christianity occasioned so much disension, and none where peace was so much expected from the kingdom of the Messiah. Yet how very unjust it is, that any of those contentsions which the gospel has accidentally occasioned should be urged as an argument against its Divine authority, the reader may see in the excellent sermons of the present Bishop of Winchester on this subject, in his Miscellaneous Tracts. In one word, the matter will issue in this; that if Christianity has occasioned more discord than any other religion, the only reason is, because it animates its professors to greater zeal for the truth, and better proves it to be worth their while to suffer for conscience sake.

c And the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.] The thought seems to sink here, as it is much more usual for mothers and daughters-in-law, in whatever relation, to quarrel, than natural parents and children; but if we consider, that our Lord speaks of this as the first occasion of a quarrel between them, it may intimate a supposition, that they were persons of a friendly temper, who, even in such a relation, might otherwise have lived together on easy terms: a thought which seems to me to enliven the discourse, and which may lead us to reflect how often bigotry entirely transforms a natural disposition, that in itself was mild and amiable. Compare Luke xiii. 55, note d, sect. cxxv.

d He
36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

that they might otherwise have agreed. So that the ties of blood shall be forgotten, and the bonds of friendship violated; and a man's enemies, yea oftentimes the most severe and invertebrate of them, [shall be] those of his own family, and it may be, the nearest of his relations, from whom he might justly have expected the greatest friendship.

Prepare yourselves then for such severe trials as these, by remembering, that he who loves his father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me;

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me;

33 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me:

39 He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.

401. We must take up our cross and follow Christ.

And

4 He that does not take up his cross, and follow after me.] This alludes to the custom of persons carrying the cross to which they were to be fastened; and was a strong intimation, that he should himself be crucified; and that none could be a sincere Christian without a willingness to bear even that shameful and cruel death for his sake, if he was called to it. See Gratus, in loc.

e He that finds his life shall lose it, &c.] The sense that I have given in the paraphrase, as it is much more general, and more important, appears to me much preferable to that of Dr. Hammond, who interprets the text, of the Christians saving their lives by leaving Jerusalem in the last siege of that place by the Romans, and the Jews losing theirs by crowding into it. The beauty and energy of Christ's discourse in a parallel place Mat. xvi. 21—26, sect. lxxxix.) would be quite lost by this interpretation; and indeed many Christians had actually lost their lives for the gospel many years before that siege commenced.

1 Hospitably
They, that entertain his disciples, shall be rewarded.

And as for you, my servants, let none be afraid of shewing kindness to you, lest they should share with you in your sufferings for my sake; for he that entertains you, does in effect entertain me, whose ministers you are: and he that entertains me, does also entertain him that sent me, and my heavenly Father will regard it as done to himself; as, on the other hand, all the slights and injuries which are offered to you will be considered as reflecting not only on me, but on him. And did men truly understand their own interest, they would rejoice to assist you in that noble work in which you are engaged: for he that hospitably entertains a prophet in the name of a prophet, or with a pious regard to the office he bears, shall receive the reward of a prophet himself, or a reward proportionable to the worth of the person he shelters and accommodates in a time of danger and difficulty; and he that entertains [any] righteous man in the name of a righteous man, or with a cordial regard to the virtues of his character, shall himself receive the reward of a righteous man. Nor shall even the smallest and cheapest favour to the least of my servants be forgotten; for whoever, being able to do no more, shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, or to one of these my followers, who makes the meanest appearance, even so much as a cup of cold water only, to refresh him in the fatigue to which he is exposed in my service, if he shall give it to him in the name of a disciple, or with a real affection to him on account of his relation to me, verily I say unto you, he shall by no means lose his proportionable reward, but shall find himself abundantly repaid both with present and future blessings.

And it came to pass after this solemn and instructive charge had been delivered, that when Jesus had made an end of giving instructions to his twelve disciples, and had prepared them for the service they were now to undertake, he did not lay aside the work himself, but still pursued it with an unwearied diligence and zeal, and departed thence to teach the Jews, in other parts, such an interpretation. - The apostles were, no doubt, regarded as a kind of divinely inspired prophets; though that title, by way of distinction, was afterwards appropriated to persons of an inferior rank. 1 Cor. xii. 28, and Eph. iv. 11.
teach and to preach in their cities.

Mark VI. 12. And they [departed, and] went on [through the towns,] and preached [the gospel,] that men should repent. [Luke, IX. 6.—]

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. [every where.] [Luke IX. 6.]

The twelve apostles also, in pursuance of the commission they had now received, set out at the same time; and they departed from the presence of their Master, and went through the towns of Galilee, and the neighbouring places, and preached the gospel wherever they came; insisting with great earnestness upon it, that men should repent of their sins, and prepare for that glorious manifestation of his presence, which God was about to favour them with. And in consequence of that miraculous power with which Jesus had invested them, they expelled many demons, and anointed many sick persons with oil, as a signal of healing which he had been pleased to direct (compare Jam. v. 14), and perfectly cured them, whatsoever their malady was; and this they did everywhere as they went on in their progress.

IMPROVEMENT.

Justly may the blessed Jesus set so high a value on himself, and on the blessings of his grace: justly may he insist upon our readiness to abandon all for him, who is so just an equivalent for all. May his grace teach us to love him more than the dearest of our relations, and even to be ready for his sake to sacrifice our lives! May it make us willing to take up and bear any cross for him, who bore his cross and expired upon it for us!

The gospel has indeed been the occasion of much contention and persecution, not only in Judea but elsewhere. Yet let us not charge it upon any malignity, or any deficiency in that, but on the lusts and corruptions of men, who have either directly opposed or grossly perverted it. Let us endeavour to arm ourselves with courage to encounter, and resolution to endure, whatever persecutions or injuries our adherence to it may cost us; ever confiding in that gracious Providence which extends itself even to the meanest creatures: reposing ourselves on the support of Divine consolations, and esteeming ourselves happy, even in losing our lives in this world, if we may find them in that which is everlasting.

In the mean time, may this excellent discourse of our blessed Redeemer animate us to every work of faith, and every labour of love! Let not the poorest be discouraged from some charitable attempt for the good of others; since the munificence of our heavenly Master will remember even a cup of cold water given to the least of his servants under that character. Yet since there will be
be such a variety of rewards proportionable to different degrees of liberality and zeal, let us indulge a generous ambition of abounding in the work of the Lord, that we may shine with distinguished glory in the day of retribution, and have an abundant entrance into his kingdom.

SECT. LXXVII.

Herod hears of Jesus, and suspects him to be John the Baptist, whom he had lately murdered in a manner which is here recounted. Mat. XIV. 1, 2, 6—12. Mark VI. 14—29. Luke IX. 7—9.

Mat. XIV. 1. At that time [king] Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, [Luke, and of all that was done by him;] [for his name was spread abroad:] [Mark VI. 14. Luke IX. 7.—] 2 And [he] said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. [Mark VI. 14—16.]

Mat. XIV. 2. And immediately his own guilty conscience suggested a fear that he could not forbear disclosing to those that were about him; and such was his surprise and terror, that he said even to his own servants, This is John the Baptist, whom I put to death; he is undoubtedly risen from the dead, and for this reason he appears with greater honour than ever, and these extraordinary powers now operate in him, though before he wrought no miracles.

And

a At that time.] Both Mark and Luke so expressly connect this with the preceding section, that there can be no room to doubt that this is its true place.
b The tetrarch we mentioned above.] Though he was called tetrarch for a particular reason, as heir to only a fourth part of his father's dominions; yet in this district (which was that of Galilee) he was properly a king. See note a on Mat. ii. 22. sect. xiii. and Luke iii. 1. sect. xv.
c More distant than the court of Herod.] The letters pretended to have passed between Christ and Abgarus, king of Edessa, and preserved by Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. lib. 1. cap. 13), are probably spurious; though Dr. Cave, the learned Dr. Grabe (Spicileg. Vol. 1. p. 1—6), and the celebrated Mr. Addison (in his Discourse on Christianity, sect. 1), seem inclined to receive them.—They might however have their foundation in some message from that prince to Jesus. But the remark in the paraphrase is much more certainly confirmed by Mat. iv. 24, 25. sect. xxxvi.
d Herod
Luke IX.—7. And he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

And notwithstanding Herod had imbibed the principles of the Sadducees, which were directly opposite to such a supposition, he was exceedingly anxious on account of the reports he heard; for the notion was not merely his own, but it was said too by some others, that John was risen from the dead, and would undoubtedly use his miraculous power to punish those who had murdered him. And it was also conjectured by some, that Elijah had appeared, according to the general expectation, as the forerunner of the Messiah (compare Mal. iv. 5. Mat. xi. 14. and xvii. 10—12.) and by others, that one of the ancient prophets was risen again from the dead: and others also said, It is certainly a prophet of the former generations, or [a person] at least like one of the prophets; for such miraculous works do as evidently speak a Divine mission as any of theirs ever did. But in the midst of this variety of opinions, when Herod heard what was discourse[d] [of Jesus] he was exceedingly distressed, and said with great anxiety, John I have certainly beheaded, and received the strongest proofs that the execution was performed; but, who is this, of whom I hear such things? I would not willingly believe it, yet I cannot but suspect that whatsoever be the name he now assumes, it is John, that venerable holy man whom I beheaded and greatly fear he is risen from the dead. And he was so uneasy under the consciousness of the enormous crime he had committed in putting him to death, that, licentious as his principles and character were, he was alarmed and terrified with the apprehension of his being actually returned.

Mark VI. 16. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, [John have I beheaded; but who is this, of whom I hear such things?] It is John whom I beheaded, he is risen from the dead. [And he desired to see him.] —[Luke IX. 9.]

d Herod had imbibed the principles of the Sadducees.] See note b below.

c He was exceedingly anxious strongly expresses a mixture of doubt and fear, which must necessarily throw the mind into a very uneasy situation.

f A prophet, or a person at least like one of the prophets.] This plainly proves that by the word prophet they generally meant one of the holy men whom God had raised up to his people in former ages; and if the particle ἐν be omitted, as it is in some manuscripts, the argument is equally conclusive. See note s, sect. xx.

g Licentious as his principles and character were.] Josephus tells us that the Sadducean principles prevailed among the rich and great; [Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 1, (al. 2) § 4.] And it is very probable Herod was of this sect, as what is called in one text the leaven of the Sadducees, is in another called the leaven of Herod (compare Mat. xvi. 6, with Mark vii. 15.) not to mention a kind of hereditary quarrel which there seems to have been between the Herodian family and the Pharisees. (See note f on Mark iii. 6, sect. 1.)—But it is no easy matter to arrive at a steady belief of so great an absurdity as the mortality of the soul. The existence of the soul after death and a state of future retribution, and other evident principles of natural religion connected with both, will even force themselves upon the unbelieving heart, and wring it with anguish which it cannot always, though it may frequently, conceal. This is admirably illustrated by Bishop Atterbury in his sermon on this text and subject.
17 Thus was his guilty mind perplexed and tormented, and not without reason; for, as we have before observed, Herod had formerly seized John, and bound him with chains in prison, on account of the reproof he gave him for his marriage with Herodias; because, as Herod had seduced her from her brother Philip, who was still living and had a daughter by her, John had said to him, with a freedom that he could not bear, It is not lawful for thee thus to have thy brother's wife. And we had likewise added, that, for this reason, Herodias also was incensed against him, and would have put him to death; but for a long time she could not compass her design; for Herod had so great a reverence for John, that he would not yield to her solicitations: But we must now inform the reader, that before this time she had found a way of accomplishing her cruel purpose.

21 For as her heart was filled with malice, and she was ever watching for an opportunity to be revenged on John, at length a convenient day happened of preferring her petition with unexpected circumstances of advantage: a public festival was kept, when Herod on his birth-day made a splendid supper for the entertainment of his lords, and of all the chief officers of his army, and other persons of distinguished rank in Galilee, over which he presided; and, to grace the solemnity, Salome, the daughter of the above-mentioned Herodias by Philip her former husband, a young lady of celebrated beauty, coming in publicly among them, and dancing in the midst of the assembly; this instance of condescension,

h As we have before observed. I have ventured to repeat here a few clauses of Mark, because they seemed to me absolutely necessary to introduce the following account of Herod's beheading John the Baptist. These verses are before inserted at large in sect. xxviii. p. 157, 158.

i When Herod on his birth-day. Some great critics, and particularly Grosius, Heinsius, and Rechard, choose to interpret this, of the day of Herod's accession, rather than his birth, which they think would have been more properly expressed by γενεθλίῳ than γενεθλίων. (See Elzas. Obscr. Vol. I. p. 100—102.) But it is evident, the seventy use γενεθλίων γενεθλίων for a birthday; Gen. xl. 20.

k Chief Officers of his army. Though the word καρποί properly signifies one who had the command of a thousand men, and held a rank in their army nearly answering to that of the colonels in ours, there can be no reason to imagine that the entertainment was confined just to that rank of officers: I have therefore rendered it in a more general way.
and pleased Herod, and then that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. [Mat. XIV. 6.]

23 And he [promised her with an oath, and] swore unto her. Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. [Mat. XIV. 7.]

24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she [being before instructed of her mother,] came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me [here] by and by, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist. [Mat. XIV. 8.]

condescension, so unusual in those days and countries, especially in persons of such high dignity, was so exceedingly agreeable and pleasing unto Herod and his guests, that the king said before them all to the maiden in a kind of transport, Ask of me whatever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And when she seemed surprised at such a declaration, to encourage her to depend on what he said, he promised her with the solemnity of an oath, [and] profanely and foolishly swore unto her more than once, I will give thee whatsoever thou wilt ask of me, even though it should be to the [value of] half of my kingdom.

And, young as she was, she perceived this was now grown a circumstance of high importance, and might be managed to considerable advantage; she therefore went out, and said to her mother, who was not in the assembly, What shall I ask? And she, struck with this unexpected opportunity of executing her revenge, eagerly replied, Ask the head of John the Baptist, who would have expelled and ruined us both; for nothing in the power of the king to grant could give me equal satisfaction.

And, though at first she hesitated at so shocking a proposal, yet being thus before urged to it by her mother, and at length confirmed in the resolution, she immediately, after a very short absence, came unto the king with speed in her motion and eagerness in her countenance, and made her demand, saying, I desire that, in accomplishment of thy promise, thou wouldst give me, presently, the head of John the Baptist; and that I may be sure the execution is done, let the head be brought and delivered to me here in a charger, or large dish.

And

1 This instance of condescension, so unusual in those days, &c.] Dr. Lardner very justly observes that it was very unusual for ladies of a high rank to appear before the men (Esth. i. 10—12). and much less to dance at such banquets as these. See his Credibility of the Gospel History, part i. Vol. i. p. 23.

2 So are unto her more than once.] This may be very well concluded, because both the evangelists use the plural osus, Mat. xiv. 9. and Mark vi. 26.

3 Being before urged to it by her mother, and at length confirmed in the resolution.] So the word ἐπιπεζνωμαι seems to intimate, as ἐπιπεζα, with his usual accuracy, has observed; and there is indeed much more reason to wonder that she was induced to make such a request at all, than that she made some difficulty, for a while, of presenting it, considering how savage it seemed, and how many pleasing views must be sacrificed to it. But at last her mother's remonstrances seem to have wrought her up to great emotion, which the evangelist well expresses by saying, She came in ὑπὲρ τος μετὰ σάλων immediately, and with eagerness. The whole narration of Mark, which is by far the most circumstantial, is very much watered: as Mr. Blackwell has justly observed in his Sacred Classics, Vol. i. p. 383.

4 The head of John the Baptist is a charger.] It was well known that it was and
And the king was exceedingly sorry, as well as greatly surprised, that she should prefer so strange a petition; nevertheless, as she persisted in it, for the sake of his repeated oaths, and out of regard to his guests, in whose presence they were made, he would not deny her, [but] granted what she asked, and ordered that it should be given her.

27 And immediately, the king sent one of his guards as an executioner, that very night, and commanded his head to be brought into the assembly: and, as soon as the soldier had received his orders, he presently went, and without any further warning, beheaded John in the prison.

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the maiden; and the maiden, forgetting the tenderness of her sex, and the dignity of her rank, with a steady cruelty, agreeable to her relation to so ill a woman, brought [and] delivered it to her mother with her own hands. And thus, till the righteous judgment of God overtook them all, they gratified themselves in the indulgence of their lusts, and triumphed in the murder of this holy prophet.

29 And the next day, his disciples hearing [of it,] came to the prison, and having permission to do it, took up his corpse, and laid it with great reverence, and due lamentation, in a sepulchre belonging to some of them, who were willing to pay this last act of duty to their master's memory: and then they went and told Jesus what had happened, and remembering the repeated testimony which John had borne to him, continued their attendance upon him.

is customary with princes in those eastern parts to require the head of those they order to be executed to be brought to them, that they may be assured of their death. The Grand Signor does it to this day. See Dr. Lardner, in the place cited in note 1, p. 24, 25.—The word σωφροσύνη signifies a large dish, which the antiquated word charger well expresses; for which reason I chose to retain it.

P One of his guards.] So σωφροσύνη properly signifies, or one who was then standing sentry. There were no executioners in those times whose peculiar business it was to put persons to death.

Q Forgetting the tenderness of her sex.] This may perhaps be intimated in the repetition of the word maiden. Jerom tells us that Herodias treated the Baptist's head in a very disdainful manner, pouring out the tongue which she imagined had injured her, and pierced it with a needle.

26 And the king was exceedingly sorry; [nevertheless] for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him [at meat,] he would not reject her, [but commanded it to be given her.] [MAT. XIV. 9.]

27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded [John] in the prison. [MAT. XIV.—10.]

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel; and the damsel [brought it, and] gave it to her mother.— [MAT. XIV. 11.]

29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came, and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb, and went and told Jesus. [MAT. XIV. 12.]
Reflections on the death of John the Baptist.

IMPROVEMENT.

How dreadful a thing is it to have a guilty and accusing conscience! and how remarkable was the force of it in the instance before us! Herod was a king, yet it addressed him in language of terror, and made itself heard and felt amidst all the hurries and flatteries of a court. Vain was the power of a prince; vain the caresses of a favourite mistress, basely gratified with the blood of a prophet; and vain the yet more besetting tenets of a Sadducee. In one instance at least a resurrection shall be believed; and if a prophet arise in Israel, Herod shall be among the first to say, It is John the Baptist, risen from the dead; and shall be ready to forbode the sad effects of his recovered life, and to prognosticate evil to himself from the mighty works he performed. Let us make it our care to preserve a conscience void of offence, that instead of a continual torment, it may be to us a continual feast!

And if we really desire to preserve it, let us take heed that 22, 23 we be not excessively transported with the entertainments of life, or rashly enter ourselves into engagements which perhaps may plunge us into some degree of guilt, whether they be performed or violated.

We see, in this dreadful instance of Herodias, what an implacable degree of malice may arise in the hearts of sinners on being reproved for the most scandalous and mischievous vices. Instead of owning the obligation to one that would have plucked her as a brand out of the burning, she thirsts insatiably for his blood: and chooses rather to indulge her cruelty and revenge in taking away his life, than to gratify her avarice and ambition in demanding a gift that might have been equal to the half of a kingdom.

But how mysterious was that providence, which left the life of so holy a man in such infamous hands, and permitted it to be sacrificed to the malice of an abandoned harlot, to the petulance of a vain girl, and to the rashness of a foolish and perhaps an intoxicated prince, who made the prophet’s head the reward of a dance! The ways of God are unsearchable! but we are sure he can never be at a loss to repay his servants in another world for the greatest sufferings they endure in this, and even for life itself, when given up in his cause.

We may reasonably conclude, that death could never be an unreasonable surprise to this excellent saint. When the executioner came into the prison by night, perhaps breaking in upon his slumbers, and executed his bloody commission almost as soon as he declared it, a soul like his might welcome the stroke, as the means of liberty and glory; assured that the transient agony of a moment would
Jesus retires with his disciples to a solitary place.

would transmit it to a kingdom where the least of its inhabitants would be in holiness, honour and felicity, superior to John in his most prosperous and successful state on earth.

29 His enemies might a while insult over him, while his disciples were mingling their tears with his dust, and lamenting the residue of his days cut off in the midst. His death was precious in the sight of the Lord, and the triumphing of the wicked was short. So will he ere long plead the cause of all his injured people, and give a cup of trembling and astonishment to those that have made themselves drunk with their blood. Let cruelty and tyranny do their worst, verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth. (Psal. lviii. 11.

SECT. LXXVIII.

When the apostles were returned from executing their commission, our Lord passes over the sea of Tiberias; and finding vast multitudes had followed him to the place of his intended retirement, he instructs and heals them; and, having miraculously fed above five thousand, retires afterwards to pray. Mat. XIV. 13—23. Mark VI. 30—46. Luke IX. 16—17. John VI. 1—15.

MARK VI. 30. AND quickly after this awful event of the Baptist's death, which has been just related, the twelve apostles, when they were returned from their circuit, gathered together unto Jesus, and told him all the occurrences of their late journey; recounting to him, both what miracles they had done by his divine assistance, and what doctrine they had taught according to his direction.

31 And when Jesus heard [of it] and was informed (as we have just now seen) of the death of John, as well as of the event of the journey which his apostles had been making, he said to them, Come ye yourselves privately with me into a solitary place in the neighbouring desert, and repose yourselves a while after the fatigue of your journey, that we may there indulge such meditations as are suitable to this awful dispensation. And it was necessary to give them this advice, for there were many continually coming and going to and from the public place in which they then were, so that they had no opportunity even

a After this awful event of the Baptist's death. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are all so express in the connection of this story with the foregoing, that there can be no doubt as to the propriety and necessity of placing it here.

b After
to eat without interruption, and much less had they leisure for religious retirement and recollec-
tion.

And accordingly, after these things, he took them with him, and retired from the multitude; and they departed from thence, (even from the place where they had been so much crowded and hurried,) and setting out in a ship privately, they withdrew into a lonely desert belonging to the city called Bethsaida, which we have several times mentioned before. [And] as this desert was divided from the place they set out from by a creek or bay of the sea, Jesus in passing to it went over a part of the sea of Galilee, which is also sometimes called [the sea] of Tiberias, because that is the most considerable place on its shore.

And when the people who had been attending on his ministry saw them departing, and, though he was at some distance, many of them knew him, and others thereabout heard of it a great multitude following him; because they had seen his miracles, which he had just before performed on them that were diseased, and, struck with the energy of them, were impatiently desirous still to hear so Divine a Teacher. And, therefore, observing how he steered his course, and guessing right as to the place at which he intended to land, they ran thither on foot, and increased

b After these things.] I have before observed (in note a on John v. 1, p. 250,) that Mr. Manne supposes this sixth chapter of John ought to be connected with the end of the fourth (see his Dissertations, p. 157—163;) and the rather, because he fancies one may find a connection between John iv. 54, and vi. 1, the first of which texts tells us that Jesus was in Galilee; and the latter, that he went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. But I cannot see the least force in the argument, considering how often Christ changed his place, and came back again to that which he had formerly visited: nor can he urge it with any consistence, because, according to his own scheme of the harmony, Christ had crossed the sea to Gergesa, and dispossessed the Legion, after the cure of the nobleman's son, and long before the passing over the sea, that is here referred to (which was plainly not to Gergesa, but to the desert of Bethsaida); so that there is no shadow of a reason for such an unexampled transposition, which has no copy or version to support it. Besides, that this requires another change in ver. 4, which is equally arbitrary, and (as we shall shew in note e of this section) most contrary not only to the faith of all copies, but to the reason of things.

c Sometimes called the sea of Tiberias.] We have before observed that it had various names, (See note b on Luke v. 1, p. 187.)—It is not necessary to suppose they crossed the lake: if they did, it was only over the extremity of it; or possibly they only made a coasting voyage round some creek or bay of it; otherwise it is hard to say how the people going on foot could have been there before him, as it is said they were, Mark vi. 55. See Lightf. Hor. Heb. on Mat. xiv. 13; and Calmet, Dissert. Tom. i. part. i. p. 89. a Many knew him.] It should seem that Christ ordered the vessel to be prepared at some distance from the place where the multitude was; yet not so far off but some of the company could make a shift to distinguish who he was.
increased their numbers out of all the cities by which they passed: and they pursued their journey with such eagerness; that they outwent them who had taken ship, and, getting round to the shore where he was to land, they came together to him, and stood ready to salute him in a large body.

34 And Jesus, when he came out of the ship, and saw such a great multitude of people, who had taken so much pains to meet him there, was moved with tender compassion for them; because he perceived they were sadly neglected by those who ought to have been their spiritual guides, and were forced to wander from place to place, as sheep having no shepherd to feed and take care of them: and with this he was struck to such a degree, that though he had come thither for retirement, he did not either dismiss or forsake them; but, on the contrary, received them in a most condescending and indulgent manner, and began with renewed zeal and fervency to teach them many important things; and, in particular, spake to them concerning the kingdom of God which he was now erecting, and healed many of their sick people, [even all] those that were brought to him and had need of healing.

John VI. 3. And in prosecution of this design, that he might be heard and seen with the greater advantage, Jesus went up into a mountain, and there sat down with his disciples, and the multitudes about him. And indeed it was a season of the year which admitted it; for the spring was now so far advanced, that the passover, a grand feast of the Jews, was near. And

because such things are expressly said to have happened between that passover and this feast, as could not be crowded into the narrow compass assigned them on this scheme. For, according to Mr. Manne's scheme, the passover happened on April the 26th, the feast of pentecost on May the 23rd, and this miracle of feeding the five thousand at the latter end of April. Now he himself allows that, after the first passover [at which he said long enough to work many miracles, and to have a conference with Nicodemus,] Jesus [having, as John tells us, chap. iii. 22., carried some time with his disciples in Judea, and made so many disci- plestherethat he alarmed the Pharisees; see John iv. 1.] went through Samaria; and after having spent two days at Sichar, [and every hour in such a circumstance is important,]
Luke IX. 12. And when the day began to wear away, [Mark, and was now far spent,] [and it was evening] then [his disciples] even the twelve, came [Mark, unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is surpised,] send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, [Mark, and buy themselves bread.] and get victuals: [Mark, for they have nothing to eat.] [Mat. XIX. 15, Mark VI. 53, 56.]

John VI. 5. When Jesus then lift up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he said unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 (And this he said to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do.)

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is important,] came into Galilee, and taught in all their synagogues; preached the sermon on the mount; and then [having, as Luke tells us, chap. iv. 31. dwelt a while at Capernaum, and taught them on the sabbath days,] cured Peter’s mother-in-law: then having cast out Legion, cured the paralytic, called Matthew, and [after having kept them with him some time, as Mark and Luke intimate, sect. ii. p. 280.] sent out the twelve apostles; and having on one sabbath vindicated his disciples for preaching the ears of corn, and on another cured the man with a withered hand, he then goes to Nazareth, [where he spent at least one sabbath;] and, after many other miracles, and the return of the twelve, goes into the desert; [John the Baptist in the mean time having been seized (for it is directly said he was at liberty after the first passover, John iii. 24.) and after frequent audiences, while Herodias long waited an opportunity to destroy him, being at length believed.]

All these events, except those included in crotechets, Mr. Mame expressly mentions, (p. 166—171); and those that are so included, the evangelists in express words connect with the rest. Now I appeal to any unprejudiced person, whether it is possible these things could happen in a mouth. It may rather be doubted whether two years be sufficient for them, and others connected with them in the preceding sections. On the whole, I cannot recollect any instance in which a person of such distinguished learning and abilities has been betrayed, by love to an hypothesis, in so palpable an error.—The reader will pardon my having been so large in constructing a scheme so inconsistent with that laid down above; and will, I hope, perceive that it is proved, not only to be precarious or unlikely, but even impossible.
and even by Jesus himself at Cana in Galilee, (John ii. 6—11. sect. xxiii.) was surprised that he should mention such a thing, and answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread, or as much as could be purchased for two hundred denarii, which is at present all our little stock, is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little refreshment, and much less would it furnish them with a full meal; it will be necessary therefore immediately to dismiss them, that they may have time to shift for themselves.

But Jesus said to him, and to them that stood near him, who had but just now made the same proposal, They have no need to go away fasting, nor am I willing to dismiss them so without any supply; and therefore let them have food for their refreshment here; and, instead of sending them away to provide for themselves, do you make ready for them, and give ye them [something] to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we then go to any neighbouring place, and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread [and] meat for all this multitude of people, and give [it] them to eat, that it may go as far as it can? If such be thy pleasure, we shall not offer to dispute it, whatever be the consequence as to ourselves.

But, as he purposed in himself to entertain the multitude out of the little store of provisions they had, Jesus says to them, How many loaves have you here already? go and see that, and there will be no need of buying any more. Upon which one of his disciples, namely, Andrew, who was Simon Peter's brother, went to enquire; and, soon returning back with an account of what they had, he says unto him, I find there is a lad here, that has five coarse barley loaves, and two small fishes, which he would let us have; but we have no more to offer them, either of bread or meat; [and] what are they among so many, to satisfy the hunger of so great a company? And he said to them, Do you be under no concern about the scantiness of your provisions; but bring them hither to me, for even these shall suffice.

And,

MAT. XIV. 16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart, give ye them to eat. [And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, \[\text{Luke, and meat for all this people,} \] and give them to eat?\] [MARK VI. 37. \text{Luke IX. 13}.—]

MARK VI. 38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see.

John VI. 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, faith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but \[\text{Luke, we have no more, and} \] what are they among so many? \[\text{Mark XIV. 17. Mark VI. 38. Luke IX. 13}.\]

MAT. XIV. 18. He said, Bring them hither to me.

\[\text{For two hundred denarii.} \] This amounts to about six pounds five shillings of our money. The mention of that sum seems to intimate (as in the \text{paraphrase}) that their whole stock amounted to so much.

There
And he commanded the multitude to sit down upon the green grass. [Mark vi. 39, Luke ix. 14, John vi. 10.]

And, when they were brought to him, he commanded the multitude to sit down upon the green grass, which that season of the year was pretty high: and, that the distribution of the food XIV. 19 might be more orderly, and the number of persons be the better observed, he said to his disciples, Let them be placed in order, and cause them all to sit down by companies in rows. Now there was much grass in the place, in which they might sit down with ease and pleasure.

And his disciples would no more dispute the matter with him; but they did so, as the Lord had commanded them. and caused them all to sit down though they could not see how they were to be fed. The men therefore sat down by themselves in rows, which there was room to pass between, by hundreds and by fifties, in a long square containing an hundred in rank and fifty in file: and they were about five thousand in number, not to mention the women and children who were placed apart.

And Jesus, taking the five loaves and the two fishes, looked up to heaven with great reverence and affection, and, having given thanks to his heavenly Father for the bounties of his kind Providence, and the extraordinary instance of Divine favour now to be manifested, he, in a solemn manner, blessed them, commanding upon the provisions before him that singular blessing by which they were to be multiplied by the distribution; and then he brake the loaves in pieces, and distributed them to his disciples, that they might set [them] before the multitude who were set down upon the grass as he had ordered them: and accordingly the disciples [gave them] round to all the multitude, with believing hearts and unsparing hands: and he likewise divided the two fishes of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty." See Esth. i. 4—7.

[There was much grass in the place.] It is also said, (Mark vi. 39.) that the grass was green; as it was before the passover, but not near the feast of pentecost, when even the corn harvest was concluded. Though they sat thus on the ground, under no canopy but the sky, and had only barley bread, and, as it seems, cold, or dried fisher to eat, and probably nothing but water to drink; yet, as Mr. Henry truly and beautifully observes on Mat. xiv. 19. "There was more real grandeur displayed by the Master of this feast, than by Ahasuerus in that royal feast which was intended to show the riches

5 There was much grass in the place. It is also said, (Mark vi. 39.) that the grass was green; as it was before the passover, but not near the feast of pentecost, when even the corn harvest was concluded. Though they sat thus on the ground, under no canopy but the sky, and had only barley bread, and, as it seems, cold, or dried fisher to eat, and probably nothing but water to drink; yet, as Mr. Henry truly and beautifully observes on Mat. xiv. 19. "There was more real grandeur displayed by the Master of this feast, than by Ahasuerus in that royal feast which was intended to show the riches

of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty." See Esth. i. 4—7.

[There was much grass in the place. It is also said, (Mark vi. 39.) that the grass was green; as it was before the passover, but not near the feast of pentecost, when even the corn harvest was concluded. Though they sat thus on the ground, under no canopy but the sky, and had only barley bread, and, as it seems, cold, or dried fisher to eat, and probably nothing but water to drink; yet, as Mr. Henry truly and beautifully observes on Mat. xiv. 19. "There was more real grandeur displayed by the Master of this feast, than by Ahasuerus in that royal feast which was intended to show the riches

of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty." See Esth. i. 4—7.

[There was much grass in the place. It is also said, (Mark vi. 39.) that the grass was green; as it was before the passover, but not near the feast of pentecost, when even the corn harvest was concluded. Though they sat thus on the ground, under no canopy but the sky, and had only barley bread, and, as it seems, cold, or dried fisher to eat, and probably nothing but water to drink; yet, as Mr. Henry truly and beautifully observes on Mat. xiv. 19. "There was more real grandeur displayed by the Master of this feast, than by Ahasuerus in that royal feast which was intended to show the riches

of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty." See Esth. i. 4—7.
fishes among them all, and gave them by the hands of his disciples to the whole company, supplying them with as much as they would take.

And so wonderfully were the provisions increased by passing under his creating hands, that they did all eat of them till they had every one enough, and were all fully satisfied.

And, when they were all sufficiently filled, he says to his disciples, Let there be no waste made of any part of the Divine bounties, but gather up the broken pieces that remain, that so nothing may be lost. The disciples therefore, in obedience to his word, went through the several ranks of the whole company, and picking up the pieces that were left, they gathered them together, and filled no less than twelve baskets with the very fragments of the five barley loaves, and of the two fishes, which remained over and above to them that had eaten: a quantity vastly larger than they had at first.

And yet they who had eaten of the loaves and fishes (as by the disposition of the multitude in rows the number of them might be easily computed were about five thousand men, besides women and children, who sat by themselves and might almost amount to an equal number.

The men therefore who were present upon this occasion, and were thus miraculously entertained, having seen the miracle which Jesus wrought, after all the preceding wonders of the day, were so mightily struck with it, that they said, Truly this is the great Prophet who was to come into the world, and has so long been impatiently expected by us; even the Messiah himself, whom God has appointed to rule as well as to teach his people. (Compare Deut. xviii, 18. and see also 1 Mac. xiv. 41.) And, concluding that the same miraculous power could make itself victorious over all opposition, and easily could subsist and maintain an army in the greatest extremity, they mention Samson's slaying a thousand with a jaw-bone (Judg. xv. 15.) and other extraordinary events of this kind recorded in the Old Testament. (See 2 Kings iii. 21—24. 2 Chron. xx. 22—25. and compare Lev. xxvi. 8. They also knew that the whole body of the Jewish nation was then highly spirited with these sentiments; and might reasonably expect that legions of them would soon pour in to the standards of such a Leader.

Copyright 1890 by the American Sunday-School Union. All rights reserved.
15 - When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, [Mark, straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go before him] to the other side, unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.] [Matt. XIV. 22. Mark VI. 45.]

Mark VI. 46. And when he had sent them away, [and the evening was come,] he departed [John, again,] [and went up,] [John, himself alone] into a mountain to pray.] [Matt. XIV. 23. John VI.-15.]

**IMPROVEMENT.**

So evidently true is it that *man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!* (Matt. iv. 4.) How wonderful did the power of Christ appear in thus multiplying the food! and how amiable his compassion, in his affectionate concern for the relief of his necessitous followers! It is to be esteemed a great happiness when the ministers of the gospel have it in their power.

---

1 Obliged his disciples, &c. This phrase may intimate that they, who plainly appear to have been too fond of secular views, were rather inclined to stay, and quitted the multitude with some reluctance in what they thought so favourable a juncture. But it was certainly the highest prudence in Christ, considering what his purposes were, to order them away, and to dismiss them and the multitude before any thing happened which could alarm or offend even the most jealous spies, who might perhaps herd among the crowd.

1 And to go before him to the other side to the creek unto Bethsaida. It was observed before, (Luke ix. 10, p. 411,) that they were now in a desert place belonging to Bethsaida; which probably was divided from it by some bay or creek that ran into the land; and Christ now only ordered his disciples to pass over this creek to the city of Bethsaida, where he might afterwards have joined them when he had sent away the people. But in their passage thither a great storm arose, and they were driven by a contrary wind into the midst of the sea toward Capernaum. This reconciles the place before us with the beginning of the next section, where, notwithstanding the direction Christ had given them to go before him to Bethsaida, we find them going to Caper- naum, which lay on the other side of the lake. Compare note a, page 412.
The disciples take ship to go to Bethsaida.

And, when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea; [Mark VI. 47.—]

John VI. 16.

IT was before observed, that, after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, Christ ordered his disciples to depart, and go before him to Bethsaida; and accordingly, when the evening was come, his disciples went down to the sea [side;]. And, having entered into the ship which waited for them, and put off from land, they quickly met with a cross wind that changed their course, and were soon driven farther from the shore than they designed; so that, instead of getting

John VI. 16.
Jesus comes to them, walking on the sea.

Sect. lxxix.  
John vi. 17.

18 And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew, [and the ship was tossed with waves; for the wind was contrary. [Mark, unto them.] [Mark xiv. 24.—Mark vi. 47.]

19—so when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, [in the fourth watch of the night, or about three o'clock in the morning, d Jesus, who knew the distress they were in, perceiving that they were weary with rowing, and in vain attempted to weather the storm, came to them, walking on the sea, by his miraculous power;]

which in this connection signifies almost, if not entirely, the same thing.

c When they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs.] Probably, when they found the wind so violent, they were afraid of being shipwrecked if they came near the shore: and therefore, having perhaps sailed a while before the wind, they now rowed out to sea: for, as they must have been several hours at sea, one can hardly imagine that with so brisk a gale they made no more way in all this time than a little above a league; unless we impute it to their having laboured all day, that they could not avoid crossing the sea and to get to Bethsaida.

d In the fourth watch of the night.] The Jewish night was divided into four watches, each containing about three of our hours, especially so near the equinox. The first began at six in the evening, the second at nine, the third at midnight, and the fourth at three in the morning. (See Genesis's Moses and Aaron, book iii. chap. 1.) F. Calmet (in the word hours) thinks they learned this division from the Romans. See Veget. de Re militari, lib. iii. cap. 8. and  

Pust. Lexic. in Vigil.

e Walking on the sea.] This was thought so impracticable, that the picture of two feet walking on the sea was an Egyptian hieroglyphic for an impossible thing. And
Peter, attempting to walk on the sea, is ready to sink.

And he said, Come. And, when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, so to to Jesus.

50 But, when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid: and

in the scripture it is mentioned as the prerogative of God, that he alone treadeth upon the waves of the sea, Job ix. 8. 

1 By that little light, &c.] It is well known that it is never entirely dark on the water; not to urge that the moon might perhaps now be in the last quarter, as it must have been if this was about three weeks before the passover.
and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Mark vi. 51. And he went up unto them into the ship; [and when they were come into the ship,] [John, they willingly received him,] and the wind ceased: [John, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went] 3 and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. [Mat. XIV. 22; John vi. 21.] 32 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened.

Then

b Into the bark.] Though the evangelists generally use the word πλωτόν, which signifies any vessel in which men sail on the sea, I have sometimes varied it a little, in order to prevent that ill effect which the repetition of it so frequently as it occurs would have on the ear in reading; and have here called it a bark, that it may not be imagined like our modern ships. Accordingly John calls it παρθένον, or a little vessel; chap. vi. 22. Compare John xxi. 3, 8.

i Exceedingly amazed — and astonished beyond measure.] The words ἰστάρεμα, ἰστάρεμα, are too emphatic to be exactly rendered; but this is plainly the sense of them: and the accurate reader will observe that I suppose the words ἰστάρεμα in πεπεψαν to be equally connected with ἰστάρεμα and ἰστάρεμα.

k As to display even a creating power.] Had not this been done, it is hard to imagine how twelve baskets full of fragments could have been taken up; it was therefore in itself (as the evangelist plainly intimates) a more certain and glorious miracle than the ceasing of the wind immediately on his coming into the ship. Their speedy landing after this must also have increased their astonishment. Considering this instance, and that of Philip, Acts viii. 29, 40, we have room to admire the condescension of Christ, in submitting so often to the fatigue of journeying on foot from one place to another, when he could at pleasure have commanded angels to transport him. With equal ease he could have walked abroad from the waves of the sea, but with a most edifying modesty he avoided the ostentation of it.
Then they that were about him, even all that were in the ship, came and worshipped him, as in a rapture of wonder, devotion and joy, falling down at his feet with the utmost reverence, and saying, We are now convinced that thou art indeed the Son of God, and hast an unlimited power over the whole creation.

And, when they had thus passed over the lake, they came to a part of the land of Gennesareth, and put to shore not far from Capernaum, to which, it was observed before (p. 418), their course was tending. And when they came out of the vessel, as it was a place where Jesus had often been, they that were present when he landed, immediately knew him: and, though it was so early in the morning, the news of his arrival quickly spread through all the neighbouring parts. For they were ready to inform each other of his coming; and the men of that place, who knew him, no sooner were apprised of his arrival, but presently they sent out, and ran to every place in all that country round about, to give notice to their neighbours, that Jesus was there, and that they now again should have the privilege of his preaching and working miracles among them: and they began to carry about the sick in beds, and brought unto him all that were diseased, to the place where they heard he was.

And this was indeed the general custom wherever he came; as soon as he was entered into any towns or cities, or country [villages] they laid the sick in the most public streets through which they expected he would pass, and entreated him that they might at least touch the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched him, believing in his power and his readiness to heal them, were perfectly recovered, how extreme soever their illness had been.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Thus it still pleases Christ to exercise the faith of his people, that he may strengthen their dependance on him, and demonstrate there, it is plain, from John's account, that Jesus at his landing came to Capernaum; for it was there the people found him that followed him in the morning from the other side of the sea. Compare John vi. 22, 24, 25, in the next section, and ver. 59, sect. lxxxii.

---

1 To the land of Gennesareth, and put to shore not far from Capernaum.] The land of Gennesareth was a large tract of ground on the western shore of the lake, in part of which Capernaum appears from hence to have been situated. For, though Matthew and Mark only speak of their coming to the land of Gennesareth, and putting to shore Mat. XIV. 34. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, [and drew to the shore.] [Mark VI. 53.]

Mark VI. 54. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him.

55 [And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out,] and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick,] and brought unto him all that were diseased,] where they heard he was. [Mat. XIV. 55.]

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, through which he expected he would pass, and besought him, that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made [perfectly] whole. [Mat. XIV. 56.]
strate at once his compassion and his power. Thus are storms permitted oftentimes to rise around them, and for a while they are left in darkness, and are tossed with tempests: but he is near at hand, even when they think him at the remotest distance; and when he seems to be passing by them, as regardless of their danger and distress, he has designs of grace and mercy to them, and acts in such a way on purpose to quicken and excite them to a greater earnestness and fervour in their applications to him. Happy would the Christian be, could he always discern his Lord and always conceive of him aright! but alas, how often does he appear to the disordered mind as the object of terror rather than of confidence! and, in a day of darkness, while he may seem to treat his suffering people with neglect, instead of seeking him with a more earnest importunity, how are they ready to be overwhelmed with fears, and to conclude he has forgotten them!

At the command of Jesus, Peter ventured to go to him on the sea. And through what storms and dangers may we not safely venture, if we are sure that our Lord calls us! Yet the rebuke, which he suffered, may warn us not rashly to throw ourselves on unwise cessary trials, lest our excess of confidence end in fear and disgrace. Modesty and caution will adorn our other virtues, and render us amiable in the eyes of the humble Jesus.

In how many circumstances of life does the Christian appear to his own imagination like Peter beginning to sink in the waves! But in the time of our distress, like him, let us cry to Jesus for help; and, while we are lifting up the hands of faith and prayer, we may humbly hope that Christ will stretch forth his omnipotent arm for our rescue. Let every experience of this kind, and all the seasonable aid he is from time to time imparting to us, establish our dependance on him, and enforce our obedience to him, as the Son of God. May Divine Grace deliver us from that hardness of heart, that stupidity and insensibility of mind, which sometimes remains unconvinced in the midst of evidence, and unaffected under the most moving illustrations of his abilities and willingness to help us!

SECT. LXXX.

Our Lord, being followed by the multitude to Capernaum, cautions them against those worldly views with which they sought him, and declares himself to be the bread of life. John VI. 22—40.

John VI. 22. The day following when the people, which In the mean time, while Jesus was thus charitably employed in healing those, who were brought John VI. 22.
The people cross the sea, and find Christ at Capernaum.

John VI. 22.

brought to him in the places near the shore, from whence he soon went forwards to Capernaum, on the morrow after he had fed the five thousand, great search was made for him by those whom he had sent away the night before: for they were so affected with the miraculous entertainment he had given them, that there were many of the multitude, who, though they might withdraw to a little distance on his dismissing the assembly (Mark vi. 46, p. 417), yet still continued on the other side of the sea that night, hoping to have another interview with him in the morning; and, as they saw there was no other vessel there on the coast, but that one, into which his disciples entered, when they departed in the evening, and knew that Jesus did not go with his disciples into the vessel, but that his disciples went away by themselves, leaving him there to spend the night alone, they made no question of his being still on that side of the sea. But in the morning they perceived that he was gone, and presently determined to go after him: and, though there were no vessels there the night before, yet were they quickly furnished with an opportunity of following him; for there came other vessels very early from Tiberias, and put to shore nigh to the place where they had eaten the bread and fishes after the Lord had given thanks, and commanded such a miraculous blessing upon them. The multitude therefore, when they saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there on that side, went also themselves immediately aboard the vessels, that were now arrived, as many of them as could, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus with all the appearance of the most eager importunity. And, when they had found him on the other side of the sea, in the synagogue of Capernaum (see ver. 59), as soon as the worship was over, and before they quitted the place, they accosted him with the greatest respect, and said unto him, Rabbi, when and how camest thou hither? for, as thou didst not go last night with thy disciples, we expected to have found thee on the other side of the sea, and know not when thou couldst come, or what imaginable way thou coudest have of crossing the water.

But Jesus, modestly waving the recital of those extraordinary circumstances which attended his passage, diverted the discourse to a yet more important and edifying subject; and, knowing, by an which stood on the other side of the sea, saw, that there was none other boat there, save that one, whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone:

23 (Howbeit, there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread after that the Lord had given thanks:

24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because
cause ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

\[a\] Labour not to procure the meat which perishes.] Hardly any one can imagine our Lord intended to prohibit men's labouring for the subsistence of their bodies. Most of those who attended him probably had no other support than their labour: but his intent was plainly to declare how much the interest of the soul was to be preferred to that of the body. (See note on Mat. xii. 7, p. 270. ἐκποτισθησαίς is to labour to procure meat.

\[b\] Him has God the Father sealed.] Some have ingeniously conjectured, that this may allude to a custom which princes might have when making grand entertainments, to give a commission under their hand and seal, or perhaps to deliver a signet, to those whom they appointed to preside in the management of them; (see Elsner, Vol. I. p. 311, 312.) Though it may possibly be sufficient to say that to seal is a general phrase for authorising by proper credentials, whatever the purpose be for which they are given; or for marking a person out as wholly devoted to the service of him whose seal he bears.

\[c\] Some
Then, though they just before had seen such an astonishing miracle, and several of them lived in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, where he had so long multiplied those wonders, yet some of them were so unreasonable, that they said to him after all the miracles that he had wrought. If thou wouldest have us to regard thee as invested with so high a character, that far exceeds whatever has been claimed by any one before, thou shouldest produce some signal evidence of a superior kind to all that has been done by others: what sign therefore shewest thou from heaven, that we may see [it] and believe thee? What dost thou perform more than others, or even equal to what Moses did, that we should treat thee with so extraordinary a regard? Thou didst indeed yesterday feed some thousands of us in an extraordinary manner with barley-bread: but our fathers, who were incomparably more numerous than that assembly, did, under the conduct of Moses, eat manna, a far more delicious food, in the wilderness, even forty years; as it is written (Psal. cxviii. 24.) "He gave them bread from heaven to eat;" and, when thou shalt give us as glorious a demonstration of thy mission, we will pay thee an equal regard.

32 Then Jesus said to them again, Verily, verily, I say, and affirm it unto you, how strange soever it may appear, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, which best deserves so honourable a name; but this you are supplied with by my Father, who, sending me among you as your Instructor and Redeemer, giveth you now the true and most excellent bread from heaven. For that is indeed the bread of God, and may most justly claim the title, which descendeth from the highest heaven, whereas manna fell only from the clouds or the inferior region of the air; and which giveth life and true happiness to the whole world

c Some of them were so unreasonable that they said to him.] The sentiments of those that speak to Christ in this discourse are so various (compare ver. 34, 41, 42), and the evangelist so expressly declares that there was a debate between some and others of them, ver. 52, that I think it would be wrong to imagine these to have been the perverse and ungrateful sentiments of the whole multitude, who had followed him with so much eagerness from place to place for several days.

c Some

d That is indeed the bread of God, which descendeth from heaven, &c.] It is necessary to translate οἷον ἑαυτοῦ, οὖτις, in this ambiguous manner, that we may not supersede the explication which our Lord gives in ver. 55. Dr. Clarke has justly observed this; and it is of great importance to apply it to many other passages, where too clear and full a paraphrase of what is explained professedly in some subsequent verses would only serve to flatten the whole. Compare note c on Mark iv. 3, sect. lxv.
world of believers, whereas what Moses gave only relieved the temporal necessities of one particular nation.

They therefore, when they heard him speaking of so excellent a gift, were presently desirous to obtain it; and, though as yet they did not fully understand what he intended by this bread, some of the wiser and better part of them had such a notion of its excellence, that they said to him, Lord, give us evermore this bread, on which our life depends, and let us always live upon this heavenly manna.

Then, for a farther explication of this important truth, Jesus said to them, I am indeed the bread of life; nor is bread so necessary to the support of your bodies, as a believing regard to me is to the life of your souls; he therefore that comes to me and makes his application aright, shall never hunger; and he that truly believes in me shall never thirst any more; but may depend upon it that he shall find the most restless desires of his soul satisfied, and, conscious of the noblest refreshment and nourishment already received, shall grow up to a state of everlasting complete satisfaction and enjoyment. But, valuable as these blessings of my grace are, you are little disposed to pursue and accept them: for I have already told you (ver. 26), that you have never seen me, and beheld the miracles, that I perform; and yet are so perverse and obstinate that you believe not in me, and will not be prevailed upon to come to me for life and happiness. Nevertheless, though you reject me, yet I shall not be universally rejected, nor shall the purposes of my mission be entirely frustrated; for all that the Father has graciously chosen to himself, and whom he giveth to me in consequence of a peculiar covenant to be sanctified and saved by me, will certainly at length come to me; and, on

Some of the wiser and better part of them.] See before, note o on ver. 30.

I am the bread of life.] Though indeed it is very usual with the sacred writers to represent Divine instructions as the food of the soul, and to compare them to delicious and nourishing diet (see Psal. xix. 10; exix. 101; Prov. x. 5; Job xxxii. 12; Jer. xvi. 16; and Heb. v. 12, 14); yet I can recollect no instance in which the Instructor himself, as such, is called Food, or any are said to eat him; much less in which, as below, they are exhorted to eat his flesh, and drink his blood: so that Dr. Clarke’s laboured and ingenious criticism on this passage (in the xith of his Seventeen Sermons) is far from being satisfactory; and, however clear it may be of any such design, I fear it has misled many to a neglect of that great doctrine of Christ’s atonement, to which there seems in this context so express a reference.

All that the Father giveth me, will come to me.] I have given that sense of this celebrated and important text, which on serious, and, I hope, impartial consideration, appeared
All that the Father gives him will come to him;  

on the other hand, if any of you find yourselves disposed to such a believing application to me, you have no reason to be terrified with any suspicion that you are excluded from hope by any secret transactions between the Father and me; for I declare it to you as an universal truth, and perfectly consistent with the former, That him that cometh to me, whoever he may be, I will by no means cast out, nor shall he be rejected or refused on any consideration whatsoever. And you have sufficient reason to believe this, because I came down from heaven into this lower world, not to do my own will, but to do the will and to seek the glory of him that sent me. And this is the will of the Father who sent me, That of all the whole body of my people whom he has given me, and committed to my care, I should lose none, not even the meanest member, but should assuredly raise it up at the last day in complete glory and happiness. Or, to express it in more general terms, even this is the will of him that sent me, That every one who views the Son with an attentive eye, and, in consequence of that view, cordially believes on him, receiving him by faith, and trusting in him as an all-sufficient Saviour, should have eternal life; and I will accordingly raise him up at the last day, and make him appeared to me most agreeable to the words themselves, and to the general tenor of scripture. (See especially John xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 24.) Mr. Le Clerc's gloss upon them appears to me unnatural, and Dr. Whitby's frivolous. I do not mean in these notes to enter largely into any kind of controversy; but dare not suppress or disguise what I am in my conscience persuaded to be the sense of scripture, merely because it is not agreeable to the general taste of the age to take it in that view. I render συνελήφθη because the word does not necessarily imply anything more than the certainty of the event; and I would not lead any, merely in dependence on a translation, to build a weak argument on the word ΣΗΒΑΣΚΩ, which it is well known has sometimes been done.  

h And him that cometh to me, whoever he may be, I will by no means cast out.] To limit this latter clause by the former is not only missing but contradicting the design of Christ, and destroying the wise and beautiful turn of this text; than which I think few more important for stating some great doctrines of the gospel which have unhappily been the foundation of much eager and uncharitable dispute.—The expression εν μιᾷ τινι ἐνδικαιωθη extreme beautiful and emphatical. It represents an humble supplicant as coming into the house of some prince or other great person to cast himself at his feet, and to commit himself to his protection and care. He might fear his petition might be rejected, and he thrust out of doors: but our Lord assures him to the contrary. His house and heart are large enough to receive, shelter and supply all the indigent and distressed. God only knows how many thousand souls have been sensibly supported by these gracious words. 

j Every one who views the Son with an attentive eye.] Thus the words εις την τινι, ενδικαιωθη, should undoubtedly be rendered. There are many other places where ΣΗΒΑΣΚΩ signifies to view with attention. Compare Mat. xxvii. 55. Luke x. 18. xxi. 6. John xvii. 24. Acts iii. 16. and Heb. vii. 4.
him completely happy, both in soul and body, in the enjoyment of a glorious immortality: nor are there any secret purposes and decrees of God inconsistent with the sincerity of such a declaration.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

How gratefully should we acknowledge the Divine goodness, in giving *this true bread from heaven for the life of the world*; and how solicitous should we be, that by a true faith we may feed upon it! In the midst of so many ensnaring circumstances, let us be strictly watchful over ourselves, that the vigour of our pursuits and labours may not be laid out on the *meat, which perishes,* 27 to the forgetfulness of that, which endures to eternal life: but acknowledging those authentic seals, by which Christ is marked out to that important trust, may we apply to him as *sent of God the to Father to be the Author of eternal salvation,* and come to him to be partakers of his saving benefits!

It must surely grieve us to observe the neglect and contempt with which he is too frequently treated; but it may comfort us that there yet remains a remnant according to the election of grace, (Rom. xi. 5.) *All that the Father giveth him, will come to him;* 37 and blessed be God, that this appears to be no inconsiderable number. *Secret things belong to the Lord our God,* (Deut. xxix. 29.) let it therefore be our care to make first *our calling,* and then, by a happy consequence, *our election sure,* (2 Pet. i. 10.) Whatever discouragements may arise in our way, may we fly to cast ourselves at the foot of Christ; and then we may be sure he will never on any consideration cast us out, but will receive us in the arms of his almighty compassion, and, having sheltered and maintained us in his house on earth, will at length conduct us safely to the presence of his glory and to the blessed abodes of complete felicity!

**SECT. LXXXI.**

*Christ having represented himself as the bread of life, enlarges on the necessity and benefit of feeding upon him as such.* John VI. 41—53.

**John VI. 41.**

Thus did our Lord declare himself to be the bread of life, which God had given them from heaven; but then, as this agreed not with their worldly views, the Jews who were about him were so far from receiving the declaration

**Vol. VI.**
No man can come to Christ, unless the Father draw him.

And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

Jesus therefore, who well knew all their secret suspicions, how artfully soever they might be whispered and concealed, replied and said unto them, Do not murmur among yourselves on this occasion; but rather set yourselves seriously to reflect on your present state, and your true interest. I know indeed that your prejudices against me are strong, and without the influences of Divine grace will prove invincible and fatal: for such is the moral blindness and de-
generacy of human nature, that no man can by a saving faith come and make his application to me, unless the Father who has sent me, draw him by the sweet but powerful influences of his Holy Spirit on the heart; and [then] I will raise him up at the last day, and finally make him a par-taker of the complete felicity and blessedness of my kingdom. For so it is written in the prophets, (Isa. liv. 13. and Jer. xxxi. 34.) "And they shall all be taught by God," by Divine in-
fluences, that to be well grounded in na
tural religion is the best preparative for re-
ceiving the Christian religion. But this, though an apparent truth, falls far short of the sense of the passage; especially con-
sidering what is afterwards said of being 
taught by God, and not merely of him, ver. 45. The doctor observes here, that when in scripture one person is said to draw an-
other, the word may signify either the action of the person said to draw, or of the person drawn; and unhappily produces, John xii. 32. Jer. xxxi. 3. and Hos. xi. 4, all which lie strongly against such a sense. The truth is, God's drawing does not ex-
clude our consent to follow, and our activity in doing it; but it always includes a Di-
vine agency. (Compare Judg. iv. 7. (See Dr. Clarke's Sermons, Vol. III. No. 3.)

c Taught by God; ἐκαθάρισε να ὑπέρ.] The word
The flesh of Christ is to be eat as living bread.  

fore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, hath everlasting life.

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead;

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

word properly signifies, they shall be the disciples or scholars of God, who shall humbly sit down, as it were, at his feet, and receive instructions from him. This, in the latter text referred to in the paraphrase, is expressly distinguished from human instructions relating to the nature of God. Compare 1 Thess. iv. 9.
His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

Thus then I plainly tell you, how incredible soever you may think it, That I, who came down from heaven for this gracious purpose, am the living bread, or a principle of Divine life and eternal happiness to all, who shall faithfully receive me: so that if any one eat of this bread, in spite of death and the grave, he shall live for ever. And, that you may more distinctly conceive this important truth, and see the propriety of this language, I add, That the bread which I will give to such a one, is my own flesh, which I will give as an atoning sacrifice for the forfeited life of the whole world of Jews and Gentiles, of which every true believer shall partake.

But the Jews, whose stupidity often occasioned them to mistake, and whose perverseness led them to wrest his words, did not, or would not, understand him; and therefore contended with each other, the generality of them saying, as if what he had said was to be taken in a literal sense, How can this man possibly give us [his] flesh to eat? What a monstrous and unintelligible doctrine is this?

Then Jesus replied in the same figurative language he had used before, and, without condescending to any farther explication, said to them, However you may censure it as unintelligible and absurd, yet, verily, verily, I say unto you, There is no truth more certain in itself, and more important to you; for unless, by a cordial dependance on the atonement I shall make, and by the powerful influences of Divine grace upon your hearts, you eat, as it were, the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no principle.

Which I will give for the life of the whole world, &c.] There seems to be a beautiful gradation in this verse, compared with ver. 31. They had insinuated that feeding a few thousands with the five loaves was an unconsiderable thing, when compared with what Moses did, when he fed the whole camp of Israel; but our Lord declares the purposes of his grace and bounty to be far more extensive, as reaching the whole world, and giving life, immortal life, to all that should believe in him.

The generality of them saying.] Had this been the language of all, there could have been no contention between them, which yet is expressly asserted.

I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood.] This phrase naturally expresses a lively and habitual regard to Christ as the great support of the spiritual life. The mention of his blood naturally leads to the thought of his atonement, as we are elsewhere told, We have redemption through his blood, (Eph. i. 7) and boldness to enter into the holy by the blood of Jesus, (Heb. x. 12) The sacrament of the eucharist is plainly intended to affect our minds with a sense of these important truths, and our Lord might probably think of that intended institution, while he spoke: but as this was a future thing, and utterly unknown to his hearers, it seems to me unwarrantable to interpret.
principle of spiritual life in you, and can have no claim to eternal happiness. For this is so important a part of faith in me, that, to declare the necessity of it, I may say (with such an alteration of my former words, ver. 59), He alone, that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will most assuredly raise him up at the last day, and shew by his complete deliverance, how just a confidence he has reposed in me amidst all the contempt, with which you treat me. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed; and nothing deserves the name so well, as nothing is worthy of being called life, in comparison of that which is hereby supported. For this feeding upon me is such, 56 that he who thus eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abides in me by an intimate and inseparable union, and I abide in him by the unalienable tokens of my favour and love to nourish the Divine life in his soul: I say by the unalienable tokens of it; for as the living Father, the great source of life, hath sent me into the world, and I live by the protection and care of the Father: who is continually dwelling in men, and communicating of his Spirit in the richest abundance to me; so he that thus eateth me, even he shall live by me, through the Spirit, which I will also communicate to him. And if you attend to these important hints that I have given, you may in general know what I meant, by saying as I have done, This is the bread that came down from heaven; and by adding (ver. 49, 50,) that it is not in this case, as it was with your fathers, who interpret this text as chiefly referring to that ordinance; and nothing can be more peculiar than many consequences, which have been drawn from it in that view, though some of them be authorised by very great names.

55 Whose eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna

of the Son of man as the bread of life, ye have no life in you. Dr. Mill (in his notes here) seems to approve the abridgment; but I think Dr. Whately has so fully proved it to be spurious, that I content myself with referring the reader to him (see his Examen Minutum, p. 49) and in Wenham on this text (Cor. Philos. Vol. I. p. 542, 543.)

1 I live by the protection and care of the Father. The hæmis and derived nature of Christ had, no doubt, the same dependence on the providence and influence of God that other creatures have; and though Christ as Mediator has life in himself (as it was said before, John v. 26, sect. 314.), yet was it given him of the Father, and it is he that qualifies Christ by his Spirit for the great work, for which he sent him into the world; and he accordingly is elsewhere represented as anointing him in it. Isa. xiii. 1. Compare John viii. 29, and xvi. 32.
who did eat manna in the wilderness, and yet are dead, without having found any efficacy in it to communicate a spiritual or secure an eternal life; [but] he that eats this bread, shall live for ever.

IMPROVEMENT.

41, 52 The hearers of Christ murmured, and perversely objected against his doctrine. Let not ministers now wonder, if the like capricious humour sometimes prompts their hearers to seek occasion of offence, where there is none: let them learn of their great Master in meekness, to instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (2 Tim. ii. 25.) Our Lord expressly asserts the necessity of being taught and drawn by the Father, in order to our knowing him, and coming to him. Let us therefore humbly seek these influences ourselves, and fix our dependance upon them in all our attempts upon others, for their conversion and edification.

48, 51 Christ here gives us line upon line, and precept upon precept, to illustrate and enforce this important doctrine of the necessity of regarding him as the bread of life, and of feeding by faith on his flesh and blood, which he has given for the life of the world. Let us, as we desire any part in his saving blessings, most thankfully receive his flesh as meat indeed, and his blood as drink indeed. May God be merciful to those that call themselves Christians, and yet are strangers to such a believing intercourse with Christ, and to the derivation of spiritual life from him! If this be enthusiasm, it is the enthusiasm of scripture; and the denial of forgetfulness of these important doctrines, is like a fatal palsy to the soul, which chills, as it were, all its nerves, and destroys at once its sensibility and vigour, its pleasure and usefulness.

To represent and inculcate these great truths, our Lord afterwards instituted the sacrament of his supper, in which we not only commemorate his sufferings, but our own concern in them. It is the language of every intelligent approach to it, that we acknowledge the life of our souls to depend on the merit of his atonement, and the communications of his grace. This is eating his flesh, and drinking his blood: may we be nourished by it to eternal life!

\[k\] Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. This version of the words is perfectly agreeable to the original, ο\[m\] νε\[m\]σι\[m\] τε\[n\] κα\[d\]\[n\]ι\[s\] τε\[m\] κα\[n\]\[s\] α\[p\]δι\[m\] πε\[m\]\[n\]ναι τε\[m\] μα\[n\]να. But I should not perhaps have taken too great a liberty, had I avoided the ellipsis in the Greek, and ventured to reduce it to a plainer form, by rendering it, Not like that manna which your fathers did eat, and are dead. So Grotius has explained this passage; and though it does not so exactly answer to the Greek, and cannot pass for a literal translation, it plainly expresses the sense of the place, and the words run more natural and easy. See Grotius in loc.

\[a\] As
Then though this mortal part of our nature drop into the dust, our souls will live and triumph; nor shall our bodies finally perish, but be raised up by Christ in the great day, to take their part in the full joy of our Lord. There these intermediate ordinances shall cease, and copious uninterrupted streams of Divine teachings, and Divine influences, shall sweetly flow in upon our ever improving, active, rejoicing minds!

SECT. LXXXII.

Christ having declared that the foregoing discourse was to be taken in a spiritual sense, is forsaken by many of his disciples; and while the apostles assure him of their continued fidelity, he intimates the treachery of Judas. John VI. 59, to the end.

John VI. 59.

These things which had been now delivered by our Lord, he spake before all sorts of hearers in the synagogue, as he was teaching at Capernaum; and, for wise reasons, he involved a VI. 59. part of his discourse in figurative and mysterious language; as in particular, that which related to eating his flesh, and drinking his blood.

Many therefore of those who followed him as 60 his disciples, having heard [it,] said, This is a difficult and strange discourse; and who can hear or understand it? In its literal sense it is plainly absurd, and we know not, what other interpretation to give it.

But Jesus knowing in himself, that his disciples 61 murmured about it, though they did not speak out their objections and scruples, said unto them: Does this, which you have just now heard, so much offend you? and do you stumble at it as incredible? [What] then, if ye shall see the Son of 62 man ascending up into heaven, where he was before? would you then understand what was meant by the bread of life coming down from thence,

1 As he was teaching at Capernaum. Probably (as was hinted above, ver. 25, p. 424.) the foregoing discourses were introduced after the reading of the law, and prayer. We are not to wonder at the dialogue which passed here: there are many other instances of disputes which either Christ or his apostles had with the Jews in their synagogues. See Matt. xii. 2, & seq. sect. 1. Luke xvi. 10, & seq. sect. xxix. Acts xiii. 41, & seq. and xvi. 17.

6 Ascending up into heaven, where he was before. A very celebrated writer thinks this refers to the Son of man appearing to Daniel in the clouds of heaven: but his appearing to him thus in vision was no more an argument of his being there at the time of that appearance, than the appearance of the symbols of the Greek and Roman empires was an argument of their existence at that time.

c Would
He asks the twelve, whether they also would forsake him.

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he farther said, For this reason I told you, (ver. 44.) that no man can come unto me, except it be given him of my Father; because I know that the prejudices of corrupt nature lie strong against such a doctrine as I publish, and that nothing but Divine grace will subdue them.

66 From this time many, who had borne the name of his disciples, abusing and misrepresenting what he had now delivered, as if it had been either absurd or utterly unintelligible, went back and walked no more with him; plainly perceiving that their true character was now discovered, as well as that their secular views were disappointed.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?
Christ declares his knowledge of the treachery of Judas.

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon; for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

I see not the least reason with Eisner to expunge the note of interrogation, and render it, I have not chosen you all; which would entirely enervate the spirit of the following clause.

According to Mr. Locke, our Lord intimates that this was the reason why he had not more plainly declared himself to be the Messiah, because he knew Judas had not accused him of rebellion against the Romans; (for so the word ἁπαλέως does sometimes signify, a false accuser; see 1 Tim. iii. 11. 2 Tim. iii. 3. and Tit. ii. 3.) But I can see no proof that Judas, from the beginning, intended to betray Christ. It is more probable he at first engaged with him in expectation of secular advantage; and finding those views disappointed, he might now begin to form that detestable scheme which he afterwards executed. If this was the occasion on which he first entertained the thought (as I think it probably might,) one would imagine that such an intimation of his secret wickedness must have struck him to the heart.

The words ἡμιδύνα αὐτὸν παραδίδοντα, may properly, though not necessarily, import thus much; and, I think, had not this been actually the case, Christ would not have said he is a devil, but rather that he would become one.

Which
We have, through the Divine goodness, been made acquainted with those gospel-truths, in their full evidence, and mutual connection, which were more obscurely hinted to those who attended on Christ’s personal ministry: may we therefore hearken to the 63 spiritual sense of this sublime and excellent discourse! And as 62 the credible account of his ascension into glory is now added to the rest, let us receive the whole of his doctrine with the most humble submission: earnestly intreating the influences of Divine grace, 65 that we may not only be drawn to Christ, but be so firmly attached to his interest, that whoever else forsake him, we may never go away. On the contrary, may we rather collect an argument from 67 their ingratitude and folly, more strenuously and more affectionately to adhere to him! Indeed to whom should we go, but to 68 him? He has the words of eternal life. From him therefore, in all lowly subjection of soul, may we learn those lessons on which our everlasting happiness depends!

May we never, like Judas, conceal a treacherous and disaffected heart, under the specious appearance of piety and goodness! This 64, 71 would be only imposing on ourselves; for his penetrating eye can never be deceived. May we approve the integrity of our souls in his sight, and repose an unlimited confidence in him, as 69 one whom we believe and know to be a Divine Saviour, Christ the Son of the living God!

**SECT. LXXXIII.**

Our Lord vindicates his disciples in neglecting the traditions of the Pharisees, and condemns those corrupt teachers for preferring such traditions to the precepts of the Divine law. Mat. XV. 1—9. Mark VII. 1—13.
Pharisees and certain of the scribes, which were of, and came from Jerusalem. [Mat. XV. 1.]

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defilement, (that is to say, with unwashed) hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands often, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And when they came from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brasse vessels, and of tables.

alarm to the Jews, and especially to their established teachers; so that to obviate the effect of them, and to prevent the success of his ministry, there were then gathered unto Jesus the Pharisees, and some of the scribes, who were stated inhabitants of Jerusalem, and came from thence, on purpose to watch, and if possible, to ensnare him. And, as they looked on all his actions with a most malignant eye, they soon found an opportunity to cavil; for seeing some of his disciples eat bread with what they counted polluted (that is, with unwashed) hands, they found fault with them among themselves.

For this was a favourite tenet of the Pharisees, on which they laid a particular stress, and indeed almost all the Jews pay a considerable regard to it, that they do not allow themselves to eat without washing their hands often with abundance of exactness, and particularly just before their meals: and this they observe, not in consequence of any express Divine command, but as holding the tradition of the elders, who thought this scrupulous care a decent expression and memorial of their concern to keep themselves free from whatsoever might pollute them. And especially when they come from the market, or any other place of public concourse, lest they should without their knowledge have touched any thing unclean, they eat not, till they have washed their hands at least, if not their whole body. And there are many other things, besides the washing of their hands, which they in like manner receive and maintain by the authority of the same tradition, as the washing of cups and pots in which their food is put, and of the brasse vessels made use of in preparing it, and even of the very couches on which they lie at their meals.

Then the word ἐφανεροῖσθαι is ambiguous, being very seldom used. Theophylact's gloss would incline one to render it, as L'Enfant does, up to the elbows; and Beza translates it with the foot. (See Gesenius's Masor and Aaron, lib. i, cap. 10, p. 29.) Not being able certainly to determine the point, I thought it sufficient to add it in the paraphrase, with a note of caution. Cameros, and Land. Capellianus, in loc., explain it of looking up their hands closed, while the water was poured upon them; and I have nothing to object to the reasons they gave for that interpretation.
Christ vindicates their neglect of human traditions.

Then the Pharisees and Scribes, after they had censured the disciples of Christ among themselves (as was observed before), came to Jesus, and asked him, Why do not thy disciples walk and behave themselves according to the tradition of the elders, as other pious and regular Jews do, but transgress [it] in a very obvious and material instance, for they eat with unwashed hands? Can they be so ignorant as not to know the traditions that forbid it? Or are they so profane as not to regard them?

And he answering, said unto them, Nay, but I may with much greater reason ask you, Why do you also transgress what is infinitely more sacred, even the command of God himself, out of regard to your own vain and superstitious tradition? And this, in several instances, you run to such a length, as that you fairly make void the command of God, and render it insignificant, that you may observe your tradition; though you consider not perhaps from whence it comes, or may easily know that it was derived only from a fallible man. I will give you one notorious instance of it, which you cannot dispute: for you well know that God has commanded [by] Moses, saying, “Honour thy father and thy mother):” A precept written with his own finger on the tables of stone, and guarded by that awful sanction, “Whoso curseth his father, or his mother, let him surely die without mercy.” (See Exod. xxi. 17. Lev. xx. 9. and compare Prov. xx. 20. and Deut. xxvii. 16.) Now for any one to suffer his parents to languish in want of the necessary supplies of life, must certainly be a yet more aggravated wickedness, than an impious word, which may possibly escape a man’s lips in a sudden transport of passion.

But what you teach is contradictory to this Divine command; and an ungrateful child may justify himself in the neglect of it, in consequence of your tradition: for you assert, [that] any one may

* For they eat with unwashed hands.* It is, in the original, *eat bread*; and I have sometimes retained the *Hebraism*, but did not think it necessary always to do it. Every attentive reader must have observed that *food in general* is called *bread* in a multitude of places; and bread is sometimes put even for the provisions of a royal table, 2 Sam. ix. 7, 10, and xii. 20.

*In a sudden transport of passion.* Dr. Lightfoot (in his *Hor. Heb. in loc.*) has well observed, that it is probable a child must be in a transport of very unfruitful passion, when he made the rash vow afterwards mentioned, that he would never in any instance relieve his parent, so that it was a kind of cursing him: but had it been said ever so coolly and deliberately, the argument here suggested would have taken place, and would have justified the connection.

5 Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but [transgress it, for they] eat bread with unwashed hands? [Mat. XV. 2.]

Mat. XV. 5. But he answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? [Mark VII. 9.—]

Mark VII. 9. Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Mat. XV. 4. For God [by Moses] commanded, saying, Honour thy father and [thy] mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. [Mark VII. 10.]

Mark VII. 11. But ye say, [Whosoever]
The word was made of none effect through the elders' tradition. 441

east~] shall say to his father or mother, It is corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, [and Honour not his father or his mother,] he shall be free. [MAT. XV. 5, 6.—] 12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother.

MAT. XV.—6. Thus have ye made the [word and] commandment of God of none effect [through your tradition, which ye have delivered; and many such like things do ye.] [MARK VII. 13.]

7 Ye hypocrites, well may say to his father or mother, [Let that be] corban, that is to say, let it be reckoned as a devoted thing, or be considered as a gift dedicated to the altar, by which thou mightest otherwise receive advantage from me, and he shall then be free from the command, and not be under any obligation to honour and relieve his father or his mother. And in this manner, out of regard to such a rash and impious vow, you not only suppose he may innocently omit this evident duty of natural as well as revealed religion, but will no more permit him to do any thing for the relief even of his father or his mother. And [thus] then it is evidently to be seen, according to the charge which I advanced against you, that, through a gross and impious superstition, you have even invalidated the word, [and,] as it were, annihilated the command of God, by means of your tradition, which you have delivered as a rule of life to be observed with the most scrupulous exactness: and it were easy to be shewn, in other instances, that many such like things you do.

7 Ye hypocrites, well may say to his father or mother, [Let that be] corban, that is to say, a gift.] So I choose with Elstee (Observ. Vol. I. p. 74.) to render the words in Matthew, of an even, though, I confess, not without some doubt. But I think it is best to leave as little as possible to be supplied in order to make up the sense; and on that principle I should prefer the addition in our own translation of this place, he shall be free, to that which Sir Norton Knatchbull proposes, who would render it, You say, [a man honours his parents,] if he say, It is corban, &c. thus supposing the passage to imply a repetition from the verse before. But such a construction seems to me quite unparalleled, and very unnatural. Grotius makes xwv, redundant, and would render it, You teach, that whoever shall say to his father or mother, It is a gift, &c. —let him not honour his father and mother: but in the way that I have rendered it, the sense is in effect the same, and the common sense of xwv is retained.—Some considerable critics, particularly Drausius (de Tribus Sectis, lib. ii. cap. 17.) and Godsew (Moses and Aaron, lib. vi. cap. 6.) give a very elegant turn to the following words, ἔποιες γὰρ καὶ ἔποιες ἐν τῷ ναῷ, and would suppose them to be unoth expressed in the elliptical manner, which was very common among the Hebrews: if so, they should be rendered, I swear by corban, or the sacred treasury, thou shalt receive no benefit from me. But as both the evangelists insert the particle τὰ, which in this construction has no force, I cannot wholly approve this version, and therefore did not insert it. Perhaps some of these pretended vices of theirs amounted to no more, than an obligation to leave some proportion of the overplus of their estates to the temple treasury after their death, which might in a thousand instances be made the cloak of avarice and cruelty. The indeterminate manner of speaking, it must be owned, would lead to such a supposition. Cappelius with immense labour (and, I think, beyond all further controversy) has asserted the interpretation of this text as given in the paraphrase 4 and has produced a vast variety of passages from the Talmud, to show the superstitious regard the Jews had to such rash and unnatural vows, as well as the ridiculous ways they sometimes took to evade them. See Lud. Cappell. in Mat. xv. 5.

b Advantage from me.] Sir Norton Knatchbull would render ἐξ ὑμῶν, of my substance, or possession: but had this been the exact rendering, it would have been in τῷ ἔρατε, of which instances occur in Greek authors.
**Reflections on a zeal for imposing human inventions.**

**SECT. lxxxiii.** O you hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of such as you, and very fitly may those words which he delivers in the name of God be applied to you, where he is saying of the superstitious Jews of his own time, what may be evidently seen to agree to you, (as it is written, Isa. xxix. 13.)

8 "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; they make a pompous profession, and pretend to a great deal of devotion and piety; but it plainly appears, that their heart is far estranged from me." Notwithstanding all your talk, then, of strictness in religion; yet as this appears to be expressive of your real character, the doom of hypocrites belongs to you; and God may justly affirm of such (as it is added there), "In vain do they worship me, while they teach doctrines or lessons [that are] merely human inventions and injunctions, being only the precepts of men, that have no stamp of the Divine authority upon them," which yet they would insist upon as necessary parts of religion, and would impose them on the consciousness of others. And this (as I have said) you may be charged with, not in one single instance only, but in many; for, leaving the commandment of God, you maintain the tradition of men, [relating to] the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things you do, with a zeal by no means required, and on which at best you lay a very disproportional stress.

**Mat. xv. 7.** How miserable is the case of those who, while they earnestly contend for the forms of Divine worship, are losing both the improvement and reward, which might be expected from a regular attendance upon it! This is the case of all, who draw near to God with their lips, while their hearts are far from him. May we abhor the vanity of such hypocritical behaviour in the presence of Him, who searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men.

Let

**IMPROVEMENT.**

1 While they teach doctrines that are human injunctions. So I render διδασκαλίας, διδασκαλίας ημιμαθών, ανάγκαιας. The words seem to allude to Isa. xxix. 13, where, though the present Hebrew copies read the text to our translation of the place, Their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men, Groenius has shown how a small variation in the original might justify the seventy in that version of theirs, which the evangelist here follows, the sense of which is much the same with what we retain in that place. I would only observe farther, that διδασκαλία in general signifies any lesson, and not merely (as Bishop Hopkins contends) a doctrine of faith; and that the purpose to which our Lord here applies it, plainly shews that it must refer to ritual injunctions. See Bishop Hopkins’s Works, p. 150, 151.
Let us learn from this just and severe sentence which our Lord passes on these superstitious Pharisees, to avoid the temper he condemns in them. It much less becomes us as Christians, and especially as protestants, to impose on our brethren with rigorous severity those doctrinal decisions, or those ritual observances, which have not their express foundation in the word of God, to which we so constantly appeal as to our common rule. Happy had it been for the church in all ages and nations, had men exerted that zeal for the truths and the institutions of God in the beauty and glory of their native simplicity, which has carried them on to defend and propagate their own inventions, till religion itself has almost sunk under the weight of the ornaments in which they have dressed it, and the unwieldy armour which they have hung about it!

Let children learn from the command which Christ has vindicated, to honour their parents by a tender care of them in their declining days; remembering, that as no filial duty and gratitude can ever fully repay our obligations to such friends, so an affectionate regard to them is a proper and necessary expression of our filial piety to the great Father of our spirits. Justly may he esteem his temples profaned, rather than adorned, by the most costly gifts, which are the spoils of nature, and the trophies of inhumanity.

SECT. LXXXIV.

Christ pursues his discourse against the Pharisees, and inculcates the necessity of inward purity. Mat. XV. 10—20. Mark VII. 14—23.

Mark VII. 14.

And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand. [Mat. XV. 10.]

Mark VII. 14.

Now when our Lord had thus condemned the Pharisees to their face, for the unwarrantable stress they laid on their vain and precarious traditions, he took this opportunity to undeceive the people, and to let them see how insignificant this outward strictness was, on which the Pharisees insisted; and having called all the multitude together to him, he pursued his discourse, and said to them, Let me charge every one of you attentively to hearken to me in what I now deliver, and give all diligence that you may understand it; lest for want of doing it, out of regard to your admired teachers, you impose on your own souls in a matter of the greatest importance. There is nothing which enters into a man from without, that can really pollute him in the sight of God: it is not, I say, that which is originally from without, and goes into the mouth, that

15 There is nothing from without a man, that, entering into him, can defile him; not
that renders him polluted; but the things which come out of a man are those that actually defile him, [even] that which comes out of [his] mouth. 

And I would have you to observe, that much is comprehended in these few important words:

16 remember them therefore, and think of them; and if any one of you has ears to hear, and a heart to consider, let him hear these things, and reflect seriously upon them.

17 And when he was come into the house apart from the multitude, his disciples came to him, according to their usual custom, and asked him concerning the meaning of this parable, or sentences, and, to them, obscure saying. And they likewise said to him at the same time, Knowest thou, and art thou sufficiently aware of it, that the Pharisees, who heard this saying, were highly offended at it, as what appears to strike directly (as they represent the matter) both at the authority of the oral and of the written law?

13 But he answered and said, As for their displeasure, I am very little concerned about it, nor shall I ever labour to ingratiate myself with persons of their character: for I consider them as a set of men doomed to destruction: and indeed every plantation which my heavenly Father has not planted, and every thing in religion, which, like the vain traditions they advance, is not founded in Divine institution, but human invention, shall sooner or later, be rooted up, and cast out of the vineyard, as an incumbrance to it.

Let them alone, and do not trouble or concern yourselves about their censures; they are blind guides of the blind populace, that implicitly commit themselves to their conduct: and it is very easy to foresee the consequence; for, if the blind shall undertake to lead the blind, they will both fall into a ditch together, and incumber instead of helping each other (compare Luke vi. 39, p. 290); and so will these perverse Pharisees, and their careless followers, perish together.

But Peter answering said unto him, We would desire thee, however, to explain more clearly to us what is the meaning of this parable which they

[not that which goeth into the mouth,] but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man, [even that which cometh out of the mouth.] [MAT. XV. 11.]

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And, when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples [came, and] asked him concerning the parable; [MAT. XV. 12.—]

And said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

13 But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

14 Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind: and, if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15 Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

---

a Not that which goes into the mouth, &c.] Though it is very true a man may bring guilt upon himself by eating what is pernicious to his health, or by excess in the quantity of food and liquor, and a Jew might have done it by presumptuously eating what was forbidden by the Mosaic law, which still continued in force; yet in all these instances the pollution would arise from the wickedness of the heart, and be just proportionable to it; which is all our Lord asserts.

b Corrupt
they are so much offended at; for even we ourselves are at a loss to reconcile it, not only with the Pharisaic traditions, but with the injunctions of the law of God, which hath so expressly enjoined a difference of meats.

And Jesus said to them, Are you likewise still so void of understanding, as not to apprehend the sense of what I said? by which you might have easily perceived, that I did not intend immediately to supersede any precept of the law relating to the distinction of clean and unclean food; but only to declare that it is the temper of the mind which God regards, and that no external accident, separate from this, can render a man offensive to him: and, after all the instructions I have given you, do you not yet perceive that it must needs be so, that whatsoever enters from without into a man, cannot defile him? And that for this obvious reason, because whatsoever enters in at the mouth, enters not into his heart, or mind, in which sin or holiness is seated, and which alone is capable of moral excellence or pollution; but goes into the belly, and, passing through the bowels, by the course of natural digestion and evacuation, is thrown off into the vault, a place which cleanses, as it were, and carries off the grosser dregs of all the food that a man eats.

But, said he, It is indeed, that which cometh out of a man, that really defiles a man, and makes him sinful in the sight of God, as it originally proceeds from within: for the things proceeding out of the mouth, come forth from the heart; and these are they that actually defile a man, as they must thus be tainted with a great deal of moral guilt and malignity. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders; [Matt. XV. 19.]

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders; [Matt. XV. 19.]

b Corrupt and evil reasonings, or sophisms, I choose to render evil reasonings, rather than merely evil thoughts, as better suiting both the original and the occasion, and as containing a more universal and important truth; for those thoughts only defile the heart, which it willingly admits, and does, as it were, hold a parley and converse with. And, I fear, there are multitudes in the present age, like those Pharisees, who are contracting immense guilt by those corrupt and sophistical reasonings, on the subtilty of which they may highly value themselves and each other.

Vol. vi. 311
ality and uncleanness; all acts of violence, and murders; And thefts, and insatiable desires, and malevolent affections of inhumanity and cruelty to mankind; the injuries arising from false witnessings, and deceit; the vile abominations of lasciviousness and intemperance; an evil envious grudging eye, and that odious temper which discovers itself by such a look (compare Prov. xxiii. 6; xxviii. 22; and xxii. 9); the horrid outrages of blasphemy, and pride; and, in a word, all kind of folly; wild imaginations, ungoverned passions, and many other moral irre-23 gularities. All these evils, and many more which I might mention, come from within, and these are the things which do indeed pollute a man, and render him an object odious to the infinite purity of the Divine nature: but the bare undesigned violation of a ceremonial precept cannot do it; and much more evident it is, that to eat with unwashed hands, which has no moral impurity in it, and no authority but a vain tradition to forbid it, does not, and cannot defile a man: and it must have a very bad tendency to teach people to place religion in things so entirely foreign to it.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

May we be all taught of God to maintain a constant watch over our own hearts, as remembering that from thence are the issues of life, and from thence the sources of sin and death! (Prov. iv. 23.) All the secret motions and sentiments of them are open to the Divine examination and inspection. There then may we begin our cares, to purify ourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit, as ever we would perfect holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

We see, what secret abominations our Lord has here discovered and marked out. It is a matter of much lamentation, that our corrupted nature abounds with such poisonous productions: let us earnestly pray, that they may be rooted out by Divine grace, lest we ourselves be rooted out of God's vineyard, as at once incumbering and deforming it!

May the blessed spirit of God create in us a clean heart, and implant

---

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, [false witnesses,] deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; [MAT. XV.—19.]

23 All these evil things come from within, and [these are the things which] defile the man: [but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.] [MAT. XV. 20.]
implant in our souls a temper opposite to all these enormities! May candour and purity, integrity and tenderness, piety and generosity, humility and wisdom, prevail in our hearts and shine in our conduct! And, in a word, whatsoever things are true and honest, just and pure, lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, let us think on these things, and practise them! (Phil. iv. 8.)

Let those, who are employed to guide others, be especially solicitous to know and pursue the right way themselves; lest instead of saving themselves, and those that hear them, they both of them at last perish together. We are in danger of it, if, like these Pharisees, we inculcate on our hearers a zeal for the circumstantial and appendages of religion, while its essentials are neglected; and perhaps some of the greatest enormities of the mind are consecrated under an honourable name, and profanely listed under the banner of the God of holiness and love.

SECT. LXXXV.

Jesus withdraws to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and there expels a demon from the daughter of a Canaanitish woman; and afterwards, in his return to Galilee, cures a man who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Mat. XV. 21—29. Mark VII. 24, to the end.

Mark VII. 24.

And from thence [Jesus] arose, and [departed] into the borders [or coasts] of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid. [Mat. XV. 21.]

25—For [behold, a woman of Canaan out of the same coasts,] whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him, and came, [and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.] [Mat. XV. 22.]

And Jesus arose from thence, and withdrew from the place where these invidious enemies were continually lying in wait for him, to the borders [or] coasts of Tyre and Sidon: and when he was come into those parts, he entered into a house as privately as he could, and would have had no one know [it] that he was there; but he had so many eyes upon him wherever he went, that he could not long be concealed in that retirement.

Yea, an occurrence quickly happened, that spread the fame of his arrival there through all the neighbourhood; for behold, a Canaanitish woman came out of those coasts, to whom, though an alien from the common-wealth of Israel, he displayed his power and goodness in a very remarkable manner. Now this was one, whose young daughter, for whom she had a most tender affection, was possessed by an unclean and malignant spirit, which often threw her into violent agonies: and, as the fame of Jesus, and of the miracles that he had wrought, was known in all those parts, the afflicted mother was no sooner told...
told of his arrival, but having now an expectation of relief from the great things she had heard of him, she came immediately to the place where he was, and cried unto him at some distance with the most humble importunity, saying, Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou son of David; consider my distressed case, and extend thy compassion to me, though a stranger; for my poor unhappy daughter is grievously tormented by a cruel demon, that delights in the misery of my child; and I well know that thou art able to cure her.

26 Now it is here to be observed as somewhat singular, that (as we just now hinted) the woman was not a Jew, but a Greek, a native of Syrophænicia, or of that tract of Canaan in which they now were: and therefore, though she thus earnestly besought him to cast out the demon from her daughter, and the case seemed so compassionable, our Lord thought it proper not to take such immediate notice of it, as he had commonly done in the like instances; but, turning from her, as if he were regardless of her case, he answered her not a word.

And his disciples came to him on the occasion, and entreated him, saying, Dismiss her with the grant of her request: for she is so overwhelmed with her affliction, that she crieth after us wherever she sees us; and not only gives us trouble, but is like to make thy abode here more public than thou wouldest have it. But he replying said, I am not sent, but to seek and recover the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and am charged with no immediate message to the Gentile nations, to whom you all know this woman belongs.

25 Then, perceiving her case was the subject of their discourse, she came nearer, and fell down at his feet in a most importunate manner, and worshipped

26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophænician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she, and fell at his feet,
But on her urging her request, he cures her daughter.

and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. [Mark VII—25.]

Mark VII. 25. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. [Matt. XV. 26.]

25 And she answered and said unto him, [truth:] Lord; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs [which fall from their master's table.] [Matt. XV. 27.]

Matt. XV. 28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: [for this saying, go thy way, and] be it unto thee even as thou wilt: [the devil is gone out of thy daughter.] And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. [Mark VII. 29.]

Mark VII. 30. And, when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

Matt. XV. 29. And [again] Jesus departed from thence [from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,] and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee [through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis] and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. [Mark VII. 31.]

d True, Lord, yet the dogs, &c.] Both Matthew and Mark use the word meat, which we have rendered in the former Truth, and in the latter, Yes. It is sometimes a form of assenting, and sometimes of entreating. Compare Philon. ver. 20, and see Blackwell's Sacred Classics, vol. I. p 143.
He cures one that was deaf and almost dumb.

Mark VII. 32. And among many other diseased persons, they brought him one who was very deaf, and had so great an impediment in his speech that he was almost dumb too: and, making known his case to Jesus, they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him, as he had done in many other cases, making no doubt that he would upon this be perfectly restored to his hearing and speech.

33 And, taking him aside from the multitude, which was very numerous, he put his fingers into his ears, where there was a great obstruction, which hindered him from hearing distinctly; and, spitting on his finger, he touched his tongue. And, looking up, as to his Father in heaven, he groaned, in token of his earnest desire that these disorders might be removed; and then said unto him, as with a voice of Divine authority, Ephphatha; that is, Be opened. And immediately the word had its effect; and his ears were accordingly opened, and the string of his tongue, which had hindered it from moving freely, was loosed, and he spoke distinctly and in an articulate manner, which from his birth he had never done before. And he charged the man himself, and them that were near, that they should tell no one of it; but, the more he charged them to conceal it, the more they were charmed with his modesty and humility, and consequently so much the more abundantly did they proclaim [the cure]. And all they who heard of it were struck with exceeding astonishment, and said, He has done all things well, and performed the most extraordinary cures in the most amiable and graceful manner; making, in this and many other instances, both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

MARK VII. 32. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech: and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue:

34 And, looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha; that is, Be opened.

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it.

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

IMPROVE-

He put his fingers into his ears, and, spitting, touched his tongue.]

If any should ask, Why our Lord used these actions when a word alone would have been sufficient; and such means (if they may be called means) could in themselves do nothing at all to answer the end? I frankly confess I cannot tell, nor am I at all concerned to know. Yet I am ready to imagine it might be intended to intimate, in a very lively manner, that we are not to pretend to enter into the reasons of all his actions; and that, where we are sure that any observance whatever is appointed by him, we are humbly to submit to it, though we cannot see why it was preferred to others which our imagination might suggest. Had Christ's patients, like Naaman (2 Kings v. 11, 12), been too nice in their exceptions on these occasions, I fear they would have lost their cure; and the indulgence of a curious or a petulant mind would have been but a poor equivalent for such a loss.

Happy
Improvement.

If there be any thing in the whole history of our Lord, which might have a tendency to discourage and terrify the humble penitent, it would surely be his treatment of this poor Canaanitish woman, when she made so humble and so affectionate an application to him; first keeping silence; then intimating in words a coldness, not to say an aversion; and at last representing her but as a dog in comparison of the Jews. Surely such an answer had almost broke her heart, had it not been secretly supported by his grace, while his conduct seemed so unkind. Happy are they that, like her (who, though a Gentile, did in this instance approve herself a true daughter of Abraham), can against hope believe in hope! (Rom. iv. 18.) Happy they, who can thus extract arguments even from discouragement! They will finally conquer and triumph, as this pious woman did; and the honours of their faith will be commemorated even by Christ himself, who soon indulges the overflowing tenderness of his heart in the applause he bestows upon her, and the ample grant he makes her of all that she asked in its utmost extent.

The story of the deaf man, whose ears were opened and his tongue loosed, is one additional instance, among many more, of Christ's humility, as well as of his power. He retired from the admiring multitude; he used means when he could easily have wrought without them; he solemnly addressed his heavenly Father, virtually acknowledging, while he looked up to heaven, that, as man, he derived his miraculous power from above; and he was so far superior to the sentiments of vanity, that he commanded men to conceal the most glorious and benevolent actions. May all his followers, and especially his ministers, learn of him who was thus meek and lowly! (Mat. xi. 29.) neither acting as in their own strength, when they attempt a spiritual cure; nor proclaiming their own praises, when they have effected it. Then will they likewise do all things well; and there will be that beauty in the manner, which no wise man would entirely neglect, even in those actions, which are in themselves most excellent and great.

1 Happy are they, &c.] The pious, moderate, and eloquent Bishop Hall has a fine contemplation on this subject, to which I refer the reader with pleasure; and take this opportunity of observing that (allowing something for the peculiarities of the age in which he lived) I have met with no devotional writings on the historical part of scripture, which have generally given me so much entertainment as his.

2 The
AND while Jesus was seated on the mountain to which he went up, (Mat. xv. 29,) there came to him, besides the deaf man of whom we have just been speaking, great multitudes, having brought along with them persons who were lame, or blind, or dumb, [or] maimed by the loss of a limb, and many others, who had different complaints; and they cast them at the feet of Jesus, entreating his compassion, which failed not to operate on such occasions, and he healed them all.

And so many and various were the displays of his miraculous power in the cures he wrought that the whole multitude was perfectly amazed, when they beheld the dumb speaking forth the praises of God and of their great Deliverer; the maimed made whole by the recovery of hands and arms which they had lost, or which were grown quite useless to them; a the lame walking with vigour and agility, and the blind seeing every object distinctly, and immediately bearing, without any inconvenience, the full force of unaccustomed light: b and, struck with such various and pleasing wonders, they glorified the God of Israel, who had raised up so illustrious a Prophet to his people, and sent help to so many afflicted creatures whom no human power could have restored.

This concourse of people continued with him much longer.

a The maimed made whole.] The word ἰκανία, which we render maimed, does, in the strictest propriety (as Fesitus observes,) signify one whose hand or arm has been cut off (see Mark ix. 43,) but it is sometimes applied to those who only were disabled in those parts. (See Beza and Casaubon, in loc.) And though in some rare instances it may be used to signify a lameness in the feet (see Ewser. Obscr. Vol. I. p. 77, and Albert. Obscr. p. 109,) yet, as it is here opposed to εὐλογίας, 'ευφυενάδως, the lame walking, it must undoubtedly be limited as in the paraphrase.—It is reasonable to suppose that among the many maimed, who were brought on such occasions, there were some whose limbs had been cut off; and, I think, hardly any of the miracles of our Lord were more illustrious and amazing than the recovery of such.

b Bearing—the full force of unaccustomed light.] So far as we can judge by all the stories of the blind restored to sight, which occur in the gospel, this was universally the case; and I could not forbear pointing out so wonderful a circumstance.

c They
those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them. [MAT. XV. 32.—]

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: [MAT. XV. 32—]

3 And [I will not] send them away fasting to their own houses, lest they faint by the way: for divers of them came from afar. [MAT. XV. 32—]

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here? [Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?] [MAT. XV. 33—]

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, [and a few little fishes.] [MAT. XV. 34—]

6 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

They lodg'd two nights together in the fields.] This we may infer from the word fields. The season of the year was pleasing, it being, as we have observed, quickly after the summer. (See sect. LXXXIV. note 5. p. 488.) And besides, that the great number of cares, which had been wrought but just before, might animate them, perhaps they might conclude that the miracles of Christ, which was displayed in so many glorious miracles around them, would ender preserve their lives from being endangered by the large dews which fell in the night, or restore them from any disorder they might contract by their eagerness to attend on his ministry.

Vol. vi. 31

The people having been with him three days, he pities them. 453
He feeds four thousand with seven loaves and a few fishes.

He feeds four thousand with seven loaves and a few fishes. And he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them: and they did set them before the people. [Mat. XV. 35, 36.]

And they had a few small fishes; and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.

So they did all eat, and were abundantly satisfied: and the disciples afterwards collected what was left, and they took up no less than seven baskets full of what remained of the fragments; which Jesus ordered them to gather up, that he might thus convince them in the strongest manner of the greatness of the miracle, and teach them also, at the same time, to use a prudent frugality in the midst of plenty.

And they who had eaten of these loaves and fishes were about four thousand men besides a considerable number of women and children, who were there in company with them, and all partook of the same entertainment.

And, the repast being over, he dismissed the multitude: and immediately after this, entered into a ship with his disciples he crossed the sea, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha (which, with several neighbouring cities, stood in the coast of Magdala, not far from Gadara, on the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee:) and there he had an interview with some Pharisees, which will be related in the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what a circle is our blessed Lord surrounded! Let us pause a little, and endeavour to paint him to our imagination on this mountain, where the astonished multitudes so justly exulted all these

That they might be served as before, in an orderly manner.] See note h on Mark vi. 40. p. 415. Probably here they might sit an hundred in rank, and forty in file, by which means the four thousand men would be exactly disposed as the five thousand had been.

With what a circle is our blessed Lord surrounded!] As this story of feeding the four thousand is so very much the same with what we had in sect. lxxxviii. I refer the reader to the improvement of that section (p. 417.) for practical reflections on the greatest part of this; and choose here to indulge a devout meditation on the number and variety of those cures which Christ performed, which constitutes the whole of this improvement, having been elsewhere but transiently touched upon.
The Pharisees ask him for a sign from heaven.

these mingled wonders of power and of grace. Let us reflect on
the dumb speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, the
deaf hearing, and the blind seeing, that with them we may glorify
the God of Israel.

But who can describe the sentiments of these happy creatures,
who, without any dangerous or painful operation, found themselves,
in a moment, restored beyond all the efforts of nature, and beyond
all the prospects of hope! With what pleasure did the ear, which
had just been opened, listen to the pleasing accents of his instructive
tongue! How did the lame leap around him for joy! and the
maimed extend their recovered hands in grateful acknowledgments
of his new creating power! While the voice of the dumb sang
forth his praises in sounds before unknown; and the eye of the
blind checked the curiosity, which would have prompted it to
range over the various and beautiful objects of unveiled nature,
to fix its rapturous regards on the gracious countenance of him
that had given it the day!

Let us farther reflect with what correspondent pleasure must
our Lord survey these grateful and astonished creatures, while his
benevolent heart took its share in all the delight, which he gave!
These trophies of his greatness, how unlike to those of the field, the
monuments of desolation and slaughter! Trophies, for which the
hero must have struggled with the man, and might sit down and
weep over his own success!

Whose heart is so insensible as not to feel an humane as well
as devout pleasure in the history of these and the like miracles,
though the subjects, on which they were wrought, are long since
mouldering in the dust! But let us farther recollect, that our
Divine Leader has other yet more noble and more permanent
trophies; those immortal spirits, which he has redeemed, and sanc-
tified, and saved! So may our transported souls, O blessed Jesus,
in the consciousness of health, vigour and salvation, behold thee
as our Deliverer! So mayest thou view us with satisfaction, as
the travail of thy soul, in that mountain of God, where we hope to
offer thee nobler praises, and for ever to consecrate to thy ser-
vice those powers, which thou hast recovered from weakness, dis-
honour and ruin.

SECT. LXXXVII.

The Pharisees again demand a sign, and Christ upbraids them
with hypocrisy in doing it; and, having crossed the lake again,
he cautions his disciples against their levity, and that of the

Mat. XVI. 1.

THE Pharisees also
with the Sadducees
came,

Mat. XVI. 1.

AND when Jesus was landed on the opposite
shore of the sea of Galilee, in the coasts of
Magdala, XVI. 1.
Christ upbraids them with their hypocrisy.

Sect. 
Ixxxvii. 

Magdala, the Pharisees and Sadducees, notwithstanding the difference of their principles, and the alienation of their affections from each other, agreed to join in an attempt upon him; and accordingly they came, and began to examine him in a very crafty and ensnaring manner; and, to try him yet farther, desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven; pretending that they could not acquiesce merely in such miracles as he had wrought upon earth, where there was much more room for artifice and deceit, and evil spirits might have some greater influence than in the upper regions. (Compare Mat. xii. 38, sect. lxiii.)

But he, answering, said unto them, It is most apparent, you ask this out of a desire to cavil, rather than to learn the Divine will: for in other cases you take up with degrees of evidence far short of those which you here reject: as for instance, you readily say in an evening, [It will be] fair weather to-morrow, because the sky is this evening of a bright and fiery red: And in the morning, [It will be] tempestuous weather b today, for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, you know how to distinguish the face of the heavens, and to form from thence probable conjectures concerning the weather; and can you not [distinguish] the signs of the present times, and see by the various miracles which are daily performed among you, and the other tokens which attend mine appearance, that this is indeed the period, which you profess to desire with so much eagerness, and which you might discern with much less sagacity?

Mark And, sighing deeply, as being touched in his own spirit with a most compassionate sense of their folly, he answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.

And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

Desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.] On the whole, I am ready to think the two things mentioned in note a on Mat. xii. 38, p. 330, are to be united; and that, what they here demanded was the very thing which Josephus tells us. (Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 13, [at 12.] § 4.) Impostors of those times promised they would shew them from God; under the character of ονείρια σημείων, signs of liberty, or some miraculous appearance from heaven, to assure them of deliverance from the Roman yoke. And on these principles they continued their demands in the apostles' time, (1 Cor. i. 22,) though so many signs from heaven had then been given in the voice from thence; in the preternatural darkness at our Lord's crucifixion; in the descent of angels in repeated instances; and in that of the Holy Spirit, in a visible form, as well as in the most sensible effects. See Dr. Lordner's Credib. book i. chap. 5, § 2, Vol. I. p. 291.

b Tempestuous weather.] So γαστρώντας properly signifies. Dr. Lightfoot justly observes that the Jews used to value themselves highly on their skill in prognosticating the weather. And Grotius has well observed in his note on this place what a variety of signs marked out that time for the arrival of the Messiah.

c Be
Why do this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, [A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.] [MAT. XVI. 4.—]

13 And he left them; and, entering into the ship again, departed to the other side. — [MAT. XVI. 4.]

MAT. XVI. 5. And when his disciples were come to the other side of the sea, they were concerned to find that they had forgotten to take bread; and, having used all the fragments, which they carried over with them in the baskets, they had now no more than one loaf. [MARK VIII. 14.]

6 Then Jesus charged them, saying, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, [and of the leaven of Herod.] [MARK VIII. 15.]

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. [MARK VIII. 16.]

This sufficiently expresses the sense of the words ὅποιος ἐστιν ὁ γεύματος, which are repeated in the original, to urge the caution with the greater force and emphasis.

Their guilt and misery, he said, Why does this generation seek after a farther sign? Verily, as I said once before on this occasion, (MAT. xii. 39, sect. lxxiiii.) I now say it again to you, This is an evil and adulterous generation, which demands a sign, and no such sign, as it requires, shall be given it, unless it be the sign of the prophet Jonah, who lay three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, and then came out alive; to which a most remarkable resemblance will be quickly manifested in the resurrection of the Messiah on the third day, that will moreover be attended with the appearance of an angel coming down from heaven.

And, having said this, he said no longer to debate the matter with persons of so perverse and disingenuous a temper, but left them; and, entering again into the ship, which brought him over the sea, he departed to the other side of the lake.

And when his disciples were come to the other side of the sea, they were concerned to find that they had forgotten to take any bread; and, having used all the fragments, which they carried over with them in the baskets, they had now no more than one loaf with them in the ship.

And Jesus, willing to improve this circumstance, considering what had lately passed, gave them a solemn charge, saying, Be very cautiously on your guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and particularly take heed of the leaven of Herod: intending thereby to caution them against those corrupt mixtures, which these sects had introduced to the degrading of religion; which tended, like leaven, to overspread and sour, and puff up the mind, and so to prevent the efficacy of Divine instruction upon it.

But the slowness of their understanding shewed itself on this occasion, as it had done on many others; and they debated privately among themselves, saying, [It is] surely because we have taken no bread with us, that our Lord thus caution us against the leaven of these men, as if they were also Herodians, might with peculiar propriety be singled out by our Lord, to caution his disciples against them.

See Grutius in loc. and note c on Mark iii. 6, p. 274.

c Be very cautiously on your guard.

d Leaven of Herod.] Those Sadducees, who were also Herodians, might with peculiar propriety be singled out by our Lord, to caution his disciples against them.
they polluted whatever they touched. [Which] when Jesus perceived, as he knew all the secret workings of their minds, he said unto them, 8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, 0 ye of little faith, why do you reason in this manner with yourselves? and why is it, that you are under such concern, because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet consider, after all that you have seen and heard, nor understand what has so lately passed before your eyes? [and] have you still your hearts so hardened, and your minds so stupefied, as not to draw so easy a consequence from such repeated miracles, as to be free from any anxious concern on this account, because you have but one loaf? Are you like so many senseless images? Having eyes, do you not see with them? and, having ears, do you not hear? and, with those natural powers of memory and reflection, do ye not remember, what you were witnesses to but a few days ago? Let me refresh your memories, and ask you, When I broke the five loaves, and you with your own hands distributed them among the five thousand men till they were all satisfied, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, We well remember that we took up twelve. And, added he, when in like manner I divided the seven [loaves] among the four thousand, and fed them to the full, how many baskets full of fragments did you then take up? And they said, Lord, we know we took up seven. 21 And he farther said to them, Since you remember these facts, how is it that you do not understand by them that I did not speak to you concerning bread, so as to blame you for having brought no more bread, but meant that you should be on your guard against the leaven of those erroneous notions and corrupt principles which are so common among the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees?

Then

8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, 0 ye of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because ye have brought no bread? [Mark VIII. 17.—]
9—Do ye not yet perceive, [neither] understand? [have ye your hearts yet hardened?] [Mark VIII. 17.]

Mark VIII. 18. Having eyes, see ye not? and, having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? [Mat. XVI. 9.—]
19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. [Mat. XVI. 9.—]
20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. [Mat. XVI. 10.—]
21 And he said unto them, How is it that you do not understand [that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? ] [Mat. XVI. 11.—]

The learned Dr. Daniel Scott, on Mat. xvi. 10. with his usual accuracy has observed that two different words are used in this and the preceding verse for baskets, καταραγμος and σαρπλος. The former signifies larger baskets; and therefore is translated panniers by the French: we have borrowed the word from them, and it seems, from its etymology, first to have been given them from their being used by bakers to carry about large quantities of bread. The other seem to have been smaller baskets with handles, and such as consequently might easily be carried on the arm. It is observable that our Lord did not affect to rise in the circumstances of the two miracles here mentioned. The latter, though in some particulars inferior to the former, was equally a demonstration of the Divine power of Christ, and therefore equally to the purpose for which it is here mentioned; not to urge that it was, of the two, the more fresh in their memories.
Then they were sensible of their mistake, and
understood that he did not charge them to beware
of the leaven of bread; but that he intended to
warn them of the evil doctrine and example of the
Pharisees and Sadducees, against which so many
of his discourses were most justly levelled.

IMPROVEMENT.

So evident is it, that the circumstances of a scripture story may
be remembered, where the design of it is overlooked or forgot!
It is much to be wished, that those which we have been surveying,
may not increase the number of such instances.

In all those cases, wherein the arm of the Lord has been made
bare in our favour, let us seriously reflect on the Divine power and
19, 20
goodness; and learn from past experience to trust it for the time
to come. Never let us fall into the perverse suspicions of the
Israelites, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? (Psal
19.) But let us be strong in faith, giving glory to God, and cheer-
fully repose ourselves on his care, who can never want wisdom to
judge aright of the necessities of his people, or power to relieve
them, even in the greatest extremities.

We see a new instance of the perverseness of these scribes and
Pharisees. They tempted Christ by unreasonable demands; and
he justly suffered them to go away without the additional demon-
stration they sought. It is not for us to prescribe to God what
degrees of evidence he shall give us. Let us impartially pursue and
improve what we have; and be very careful that our sagacity, and
openness to conviction, in other matters of much less importance,
may not condemn our stupidity or obstinacy, where the truths of
God and the salvation of our souls are concerned.

It is our concern to beware of erroneous principles in religion,
and of every corrupt leaven which might be ready to insinuate
itself into our minds; especially of that, which, like the leaven of
the Pharisees, would exalt our confidence in ourselves; or, like
that of the Sadducees, would impair our persuasion of a future
judgment, and our solicitous concern to live as in the views of it.
May the oracles of Divine truth ever appear to our minds as the
rule, by which all doctrines are to be tried! and let us, in the
spirit of love, contend earnestly for that faith, which we believe to
have been once delivered to the saints; that both our sentiments
and actions may finally be found blameless, unto praise, and honour,
and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ! Amen.
Christ cures a blind man at Bethsaida.

SECT. LXXXVIII.

Christ gradually heals the blind man at Bethsaida; and owns to his disciples, that he is the Messiah, applauding Peter for expressly acknowledging him under that character. Mark VIII. 22—30. Mat. XVI. 13—20. Luke IX. 18—21.

MARK VIII. 22.

And when our Lord had thus crossed the sea, he came to Bethsaida; and his fame being well known there, as soon as he entered the place, they brought him a blind man and entreated him that he would be pleased only to touch him, as being well assured, that this would be sufficient for the recovery of his sight. And, as he chose to work this miracle in private, he took hold of the blind man's hand, and led him out of the town a in the most tender and condescending manner; and having spit upon his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw any thing. And looking up, he said, I do indeed discern the forms of things, in an imperfect manner, and see men walking before me, but it is so obscurely, as that I am hardly able to distinguish them from trees, any otherwise than by their motion b. Then he laid his hands again upon his eyes, and caused him to look up a second time: and upon this he found his sight was perfectly restored, so that he saw every man and thing about him clearly and distinctly. And he sent him away directly to his own house, which lay in some neighbouring village; and said unto him, Enter not into the ungrateful town of Bethsaida, to proclaim what has now been done for thee; neither tell the circumstances of it to any man dwelling in the town, for they are unworthy the knowledge of such a miracle; but content thyself with returning thy acknowledgments to God for his favour to thee; for I assure thee, that in what I do, I am animated only by a sincere regard to the glory of him that sent me, and to the relief of afflicted creatures.

And

a And led him out of the town.] Grotius thinks it was an intimation of his just displeasure against the inhabitants of Bethsaida, for their ingratitude and infidelity, that he would not permit them to be eye-witnesses of this miracle, or even suffer the person who received the cure to go back thither to proclaim it. Compare Mat. xi. 21, sect. lix.

b I see men walking, as trees.] Probably they might not be far from the sea-side, and these might be passengers who happened then to be going by; for it seems by the story, that our Lord, when he took him out of the town, permitted none of his company to attend him.

c Cesare.
27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and [Luke, it came to pass] by the way, [when Jesus came into the coasts of Tyre] [Luke, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him, and] he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? [Matt. XVI. 13. Luke IX. 18.]

Luke IX. 19. They answering, said, [Some say that thou art] John the Baptist; but some say Elia; [and others Jeremiah;] and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. [Matt. · XVI. 14. Mark VIII. 28.]

Mark VIII. 29. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And [Simon] Peter answered saying, [the Son of the living God.] [Matt. XVI. 15. 16. Luke IX. 26.]

And Jesus, with his disciples, went out from the city of Bethsaida, in the neighbourhood of which this miracle had been performed, and came into the towns belonging to a city in the northern part of Canaan, (near mount Lebanon, which had formerly been called Laish, but now bore the name of Cesarea Philippi, having lately been rebuilt by Philip the tetrarch.) And it came to pass by the way, as they were on their journey, when Jesus was just come into [those] parts, he retired a while for devotion; and when he had been praying with his disciples apart he inquired of them, saying, Whom do men say that I, who have so long conversed among them as the Son of man, am? What notions do you find that men generally form of me?

And they, replying, said, Some [say that thou art] John the Baptist risen from the dead, with an additional power of working miracles; but others [say] that thou art Elijah the prophet, who art come to prepare the way of the Messiah; and others say that thou art Jeremiah; and others, in a more general way, that one of the ancient prophets is risen again.

And, after they had told him what were the thoughts of others, he then said to them, for the trial of their faith, But tell me truly and plainly your own sentiments; whom do you yourselves think and say that I am? And Simon Peter immediately answered, with his usual zeal and forwardness, and said to him, in the name of the rest, Lord, we well know that thou art the great expected Messiah; and art not only the Son of man, the worthy Heir of that glorious and extensive kingdom promised to him; but art, in a proper and incommunicable sense, the Son of the ever living God; and we believe in thee as such, and adore thee under that Divine character. And

a Cesarea Philippi, &c.] Philip the tetrarch called the chief city of this tract of land Cesarea, in honour of Tiberius Caesar; and Philip's own name was added, to distinguish it from that other Cesarea so often mentioned in the Acts (chap. viii. 40; ix. 50; x.; xi. 19; xii. 8; xiii. 23, 33, and xv. 4, 14), which was a fine port on the Mediterranean sea, and had been rebuilt by Herod the Great, and named in honour of Augustus Caesar.—Josephus gives Philip so good a character, that some have thought our Lord retired into his territories for security from the insults of his enemies elsewhere. See L'Évesque's Introduction, p. 27.

d Others say that thou art Jeremiah.] Mr. Cradock has observed, that the Jews seem to have had a tradition among them, that Jeremiah the prophet would appear among them, when the Messiah came, to recover the work of the covenant, which they fancied he had hid: 2 Mac. ii. 5. (See Cradock's Harmony, Part II. p. 12.) And Dr. Whiby imagines, they might further encourage themselves in that notion, from Jer. i. 5, 10. (See his note on Mat. xvi. 14.)

e Upon
Christ applauds Peter's confession that he is the Messiah.

And Jesus, replying, said unto him, Thou hast confessed a truth, and a truth of the utmost importance; blessed art thou, therefore, O Simon, Bar-Jonas, (or the son of Jonas,) in being brought thus firmly to believe it: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] to thee, thou hast not learnt it by human report, or the unassisted sagacity of thine own mind; but my Father in heaven has discovered it to thee, and wrought in thy soul this cordial assent in the midst of those various prejudices against it, which present circumstances might suggest. And, as thou hast been so ready to make this acknowledgment, I also in return say to thee, Thou art indeed Peter, (see John i. 42, p. 125,) thou art, as thy name signifies, a substantial rock; and, as thou hast shewn it in this good confession, I assure thee, that upon this rock I will build my church; faith in me as the Son of God shall be its great support, and I will use thee as a glorious instrument in raising it: yea, so immovable and firm shall its foundation be, and so secure the superstructure, that though earth and hell unite their assaults against it, and death, in its most dreadful forms, be armed for its destruction, the gates of hell, or the unseen world, shall not finally prevail against it to its ruin; but one generation of the Papists draw from hence, to support the supremacy of Peter in their wild sense of it, is sufficiently shown by Bishop Burnet on the Articles, p. 150. Calvin, Institut. lib. iv. cap. 6. Dr. Barrow on the Creed, Serm. xxviii. Dr. Patrick in his Sermon on this text, and a multitude more, whom I need not name. — There seems a reference in this expression to the common custom of building cittadels upon a rock.

The gates of hell shall not prevail against it to its ruin. — It is most certain that the phrase here used was also, does generally in the Greek writers signify, the entrance into the invisible world; as Elrner (Vol. I. p. 77, 78), and Albert (Observ. p. 111, 112), have abundantly proved. So the senate use it, Isaiah xxxviii. 10, and Job xxxviii. 17. (Compare Wend. of Sol. xvi. 13.) So that it is equivalent to the gates of death, Psal. cxi. 18, and elsewhere. The plainest and fullest sense seems to be what I have given in the paraphrase; for the vindication of which, see Dr. More's Theological Works, p. 110, and Dr. Whitby's note on this place. Grotius also supposes it refers to the final triumph of the saints over the grave at the general resurrection. This does indeed imply

Mat. XVI. 17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.
The keys of the kingdom of heaven are promised to Peter.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

18 And a victory over the powers and policy of infernal spirits; but I cannot apprehend a reference to this to be chiefly intended; as it is certain, that the Greek word οὐώς (as) does very seldom signify the state of the damned, but generally (as in Hebrew), the invisible world, in general. See Mr. Howse's Works, Vol. II. p. 61, 62.

19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.] As stewards of great families, especially of the royal household bore a key, probably a golden one (as the birds of the bed-chamber do), in token of their office, the phrase of giving a person the key naturally grew into an expression of raising him to great power; (compare Isa. xxv. 52, and Rev. iii. 7.) And this seems more natural and certain than Bishop Burnet's supposition, that Christ refers to the custom of giving a key to the Jewish rabbiies when they were admitted into their office, in token of the power given them to expound the scripture. See Grotius in Luke xi. 52, and Bishop Burnet's Four Discourses, (p. 241, 242.)

Peter's opening the kingdom of heaven, as being the first that preached it, both to the Jews (Acts ii), and to Gentiles (Acts x), may be considered as an illustration of this promise; but I apprehend it more fully explained by the power of binding and loosing afterwards mentioned.

1 Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, &c.] A power to bind and loose may signify, in general, great authority in a family or state; which sense it plainly has, both in Josephus and Plutarch. (See Elsner, Observ. Vol. I. p. 80.) When applied to judges in criminal cases, it signifies to absolve or condemn (see Raphel, Annot. ex Herod. page 169); and when used of teachers, especially in the Jewish language, it refers to the interpretation of the law; and thus to bind is to oblige a person to do or forbear anything in question, or to declare a thing commanded or forbidden; and to loose is to declare the thing to be indifferent, or the person at liberty with respect to it. (See Lightf. Hor. Heb. in loc.)—The learned Stedlen has endeavoured to show that the clause before us must be interpreted in this sense (see Schell, de Synod. lib. ii. cap. 7); and many of the greatest characters for criticism in our own country and abroad have followed him; and among the rest the present celebrated Bishop of Winchester, in his glorious controversy on the subject of Church Authority, I have included that sense, and taken the words in a yet greater extent, as the learned Pullendoff also does (De Habitu Bsp. Christ, &c. § 22—23); and I shall, with great pleasure, submit to those ecclesiastical rulers who shall prove, as the apostles did, their power to explain the laws of Christ in a decisive way, and their authority effectually to absolve or condemn men, according to the sense they give of them.
Reflections on the sure foundation of the church of Christ.

\[\text{Sect. LXXXVIII.}\]

And upon this he strictly charged and commanded his disciples that they should tell no man, at present, this thing concerning him, which he had so expressly acknowledged to them, that he was Jesus the Messiah, and that he actually professed and owned the title; because he knew it was like to be interpreted in a very unjust and unnatural manner, which might have rendered him and his followers obnoxious to the Romans, who would unreasonably look on such a profession as a claim to regal power, and utterly inconsistent with the rights of Caesar.

\[\text{Luke IX. 21.}\]

We here behold the great Foundation of our faith and hope, even Jesus, the Rock of ages, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever (Heb. xiii. 8), who is Christ the Son of the living God. Other foundation can no man lay (1 Cor. iii. 11). On him may our souls rest, and the fiercest tempests shall rage in vain!

18 Our Lord foretold that the gates of hell should not be able to prevail against his church as thus founded; and behold, even to this day, the accomplishment of the prediction. As Christians of one age have sunk into their graves, a new harvest has sprung up in the next; and, in spite of all the artifices of Satan to pervert young minds, and all the advantages with which he attacks them, instead of the Fathers have been the children, to be accounted to the Lord for a generation. (Psal. xlv. 16, and xxii. 30).

19 Let us thankfully adore the Divine goodness herein; and be very sensible how much we are indebted to that goodness in those powers communicated to the apostles, on whom, as subordinate foundations we are built (Eph. ii. 20). As they received so ample a commission, and obtained grace from the Lord to be faithful to it, let us pay the humblest regard to their teachings; as well knowing, that what they have bound on earth is bound in heaven, and what they have inculcated, was solemnly confirmed by a Divine authority.

17 If we have listened with attention to those immortal writings of theirs, by which, being dead, they yet speak; and have found them the effectual means of revealing Christ in our hearts, in all his Divine glories and saving powers; let us remember that we owe it not to flesh and blood, or the most excellent human instruments alone, but to the influences of our Father in heaven.

That
That efficacious grace is freely exercised, and operates in various methods; on some, in a more instantaneous way; on others, like the power of Christ on the blind man of whom we have been reading, by more gradual advances. Let us be thankful for whatever light we receive, and press on to brighter discoveries; and join with them proportionable degrees of gratitude to Christ, and veneration for his gospel.

SECT. LXXXIX.

Christ prophesies of his approaching sufferings, rebukes Peter for being offended at them; and exhorts his disciples to self-denial, and a readiness for martyrdom in his cause. Mat. XVI. 21, to the end. Mark VIII. 31, to the end, IX. 1. Luke IX. 22—27.

MAT. XVI. 21.

From that time forth began Jesus to [teach and] shew unto his disciples, how that he, [the Son of man,] must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things, [and be rejected] of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days he was raised again in the third day. [MARK VIII. 31. LUKE IX. 31.]

MARK VIII. 32.

And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, [saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.] [MAT. XVI. 22.]

MARK VIII. 32.

And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, [saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.] [MAT. XVI. 22.]

Now when Jesus had applauded the confession of Peter, (as recorded above,) and thereby expressly declared to all the apostles that he was the Messiah, he from that time began more plainly than ever, to teach, [and] shew to his disciples, that he, the Son of man, who was indeed the Christ of God, must in a few months more go to Jerusalem; and, there, instead of being owned under the royal character he bore, and submitted to by princes and people, must suffer many most injurious things, and be disdainfully rejected by the elders, and chief priests, and scribes of their nation, and be killed in a most cruel and outrageous manner; but he went on and added, to encourage them under this gloomy prospect, That after having laid part of three days under the power of death, he should be raised again on the third day.

And, as he now spake that saying plainly and freely, whereas he had before only given distant and obscure hints of it, they were exceedingly surprised and troubled: and Peter elevated with what our Lord had before been saying, and unable to reconcile it with what he now heard, took him [by the hand] and began, with a mixture of tenderness and surprise, to chide him

a Plainly and freely.] So ἀκρατήτως evidently signifies, and is often rendered in our version (compare John x. 44, and xi. 14,) and in this sense it is opposed to speaking in proverbs; John xvi. 25, 29. Christ had before given obscure hints of this, John ii. 19. iii. 14. vi. 51. Mat. x. 33; xx. 40. and elsewhere.

b Took him by the hand.] So I render the word ἐμακναμένος. Compare Rom. xv. 7. Gr. which may help to illustrate the sense of it.

c God
33 But when Jesus had turned about, and looked round him on his other disciples, whose sentiments he knew to be much the same, rebuked Peter with an unusual severity; and said to him, Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art as the part of a devil, rather than a friend; and art a scandal to me, in thus endeavouring to obstruct the great end of mine appearance in the world; for by this it plainly appears, that thou dost not regard and relish the things of God, but those of men, and best thy zeal for the Divine glory, and the salvation of souls, in the mean solicitude for the enjoyments of this temporal life, and the grandeur of an earthly kingdom, of which thou art vainly dreaming.

34 Then having called the multitude, with his disciples

But when he had turned about, and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter (and said unto him,) Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto me; for thou favourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. [Matt. XVI. 23.]

35 For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall find and save it. [Matt. XVI. 25. Luke IX. 24.]

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, [Luke, that is, lose himself, or be cast away:] [Matt. XVI. 26. Luke IX. 25.]

If he should gain the whole world, and be punished with the loss of his life? saith James, 2:7. Though the force of this maxim, taken by itself, appears best by rendering \( \text{i} \) \( \text{my soul} \), which it does undoubtedly on the whole signify here; yet as the same word had been rendered life, ver. 35, and its meaning is sufficiently plain from what follows, I thought it better to retain the same version here likewise; which, taken in its connection, has (as Dr. Tillotson observes, Vol. III. p. 528, 529,) an additional spirit, which consists in the application of a proverb relating to the worth of life (compare Job ii. 4.) to the soul, which is in the highest sense the life of the man, or the man himself. (Luke ix. 25.)—The \( \text{i} \) \( \text{my soul} \) does not merely signify to lose the life, which might be applied to a man who accidentally met death in the pursuit of gain; as a merchant who should be lost in his voyage; but it properly imports undergoing a capital execution, which is an idea of much greater terror, as well as of much stricter propriety in the present case: and would to God it might seriously be considered in this awful view! See Raphel, Annot. ex Herod. p. 171.
To gain all the world is no amends for the loss of the soul.

I say, what would all that gain, added to his present security, signify, if he thereby bring a sentence of death on his soul, [and] so lose himself, or be finally cast away? Or what shall a man give as a ransom for his life? what gains would be not be willing to resign, to quit himself of that foolish bargain by which he had sold it? Yet in this case, what would be accepted as an equivalent for it? "Its redemption is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." (Psal. xlix. 8.)

38 Now assure yourselves that this thought may with the utmost propriety be applied to the case before us: for whosoever is ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, shall find, to his cost, that of him also will the Son of man be ashamed, and him will he with scorn disown, and with inexorable justice condemn, when he comes in his own glory, (that is, in all the pomp and grandeur in which he was of old represented to the prophets,) and shall appear upon his throne invested with the glory of his Father, as commissioned by him, to be the great executor of his judgment, as well as the dispenser of his grace, attended with the bright retinue of the holy angels, who shall wait on him as his servants to grace the solemnity of that awful day. For you may certainly depend upon it, that howsoever he be now despised and rejected of men, there is a day appointed, when the Son of man shall thus come in his Father's glory, and be encircled in the most pompous manner with his holy angels; and then shall he convene the whole world before him, that he may determine the final happiness or misery of each, and recompense every man according to his actions.

And he said farther to them, Verily I tell it you as a most certain truth, that there are some of them who stand here among us that shall live to see a

As a ransom for his life.] So the word ανθρωπος properly signifies; and in this connection leads us to reflect how willing a condemned malefactor would be to give all he had got by his crimes to buy his pardon, and how vain the attempt would in this case be.

h In his own glory, and the glory of his Father.] How these are distinguished it is not easy to say. Mr. Bragge explains it of the lustre of his own glorified body, surrounded with such a circle of fire as that in which (according to him) God the Father had appeared particularly on Mount Sinai. (Bragge on the Parables, Vol. II. p. 181.) I think it sufficient to say that, besides the glory which the human nature of Christ habitually wears in heaven, some additional splendour shall now be given to him by the Father, when he sends him with his commission on so august an occasion as the universal judgment.
you of a truth,) that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power, [and the Son of man coming in his kingdom.] [Mat. XVI. 23. Luke IX. 27.]

a most awful emblem of this important day: for some that now hear me shall not taste of death, that is, they shall not die, till they have seen the kingdom of God come to be established far and near, with a divinely efficacious power; [and] have beheld so eminent an appearance of Providence to promote the triumphs of my gospel, and to avenge the cruel injuries I shall receive from this ungrateful nation, that they may be said even to see the Son of man coming in his kingdom, and leading on his victorious armies against those who would not admit him to reign over them.

IMPROVEMENT.

ALAS, how prone are our foolish souls to relish and regard the things of men rather than those of God! How justly do we deserve the rebuke of our Lord, who, while he speaks to Peter with such abhorrence, after all the encomiums he had just been giving him, shews us with what indignation we should reject every motion that would lead us to prefer our own ease or temporal interest, to the glory of God and the happiness of man.

We shall never act so mean a part, if we cordially digest the lessons which Christ hath here taught us, and consider of how much greater importance the salvation of the soul is, than the gain of the whole world when opposed to it. Let us steadily pursue this maxim of Divine wisdom, and with cheerfulness sacrifice every other interest to the views of an eternal felicity.

Does Jesus call us to deny ourselves for him? What difficulties should we not be ready to submit to, what pleasures should we not renounce for him, who pleased not himself, that he might shew his love to us; and took upon him the form of a servant, that he might make us kings and priests unto God!—Does he require us to take up our cross and follow him? What sufferings should we not be

1 The Son of man coming in his kingdom.] Raphelius (Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.) and Albert. (Observ. p. 113, 114) have indeed proved that οὐκ ἔχειν is sometimes used for οὐκ ἑξεχεῖν, and οὐ for οὔν (compare John v. 4.) and therefore they, with some other critics, would render this text, Some here present shall not die, till they see the Son of man going into his kingdom, that is, ascending to heaven, which the apostles did, (see Acts i. 9.) But it ineresteth the difficulty to suppose both these uncommon senses of the word in question to occur together; nor will Luke xxiii. 42. be allowed as an exact parallel. I choose therefore to adhere to our received version, which may include a reference to the giving of the Spirit, and propagating the gospel, but chiefly refers to that providential appearance of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem, so often called the coming of the Son of man, (Mat. xxiv. 3, 27, 30, 7.) and the day in which he should be revealed, (Luke xvii. 24, 26, 30.) This sense is the more natural here, especially as our Lord's manner of speaking intimates that most of the company should be dead before the event referred to; yet his ascension happened in a few months after this.
be willing to endure for him; and whither should we not consent to follow him, who has borne the cross for us, and willingly expired on it for our sakes!

A sense of gratitude for past favours might bear us triumphantly through all the opposition we might be called to encounter in his cause; how much more then may we be animated by the pleasing hope, that we shall another day be confessed by Christ in the presence of his Father and of his holy angels. Let us represent to ourselves that august presence, that awful day, whenever a regard to an adulterous and sinful generation would lead us to be ashamed of Christ and of his words. So shall we certainly be brought to see the kingdom of God in its glory; and if it opens to us in the visions of the future state, we shall have no reason to be anxiously solicitous, though death should remove us from these lower regions, before the gospel hath that universal triumph, which the word of God encourages his church to expect.

SECT. XC.

Christ goes up to a mountain, where he is transfigured, and discourses with his disciples concerning the expectation the Jews had of Elijah. Mat. XVII. 1—13. Mark IX. 2—13. Luke IX. 28—36.

MARK IX. 2.

AND it came to pass after six days, [or] if you include the first and last, about eight days after these discourses, which were related in the two last sections, Jesus took with him those three disciples whom he honoured with something of a peculiar intimacy (compare Mark v. 37. and Mat. xxvi. 37.) namely, Peter and James, and his brother John, and brought them up, privately, to an high mountain apart from the people, whether he retired to pray; intending, as he often did, to spend the night in that holy exercise.

A

AND [Luke, it came to pass after six days, [Luke, or about eight days after these sayings.] Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John [his brother,] and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves [Luke, to pray. ] [Mat. XVII. 1. Luke IX. 28.]

a An high mountain apart from the people. Jerom tells us (Epist. 17, 18) that there was in his days an ancient tradition that this was Mount Tabor, which lay in the tribe of Zebulon. Its standing apart (as Mr. Mawdrell observes that it does, Travels, p. 113) is to be sure no argument to prove it; for that expression only signifies that it was a private retreat, which it might have been, had it made part of a ridge of mountains. However, as this happened at the distance of six days, there seems to be but little probability in Mr. Fleming’s conjecture, that since Christ was just before near Caesarea Philippi, this must be the mountain in that neighbourhood on which one of Jeroboam’s calves had been worshipped; over which he thinks it a kind of triumph that the Shekinah was thus gloriously manifested, where it had been so long affronted by idolatry. See Fleming’s Christology, Vol. I. p. 40.

b To spend the night in that holy exercise. This appears from Luke ix. 37, where we read of their coming down from the mountain the next day. See p. 476.
And as he was praying, it came to pass that he was suddenly, in a most glorious manner, transfigured in their presence; and the form of his countenance was changed, so that his face shone with a brightness like that of the sun; and his whole body was clothed with such a lustre, as shone through his raiment, insomuch that the appearance of it was all white and dazzling, shining so exceedingly, that it seemed as white as snow [yea] as resplendent as the light itself, to so great a degree as no fuller on earth could whiten it. Such a glory did God confer on his Son, as an earnest of that, in which he was finally to appear; and he permitted these his servants to see it, that they might not be offended at those scenes of deep abasement, in which they were shortly to attend him. (Compare Mat. xxvi. 37, sect. clxxxii.)

And behold, there appeared to them, at the same time that they saw their Lord in this splendid form, two men, that were talking with Jesus in a language and accent which the three apostles heard and understood, who were known to be Moses the great giver, and Elijah the zealous restorer of the law. These were the persons whom they saw with Christ, in whose honour their respective ministrations terminated; who appearing to their view in forms of glory, somewhat resembling that which he now wore himself, spake of his exit, or departure out of the present life and state, which he was shortly after, even at the ensuing passover, to accomplish at Jerusalem; suggesting and enlarging on such thoughts as were proper to animate him to so painful and glorious a conflict.

But Peter, and they that were with him, even the two other disciples, did not see the beginning

**Luke IX. 29.**

And as he was praying, it came to pass that he was suddenly, in a most glorious manner, transfigured in their presence; and the form of his countenance was changed, so that his face shone with a brightness like that of the sun; and his whole body was clothed with such a lustre, as shone through his raiment, insomuch that the appearance of it was all white and dazzling, shining so exceedingly, that it seemed as white as snow [yea] as resplendent as the light itself, to so great a degree as no fuller on earth could whiten it. Such a glory did God confer on his Son, as an earnest of that, in which he was finally to appear; and he permitted these his servants to see it, that they might not be offended at those scenes of deep abasement, in which they were shortly to attend him. (Compare Mat. xxvi. 37, sect. clxxxii.)

And behold, there appeared to them, at the same time that they saw their Lord in this splendid form, two men, that were talking with Jesus in a language and accent which the three apostles heard and understood, who were known to be Moses the great giver, and Elijah the zealous restorer of the law. These were the persons whom they saw with Christ, in whose honour their respective ministrations terminated; who appearing to their view in forms of glory, somewhat resembling that which he now wore himself, spake of his exit, or departure out of the present life and state, which he was shortly after, even at the ensuing passover, to accomplish at Jerusalem; suggesting and enlarging on such thoughts as were proper to animate him to so painful and glorious a conflict.

But Peter, and they that were with him, even the two other disciples, did not see the beginning


32 But Peter, and they that were with him
The disciples are astonished and afraid.

**Sect. xc.**

**Luke IX. 32.**

"And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter answered and said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here in such a circumstance as this: let this glorious appearance and converse be prolonged; for we could delight to spend all the remainder of our days thus: and therefore, if thou pleasest, let us make three tents here, for Thee one, and for Moses one, and one for Elijah, that thou with them mayest lodge here in a more convenient manner. This was indeed a wild kind of proposal, ill suiting the state of these glorified persons, or the subject of their late discourse: but it is the less to be wondered at, considering the great surprise in which Peter was, for he knew not what he said, [or] should say; for such was the effect it had on him and the two other disciples who were then present, that they were vastly terrified at the majesty of this unparalleled sight, which broke out upon them at once in so unexpected a manner.

**Mark IX. 6**

**Luke IX. 34.**

While he thus spake, [behold,] there came a (bright) cloud, and overshadowed them; and

Heard the conclusion of their conference, etc.] It might not perhaps have been proper they should have heard the whole of it: God might intend to reveal some of those things to them by the Spirit, and the knowledge of others might be reserved to the discoveries of the heavenly state.

Let us make three tents here.] Mr. Fleming thinks it is as if he had said, "Lord, let this mountain be to Israel now what Sinai was to our Fathers: hold, as it were, thy court here; and let the people resort hither to learn thy will, and pay their homage to thee, attended by these thy glorified servants." (See Fleming's Christology, Vol. I. p. 46.) But this seems too great a refinement, and too deep a scheme, I rather choose to interpret them as words of repetitious surprise, intended merely to express the pleasure they had in what they saw and heard. The proposal was, as St. Mark observes, very improper; but perhaps few, in such an astonishing circumstance, could have been perfectly masters of themselves.—The tents they proposed to build must be only slight huts or boxers; and there is no reason at all to suppose they meant any sumptuous tabernacles like that of Moses in the wilderness; and, that no such idea might accidentally be raised, I chose to use the word tents.
and they feared, as they entered into the cloud. [Matt. XVII. 5. Mark IX. 7.—]

35 And [behold,] there came a voice out of the cloud, [which said,] This is my beloved Son, [in whom I am well pleased,] hear [ye] him. [Matt. XVII.—5. Mark IX. 7.—]

Luke IX. 35.

Mat. XVII. 6. And when the disciples heard [this voice,] they fell prostrate on their faces to the ground with the humblest reverence, and were exceedingly terrified by this tremendous manifestation of the present Deity. And Jesus, knowing their confusion, came and touched them, and said, Rise up, and be not afraid; infusing into them, at the same moment, a secret strength and fortitude of mind. (Compare Dan. x. 10, 19.)

And when the disciples heard [this voice,] they

Mark IX. 8; 5. And a sudden, while the heavenly voice was uttered, Jesus was found alone, Moses and Elijah disappearing in a moment: [and] the disciples, lifting up their eyes, upon the kind encouragement that he had given them, [and] looking round about them for the persons they had seen but just before, saw no man any more, but Jesus only with themselves. [Mat. XVII, 8. Luke IX. 36.—]

and they feared, as they entered into the cloud. [Matt. XVII. 5. Mark IX. 7.—]

35 And [behold,] there came a voice out of the cloud, [which said,] This is my beloved Son, [in whom I am well pleased,] hear [ye] him. [Matt. XVII.—5. Mark IX. 7.—]

Luke IX. 35.

Mat. XVII. 6. And when the disciples heard [this voice,] they fell prostrate on their faces to the ground with the humblest reverence, and were exceedingly terrified by this tremendous manifestation of the present Deity. And Jesus, knowing their confusion, came and touched them, and said, Rise up, and be not afraid; infusing into them, at the same moment, a secret strength and fortitude of mind. (Compare Dan. x. 10, 19.)

And when the disciples heard [this voice,] they

Mark IX. 8; 5. And a sudden, while the heavenly voice was uttered, Jesus was found alone, Moses and Elijah disappearing in a moment: [and] the disciples, lifting up their eyes, upon the kind encouragement that he had given them, [and] looking round about them for the persons they had seen but just before, saw no man any more, but Jesus only with themselves, who now again appearing in his usual form, graciously entered into conversation with them in the same condescending manner he was used to do.

And

1. There came a bright cloud, and overshadowed them, &c.] I cannot think it probable (though a late eminent critic has so explained it) that this only means that the cloud cast a shadow which fell upon them, but rather that it spread over the mountain; and this not like a canopy or umbrella, but that it covered it in such a manner as a cloud does; yet with this difference, that it was more like a thick smoke than a shower; and that whereas the skirts of clouds are generally rarer than the central parts, this was darker towards the edges, a glory being in the midst: and probably it was the darker part with which the apostles were enveloped, while the excellent glory (as St. Peter calls it, 2 Pet. i. 17.) seemed much higher, and the rays of it were much tempered by that part of the cloudy veil which was between it and them. And thus we know that the Shekinah had appeared in former ages; particularly when it took possession of the tabernacle of Moses, Exod. xl. 34, 35, and the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 10, 11.

[In whom I am well pleased.] Though neither Mark nor Luke have given us these words, we may be sure that they were really spoken, as we have the concurrent testimony both of Matthew and of Peter, who has thus quoted them, 2 Pet. i. 17. Some have thought their being omitted by Mark an intimation that Peter did not review that gospel with any great accuracy, supposing it was (as Clemens Alexandrinus reports) put into his hands. Perhaps the command that is added, to hear him, may refer to that solemn charge to hear the great prophet, Deut. xviii. 15.

2. They
And as they came down from the mountain, on which this wonderful transaction had passed, Jesus strictly charged them, that they should tell no one what they had seen, unless it were when the Son of man was risen from the dead; lest, till that glorious evidence was given of his Divine mission, this story should appear as an idle dream, or an incredible tale. And when he spake of rising from the dead, they laid hold on that word, disputing among themselves what this rising from the dead could mean; for as often, and as plainly, as Christ had declared it to them, they could not persuade themselves to understand it in a literal sense. However, in obedience to the charge he gave them, they were silent as to what had passed, and told no one in those days any of the things which they had now seen and heard.

And his disciples as they could not doubt but he was the Messiah, took that opportunity of informing themselves as to a scruple, which had long lain on their minds, and asked him, saying, Why then do the scribes, the teachers of our nation, and professed students of the law, say, that Elijah must first come before the Messiah appear? Is this vision, that we have now seen, all the coming of that prophet, which was to be expected?

And Jesus replying said unto them, It does indeed appear from the scripture, that Elijah shall first come to make way for the Messiah, and regulate all things; by preaching repentance and reformation: and yet, how little is the influence that his coming will have upon a wicked and ungrateful generation? And how is it also written of the Son of man himself, that illustrious Person

10 And as they came down from the mountain, [Jesus charged them, that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. [Mat. Xvii. 9.]

10 And they kept saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean: [And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.] [Luke ix.—36.]

Mat. Xvii. 10. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes, that Elijah must first come? [Mark ix. 11.]

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things, [and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer

k They laid hold on that word.] So I think τον γεγονότα παραθύρων may most literally be rendered; the verb often signifying to lay hold on, and, in consequence of that, resolutely to retain; but never, that I can collect, to keep a secret. Compare Mat. ix. 25. xiv. 9. Mark xii. 19 and Rev. xiv. 2.—I think the words σημειονέω should be joined with εὐθύς, as they are with the same word Mark i. 27. xiv. 16. Luke xxii. 23 and Acts ix. 29.

m And yet how is it written of the Son of man himself?] The construction of this verse in the original is as perplexed as almost any in the New Testament. The Persian Testament, which is followed by the late English version, renders it roundly and elegantly enough: “It is true,” said he, “that Elijah must first come to restore all things, and that it is foretold of him, as well as of the Son of man, that he should have much to suffer, and be rejected with contempt.” But this is not strictly agreeable to the original, nor can I find the martyrdom of John the Baptist.
suffer many things, and be set at nought.]  
[Mark ix. 12.]

12 But I say unto you, that Elijah is [indeed] come already, and they know him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed, [as it is written of him:] likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.  
[Mark ix. 13.]

13 Then the disciples understood that he spake to them concerning John the Baptist, who was foretold under the name of Elijah, as the Messiah was under that of David. (Compare Mal. iv. 5, and Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.)

**IMPROVEMENT.**

How glorious and delightful was this view of our blessed Ver. Redeemer, which the apostles had, when he was transfigured before 2 them, clothed, as it were, with the Divine Shekinah and shining with a lustre like that of the sun! How pleasing and how edifying must it be to them, to see with him Moses and Elijah, those 3 two eminent saints, who had so many ages ago quitted our world, but whose names they had often read in the sacred records with wonder and reverence!

Well might Peter say, *It is good for us to be here.* Well might 4 he be contented to resign his entertainments and his hopes elsewhere, that they might prolong these delightful moments, feasting their eyes with these Divine visions, and their minds with these more than human discourses. Nor can we wonder that the scene, transitory as it was, left so abiding a savour on his spirits, that


p Elijah is indeed come already, as it is written of him.] For the reason assigned in the preceding note I choose to connect these two clauses, and conclude that the words which lie between, both in the original and in our translation, are to be included in a parenthesis.
that in an epistle which he wrote many years after, and but a little before his death, he should single this story from a thousand others to attest it as he does, and to argue from it. (Compare 2 Pet. i. 16—18.) But oh! how much more desirable is it to stand upon mount Zion, and to behold those brighter glories, which our Jesus wears in the heavenly regions! To behold, not merely Moses and Elijah, but all the prophets, the apostles, and martyrs, and, in a word, all the saints of God in every age, whether to us personally known or unknown, surrounding him in a radiant circle; and not only to behold them, but to converse with them. Lord, it is good for us to be there, in our desires at least, and in our meditations, till thou pleasest to call us to that happy world, and to take us thither, where no drowsiness will cloud our eyes, where no hurry will discompose our thoughts; but where the perfection of holiness, and of love, shall cast out every degree of terror, as well as of sorrow.

In the mean time let us reverently attend to that Saviour who appeared in this majestic form, and who comes recommended to us with so many testimonials of his Divine authority. He was again declared by a voice from heaven to be the beloved Son of God: as such let us hear him, receiving all his revelations with the assurance of faith, and all his commands with the obedience of love. If these sentiments govern our hearts and our lives, the thoughts of that departure from this world, which we are shortly to accomplish, will be no grief or terror to our souls. Like our blessed Master, we may connect the views of it, and intermix discourse upon it, with the most delightful enjoyments and converse; nay, it will serve to render them yet more pleasing. For who would not long to be made conformable to Christ, even in his sufferings and death, if it may be a means of transforming us into the resemblance of his glories!

SECT. XCI.

Christ, descending from the mountain on which he was transfigured, drives out an evil spirit, which had obstinately withstood the attempts of his apostles. Mat. xvii. 14—21. Mark ix. 14—29.

Luke IX. 37—43.

LUKE IX. 37.

THUS did our Lord discourse with his three disciples after he had been transfigured in so glorious a manner in their presence: and it came to pass, that on the next day, when they came down from the mountain on which the night had been so delightfully spent, a great crowd of people


AND it came to pass that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.
A lunatic possessed with a dumb spirit is brought to him.

Mark IX. 14. And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed; and running to him, saluted him.

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17 And [Luke, behold.] [a certain man] of the multitude, [kneeling down to him,] answered and [Luke, cried out, saying.] 'Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; [Mat. XVII. 14] 

Luke IX. 38.—]

Mat. XVII. 15. Lord, [I beseech thee, look upon my son, for he is mine only child; and] have mercy on him, for he is lunatic, people met him. And, being come to the disciples, and particularly to the rest of the apostles, who, knowing their Master was on the hill, waited for him in the adjacent valley, he saw a great multitude around them, and, among the rest, some of the scribes and Pharisees, who were disputing with them, and endeavoured to take the opportunity of their Master's absence to expose and distress them.

And immediately, as soon as he came near them, all the multitude seeing him, was struck into astonishment at those unusual rays of majesty and glory which yet remained on his countenance; and, running to him, they saluted him with the greatest marks of respect and affection: yet the scribes and Pharisees, without regarding his return, continued their ill-natured attack on his disciples.

And, taking notice of the warm dispute they were engaged in, he asked the scribes, What is the point you are debating, and what do you contend with them about?

And presently, upon his making this inquiry, 17 behold, a [certain] man of the multitude came, and kneeling down to him, answered the question in effect: and, crying out with a loud and eager voice, said, O thou great Teacher and Master in our Israel, I have brought thee my poor afflicted son, who has for a long time been possessed with a dumb spirit; and the malicious demon has deprived him of the use of his hearing and speech: And in this moving case, O Lord, I beseech thee look upon my son, for he is mine only child, [and] yet, instead of being any comfort to me, is a most melancholy spectacle of horror: let me interfere therewith therefore to have compassion on [him], for

a Was struck into astonishment, &c. It is strange that so few critics should have said anything concerning the reason of the multitude's being thus astonished. It could not be, as Dr. Clarke supposes, his coming down from the mountain the day after he went up; for they were gathered round it in expectation of his descent; and I do not remember that he ever continued more than one night in such a retirement. Nor is it easy to imagine the multitude were under any apprehension, after he had been no longer absent, that they never should be able to find him again. I therefore follow Dr. Whitby's natural conjecture in his paraphrase, which is agreeable to what we read of Moses, that the skin of his face was not, when he came down from the mount. (Compare Exod. xxxiv. 29.) 0, and 2 Cor. iii. 7). One would indeed have expected that Luke, who has mentioned the latter on Stephen's countenance, when pleading his cause before the Sanhedrin (Acts vi. 13), should have taken some notice of the fact here supposed; but it is observable, Mark tells the story before us for more circumstantially than either of the other evangelists; which, by the way, is another most convincing proof that his Gospel was not (as Mr. Wiston supposes) an abridgment of Matthew.
The disciples being unable to cure him, Jesus is applied to;  

for he is lunatic, and grievously tormented with terrible fits, which frequently seize him, and sometimes endanger his life; for he often falleth into the fire, and often into the water. And behold, wherether [this] spirit seizes him, he has no strength or thought to take care of himself, but suddenly cries out in a violent manner; and it convulses him so, that he foams again at the mouth, and gnashes with his teeth in extremity of anguish; and thus he miserably pines, and withers away in the bloom of his age: and [it] is with great difficulty that the malignant demon departs from him for a little while, having bruised him to such a degree by violent distortions, that he is hardly able to use his limbs in the interval of these dreadful agitations.

And I am persuaded there is some more ordinary difficulty in the case; for I brought him to thy disciples, and spake to [them] concerning him, and entreated [them] in the most affectionate manner, to use their utmost efforts to cast him out: and they could not accomplish it, nor heal him.

Then Jesus said in reply to him, O ye incredulous and perverse generation of men, how long shall I be with you, before you will learn a becoming regard to me? How long shall I endure that infidelity which you are shewing on so many occasions? And thus did he mean at once to reprove the weakness of faith in the father, and in his disciples, as well as the obstinacy and perverseness of the Jewish teachers, who were triumphing in their present disappointment: and then, turning to the father of the child and his attendants, he said, Bring thy Son hither to me, and you shall see what my power can effect.

And upon this they brought him that was possessed to Jesus, and presented the poor creature to him. And immediately, as soon as he saw him, while he was yet coming, the evil spirit in a rage wrought in him with such violence, that he threw him down, and convulsed him; and he fell on the ground with great force, and there lay, and rolled...
rolled from one side to the other, a spectacle of horror, foaming at the mouth, and sweating profusely, till nature was almost exhausted, and he seemed ready to die.

And, that the greatness of the cure might more plainly appear, while the unhappy youth lay thus before him, he asked his father, How long time is it, that he hath been thus afflicted? And he said, Even from his childhood: And the evil spirit is so outrageous, and so malicious, that it frequently, as I said, has thrown him into the fire, and into the waters, when he has happened to be near them, as if he watched for opportunities to destroy him; so that I am sensible it is a most difficult, as well as dreadful case: but if thou canst do any thing in it 4, have compassion on us, and help us; for surely none ever needed thy pity more.

And Jesus said unto him, The question is not at all concerning my power, but concerning the strength of the faith; for if thou canst firmly and cheerfully believe, the deliverance will surely be effected, as all things of this kind [are] possible to him that believeth.

And immediately the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

Then
Then Jesus, seeing that the crowd ran together and was continually increasing round them, rebuked the unclean spirit, which had possessed the child, and said unto him, with an air of superior power and Divine authority, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, who had so maliciously deprived this youth of his speech and hearing, I strictly charge and command thee immediately to come out of him, and presume to enter into him no more, nor farther to disquiet him as long as he lives.

26 And, immediately, as soon as he had spoken these words, [the evil spirit] having cried out with great earnestness, and thrown him into violent distortions, came out of him, and the poor youth had been so miserably handled, that he fell into a swoon, and seemed as one dead, so that many who were present, said, He is undoubtedly quite dead, and will require no more.

27 But Jesus, taking hold of him by the hand, lifted him up, and strengthened him, so that he arose and stood on his feet. And when [he] thus had perfectly restored and healed the child, he took and delivered him to his father, who received him with an inexpressible mixture of joy and amazement. And the child was well from that very hour, and these terrible symptoms returned upon him no more.

Luke And they who beheld it were all astonished at the mighty power of God, by which this illustrious miracle had been wrought.

And when he had left the multitude, and was come into the house, where he then resided, his disciples, something mortified at the repulse they had met with in their late attempt, came to Jesus when he was alone, and asked him privately, Why could not we prevail so far as to cast out this demon, and expel him, since we have performed many cures which seemed equally difficult?

Mat. And Jesus said unto them, It was because of the remainder of your unbelief; for verily I say unto you, If you had but the least degree of faith in a lively exercise, though it comparatively was but as a grain of mustard-seed, you might perform the

strongly pointed sentences should lose something of their spirit by it; yet keeping the original thus distinct, may in part remedy it; and, on the whole, many of these expressions are so full of meaning, that the general laws of interpretation require, they should be unfolded. To observe the exact medium here, is a felicity, which I dare not say I have obtained, though I have laboured after it.

5 Faith as a grain of mustard-seed.] It
Reflections on the necessity of a lively faith.

say unto this mountain, Remove hence unto yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. 21 Howbeit, [he said unto them, [this kind can come forth by nothing] but by prayer and fasting, [Mark IX. 29.]

the greatest wonders, so as even to say to this mountain here in the neighbourhood, Remove from this place to that, and it should accordingly remove; and, in a word, nothing will be impossible to you. But as to the case that was lately before us, he farther said unto them, This demon which possessed the child was one of a very obstinate kind, which cannot be expelled so readily as others; nor must you expect to have power over such spirits as these, to oblige them to go forth by any means, unless you do by frequent prayer and fasting intercede with God for his more abundant co-operation; and by such extraordinary devotions endeavour to prepare your souls for his farther influences.

IMPROVEMENT.

The invidious opposition, which these scribes and Pharisees made to our Lord, and the ill-natured joy they expressed, in what they imagined would disgrace his disciples, appears exceeding odious; and it shews us the fatal effects of ambition, pride, and avarice, is very trifling to suppose that here is a reference to the poisonous mustard-seed, as an emblem of a vigorous and lively faith. It is apparently a proverb to express anything incomparably small, that being, as our Lord expresses it, one of the smallest among seeds. Thus the rabbies say the globe of the earth is but as a grain of mustard seed, when compared with the expanse of the heavens. See Deusm in loc.

This kind cannot go forth by any means, unless by prayer and fasting.] An ingenious physician, mentioned by the learned Author of the Inquiry into Demons, &c. p. 47. instead of επαρχει τυφώσας ανάπτυξιν, would read επαρχει τυφώσας ανάπτυξιν, by constant fasting; and supposes it refers to the necessity of frequent and long continued abstinence, in order to the cure of such an epileptic disorder as the child in question had been subject to. But as the criticism is founded on mere conjecture, contrary to all the copies known in the world, so I cannot think it at all natural in itself, or pertinent to the occasion; for it seems not at all to our Lord's purpose to speak of the natural method of cure, in answer to the apostle's demand, why they could not miraculously perform it?—Nor can any instance be produced to prove, that the expression is proverbial for any thing very difficult.—I could therefore see no reason to recede from the usual interpretation, which I have given in the paraphrase.

—As for the interpretation of Chrysostom and Theophylact, who suppose that ὑποτελέσθω signifies at large this kind of beings, that is, demons, it seems very wrong; since the apostles evidently did cast out many demons, whatever peculiar malignity there might be in this and others of his rank, which might make more intense devotion necessary to effect them.—Sir Norton Knatchbull's sense is extremely forced, who understands it, as if it had been said, This sort (of miraculous faith) answers not but by prayer and fasting. Rephake has abundantly shewn how inconsiderable those authorities from Xenophon are, by which he would justify so odd a version of επαρχειν. (See Rephake, ibidem, x. Nos. p. 44—46.) And were the words considered as they stand in Mark, where there is nothing said of faith, it would be easy to perceive, our Lord is speaking of a kind of demons, which they were not able to cast out: and that some demons are more malignant than others is most manifest from Mat. xii. 44. But oftentimes an expleation has been built upon the words of one evangelist, and many learned remarks have been made to establish it, which could not be applied without great violence to suit the parallel place in another, and presently has fallen to the ground upon comparing them together.
He passes privately through Galilee with his disciples.

Sect. xci.

Mark IX. 14.

Avarice, when they possess the hearts of those who should be (as these by their office were) teachers of others. Such qualities render those in the number of the most dangerous enemies of mankind, who ought to be its most affectionate friends and most useful benefactors. May the light of the gospel break in on their souls, and form them to a better temper!

The solicitous concern of this parent when he saw his child under such sad symptoms of disorder, may surely remind persons in that relation, of the sentiments, with which they should view those of their children, who are, in a spiritual sense, under the power of Satan; and of the importunity, with which they should entreat, that the hand of Christ may be stretched out for their rescue.

A lively exercise of faith is greatly to be desired in this and all other applications of this nature. But alas, how often do we find the remainders of a contrary principle! In how many instances does that passionate exclamation of the father in this story suit us? Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief! How difficult is it, in the midst of so much guilt and weakness, of so much perplexity and unworthiness, to believe the promises of forgiveness and preservation, of grace and glory? Yet we may humbly hope that He, who by his grace has wrought the Divine principle in our souls, will maintain it there. Only let it be our concern to oppose those corruptions which would enervate and suppress it. Perhaps there are some of them, which will not be driven out, but by prayer and fasting, by deep humiliation, and more than ordinary solemnity and intenseness of devotion. But surely they have little regard to the peace and security of their souls, who can allot only a few hasty moments to them, when they have whole hours and days to bestow, not only on the labours, but even on the amusements of life.

Sect. xcii.

The disciples are offended at the warning Christ gives them of his approaching sufferings. He makes a miraculous provision for paying the tribute-money. Mat. XVII. 22, to the end. Mark IX. 30—33.—Luke IX. 43—45.

Mark IX. 30.

And while every one of the spectators was amused at this stupendous miracle wrought on the child who had been so terribly possessed, and at all the other extraordinary things which Jesus did, our Lord and his apostles, left that place, and, setting out on a further progress, they departed from thence, and passed from the mountain.

Mark IX. 30.

And [while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did,) they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. [Luke IX. 43.]
tained on which he had been transfigured, through the rest of Galilee: and Jesus chose to do it as privately as he could; for he was desirous that no one might know it, lest the important conversation, into which he then entered with his disci- ple, should be interrupted. For while they continued travelling and conversing in Galilee, and especially when they came to the place where they lodged, Jesus taught his disciples; more largely than he had done before, what was to befall him. (Compare Mat. xvi. 31. Mark viii. 31. Luke ix. 22. sect. Ixxxix.)

And he said unto them, with great solemnity, 

**Luke IX. 44.** Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. [Mark IX. 31. Mat. XVII. 22. 23.—]

45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying, [and were exceeding sorry.] [Mat. XVII. 23. Mark IX. 32.]

a For Jesus taught his disciples.] Mark assigns this as the reason, why he desired his journey should be private, viz. that he might have an opportunity to talk over this subject at large, which shows that the continuance of abode in Galilee, mentioned by Matthew, refers to the short stay they made in the places where they lodged; and indeed he could not so conveniently speak to all the twelve, while they were actually travelling.

b Apply your ears to these sayings.] This seems to me a just translation of τιτο αυτος εις τα αυτοι τοις δημοις, which is literally, Put these sayings to your ears; a phrase, which our language will hardly admit. It intimates the propensity they had to withdraw and turn away these ears from such declarations, as he was now about to make.

c Shall shortly be betrayed. &c.] Mark has expressed it in the present tense, and says, The son of man is delivered; but no- thing is more common in the sacred lan- guage than to speak of what should cer- tainly and quickly be, as if it was already done. (Compare John xii. 31. xvii. 11, 24. Eph. vi. 1, 5. Heb. xii. 22. and Rev. xviii. 2, 4.—The explication of many other scriptures depends on this obvious remark.

d The
He pays the tribute by a miracle at Capernaum.

And how severely he had rebuked Peter for endeavouring to dissuade him from it (sect. lxxxix.) nevertheless, they perceived that their Master foretold his own death; and were exceeding sorry, that a Person of so excellent and amiable a character, from whom they had entertained such glorious expectations, should meet with so unworthy a return.

And soon after this, he came with his disciples to Capernaum: and when they were come to Capernaum, the receivers and collectors of the sacred tribute, which was gathered every year through all their cities, came to Peter; and said, Does not your Master, who has the character of so religious a Teacher, pay the usual tribute of the didrachma, or half-shekel, to the service of the temple? And he says, Yes, I know that he uses to pay it, and make no doubt but he will do it now. And when he came into the house, Jesus, who was there before, prevented him, before he could speak of the affair in question, and said to him, What dost thou think, Simon, and what seems fit to thee on this occasion? Of whom do the kings of the earth receive custom or tribute? of their own sons, or of strangers? Peter says to him, Lord it is evident, they receive it only of strangers. Jesus said to him, Then the sons, by virtue of their fathers' dispensation, are free from the obligation: and, on the like principle, I, as the Son of God, might plead an exemption here, especially as I have not now the sum, which is required towards the maintenance of the temple worship. Nevertheless, lest we should offend them, by giving an occasion to imagine, that I put any slight on the temple, or lest others from my example should in far different circumstances omit this contribution, I will not debate the matter, but rather

And [he came to Capernaum: and] when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute-money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute? And he saith, Yes, And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and there shall find a great net, full of little fish: and the measure shall not fail thee.
sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

rather work a miracle than fail in the payment.

Go therefore to the sea, and when thou comest to the neighbouring shore, throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a piece of silver-coin, called a stater, which it has just swallowed; take that, and give it to them that collect the tribute, both for me and thee; for thou knowest it will answer their demands for both. Accordingly Peter went, and having caught a fish, he found the money in its mouth, and presently returned and paid it according to his Lord's command.

IMPROVEMENT.

How slow and untractable were the minds of the apostles, who understood not these plain things when thus inculcated again and again! But, on the other hand, how much integrity does it shew in the historian, to record what seemed so little to the honour of himself and his brethren! In this respect, and many others, surely credit rises to the gospel, even by occasion of the infirmities of those to whom it was committed, and out of weakness they are made strong.—The lenity of our blessed Lord was truly admirable, that he should bear with such stupidity in his disciples with so much gentleness and patience, and should, with so much earnestness, go on to renew his instructions to them. Let us, however, learn to be upon our guard against the prejudices of worldly interest, since, as we see, they may take such strong hold of minds, in the main, upright and pious. And therefore let us earnestly pray, that God would give us a greater relish for spiritual and eternal blessings.

It cannot surely become us to seek the grandeur and riches of this world, when our blessed Master was so poor, that he could not pay

[A stater, which it had just swallowed.]

The stater was (as appears in part from this text) a piece of coin, in value about two half shekels, or, according to Dr. Prideaux, near three shillings of our money, though most critics reckon the shekel but about half-a-crown. (See Drusius on this verse and the 24th.)—I see no reason, with Schmidius, to suppose this piece of money was created on this occasion: but supposing, as in the paraphrase, that the fish had accidentally swallowed it (perhaps as it was falling into the water, near some other prey), I cannot forbear remarking how illustrious a degree of knowledge and power our Lord discovered in the case before us; knowledge, in penetrating into the bowels of this animal, though in the sea; and power, in directing this particular fish to Peter's hook, though he himself was at a distance. Hardly any circumstance can be imagined more fit to encourage him and his brethren in a firm dependance on Divine Providence. And it is very natural to reflect how easily Christ could, if he had seen fit, have drawn up immense treasures, by this very method, from the heart of the sea: but he intended that his servants should be enriched and adorned in a much nobler manner than with pearls and costly array.
The disciples contend, who of them should be greatest.

pay this little tribute without having recourse to a miracle. Yet this he chooses, rather than to give offence by a refusal, how justly soever he might have pleaded an exemption from it. Let us learn from hence that meekness of wisdom which will teach us to seek the interest of others rather than our own; and to consider how we may edify others by the abundance of our good works, rather than how we may excuse ourselves in the omission of any. That extent of knowledge and power, which our Lord displayed on this occasion, can never be at a loss for means to repay, whatever we may thus sacrifice for his sake.

SECT. XCII.

Christ reproves his apostles for their contention, who should be greatest; and recommends to them humility and mortification. Mark IX.—33—37, 42. to the end. Mat. XVIII. 1—9. Luke IX. 46—48.

MARK IX. 33.

NOW when Peter was returned from the sea-side, and had paid the tribute-money with which the fish had supplied him, our Lord, from a late occurrence which he had observed among his disciples, took occasion to recommend humility to them: and being in the house with his apostles, that he might naturally introduce the discourse he intended, he asked them, About what were you disputing with each other on the way in so eager a manner, that I could not forbear taking particular notice of it?

34 But, instead of answering him directly, they were confounded with the question, and continued silent, being ashamed to confess the truth; for as they were travelling on the way, a controversy arose among them, [and] they had warmly debated the matter one with another, which of them should be the greatest man in that temporal monarchy, which they assured themselves that Jesus, as the expected Messiah, would erect, whatever sufferings might lie in the passage to it.

And Jesus perceiving, notwithstanding their silence,

5 When Peter was returned, &c.] In order to remind those who may here these sections read in a family, of the connection of them, I have generally introduced each with a brief hint at the subject of the former; which, though it makes the paraphrase on the first verse of a section sometimes much longer than I should otherwise have chosen, yet I hope it may be attended with advantage sufficient to balance that inconvenience.

6 Called
Christ taking up a little child, exhorts them to humility.  

Silence, the secret thought of their ambitious heart, and observing the same carnality and emulation to be still working there; when he was sat down, called all the twelve about him, and says unto them with great seriousness and earnestness, It is humility that is the way to honour in my kingdom; and therefore if any one would be chief there, let him, in all the offices of descending friendship to his brethren, be as the last of all, and the servant of all. [Luke IX. 47.]

Mat. XVIII. 1. At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and sat down, and called the twelve, and said unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. [Mark IX. 36.] [Luke IX. 47.]

3 Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself even as this little child, and shall lift up himself, shall be cast down; but he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. [Matthew XXIII. 11.]

Called all the twelve about him.] It is natural to suppose, that twelve persons travelling together on foot would form themselves into two or three little companies, while some of them, no doubt, would be attending Christ, and discoursing with him: but our Lord judged it proper, as he was now in the house, that all the twelve should hear this admonition, though they might not all have been engaged in the dispute which occasioned it.

b Called all the twelve about him.] It is natural to suppose, that twelve persons travelling together on foot would form themselves into two or three little companies, while some of them, no doubt, would be attending Christ, and discoursing with him: but our Lord judged it proper, as he was now in the house, that all the twelve should hear this admonition, though they might not all have been engaged in the dispute which occasioned it.

c At the same time.] By these words Matthew expressly fixes the connection between this story and that which concluded his xviii. chapter. But Clarus seems to refine too much, when he supposes that Christ's laying this miraculously provided for paying Peter's tribute with his own, gave umbrage to the rest: yet this pre-arranged turn serves the church of Rome as an argument for the supremacy of the Pope; nor is it wonderful that in so weak a cause they should catch at such a shadow.

Entertains

3 N 2
act with such candour, simplicity and modesty, as you see in him, He is the person, that here-
after will be regarded as the greatest in the king-
dom of heaven, and will stand high in its final
5 glories. And whosoever cordially shall enter-
tain this child, [or] shall discover an affectionate
regard to any one of such little children, in my
name, and for my sake, as one whom I love,
and recommend to his care, entertaineth me;
for I shall take the kindness as done to myself:
and I would have you to remember, that it shall
not terminate even there, but (as I have formerly
told you, Mat. x. 40. p. 402), whoever thus
shall entertain and shew a regard to me, enter-
tains not me alone, but him that sent me, even
my heavenly Father, who is honoured or affront-
ed, as I am respected or slighted. And this
regard to the meanest of my servants, I must
urge upon you, as of the utmost importance;
for (as I just now told you) he that by such a
condescension is as the least among you all, He
shall be eminently great in my esteem, and be
distinguished by peculiar marks of the Divine
6 favour. But whoever shall deliberately do any
thing to offend, and to occasion the fall of one of
these little ones who believe in me, or of any dis-
ciple of mine, though he may seem as weak as
this infant, will expose himself thereby to such
guilt and punishment, that it were better for
him he should undergo the most certain and ter-
rrible destruction one can imagine, even that a
huge mill-stone should be hanged about his neck,
and he should thus be thrown headlong into the
sea, [and] there be drowned in the depth of it.

5 And [Luke, who-
soever shall receive this
child[,] or one of such
little [children] in my
name, receiveth me;
[and whosoever shall
receive me, receiveth
not me, but him that
sent me:] [Luke, for
he that is least among
you all, the same shall
be great.] [Mark IX.
37. Luke IX. 48.]

6 But [whosoever]
shall offend one of
these little ones, which
believe in me, it were
better for him that a
mill-stone were hang-
ed about his neck, and
that he were [cast into
the sea, and] drowned
in the depth of the sea.
[Mark IX. 42.]

Entertain not me alone, but him that
sent me.] Here Christ was interrupted by
a speech of John, related Mark ix. 38—41,
which is paraphrased and explained below,
in sect. xcvi. where I have accounted in
note a for placing it apart.

Shall offend one of these little ones, &c.]
To offend a person generally signifies (as
was observed before, p. 211, note b) laying
a stumbling block in his way; so that any,
who should by a scandalous life lead others
to think ill of the Christian profession in
general, or should by persecution dis-
courage the weak, or by sophistry, bad
eexample, or otherwise, pervert them from
the way of truth and goodness, would fall
under the weight of this terrible sentence.

A huge mill-stone.] So I render pedo-
try; which (as Erasmus, Grotius, Ra-
phelius, and many others observe) pro-
perly signifies a mill-stone too large to be
turned, as some were, by the hand, and re-
quiring the force of oxes to move it; as it
seems those animals were generally used by
the Jews on this occasion. See Raphel.
Annot. ex Xun. p. 46.

Thrown headlong into the sea.] Ca-
sanbor and Elsner (Observ. Vol. I. p. 85),
not to mention others, have shown at large,
that drowning in the sea was a punishment
frequently used among the ancients, and
that the persons condemned had sometimes
heavy stones tied about their necks, or were
rolled up in sheets of lead. It seems to
have grown into a proverb for dreadful and
inevitable ruin.
Wo unto the world because of offences.

7 Wo unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be, that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.

8 Wherefore, if thy hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched. [MARK IX. 45.]

MARK IX. 44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

As I told you in my sermon on the mount. It will, I hope, be observed, that Matthew, who had before so largely recorded that sermon, gives us again this passage of it on the present occasion; which is one proof, among many others, that our Lord did not think it improper or unnecessary sometimes to repeat what he had then said: (See p. 240, note c.) And, considering the importance of these maxims, and how little many of his hearers were disposed to receive and retain them, it was a valuable instance of his compassion and wisdom.

Where their—conscience is as—a worm, which—dieth not: There may indeed be an allusion here to Isa. lxi. 24. (compare Ecclus. vii. 17, and Judith xvi. 17; but the expression had been just and proper without it: and it is observable, that some of the ancients expressed the same thought by saying, that the marrow of the back-bone did, in a wicked man, turn into a huge and fierce serpent; thereby intimating (by a much finer figure than Elisha, who reports it, understood) that their own thought should be their serpent, and they should be unable to discern it by those arguments, which had prevailed in the present life; see Elisha, Hist. Anim. lib. i. cap. 51. and Gataker, Antiqua. lib. viii. § 58.—Since the first edition of this work, I have met with an explication of these words in Dr. Rymer's Representation of Revealed Religion, p. 155, so new to me, and at the same time so considerable, that I could not forbear mentioning it. He supposes that both the worm and the fire are mean of the body, and refer to the two different ways of funeral among the ancients, interment and burning.
anguish, still gnaws upon the heart; and where
the fire of Divine wrath, which shall penetrate
into the very soul of the sinner, is not, and shall
not be quenched throughout all the endless ages
of eternity.

45 And again, if thy foot offend thee, cut it off,
with as much resolution as thou wouldest part
with a gangrened member for the preservation
of thy life: for something yet more important is
here concerned, and it is better, for thee to enter
lame into the regions of eternal life and blessed-
ness, though thou wast ever to continue so
than having two feet to be cast into the inextin-
guished fire of hell: Where their tormenting
worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched;
or the violence of its heat abated through
all the ages of eternity.

47 And, to repeat so wholesome and necessary an
admonition a third time, If thine eye offend thee,
or would necessarily be the means of leading thee
into sin, choose rather with thine own hands to
tear it out of its socket, and to cast it away from
thee as an abhorred thing, than, by complying
with the temptation, to hazard thy far more preci-
sions soul; for it is far better for thee to enter
into the kingdom of God, or into everlasting life
and blessedness, with but one eye, even though
the other were not to be restored at the resurrec-
tion, but the blemish were to continue for
ever, than having two eyes, and all the other
members of thy body in the greatest perfection,
to be cast into hell, where they will all be full of
unutterable anguish, being tormented with ever-
lasting fire. In that dreadful prison of Divine
vengeance, where (as I have told you again and
again)

48 Where their worm

burning. So that our Lord may seem here
to present an objection against the perma-
nent misery of the wicked in hell, arising
from the irrat constitution of the body; as
it he should have said, "The body will
not then be as it is at present, but will
be incapable of consumption or dissolu-
tion. In its natural state, the worms may
devour the whole, and die for want of
nourishment; the fire may consume it, and
be extinguished for want of fuel. But
there shall be perpetual food for the worm
that corrodes it, perpetual fuel for the fire
that torments it." The words of the
Apocryphal writer above mentioned, Judith
xvi. 17, greatly illustrate this interpreta-
tion; where it is said, The Lord Almighty
will take vengeance on the wicked in the day
of judgment, putting fire and worms into their
flesh, and they shall feel pain, and weep for
ever.

1 Though thou wast ever to continue so.
It is certain no man will enter into life,
half, maimed, or blind, as the bodies of the saints
will be restored in the greatest perfection.
I know indeed that, with some latitude in
the expression, he may be said to enter half,
or maimed, into life, whose spirit passes from a
dismembered body into the regions of the
blessed; but it seems to me that the pro-
priety of the phrase is most exactly pres-
served by taking it as in the paraphrase, and
the spirit of the thought is greatly increased
by that interpretation.

1 Shall
Offenders shall be salted with fire and not be consumed.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, where with will ye season it? Have

again) their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched nor abated, but preserveth perpetually on the miserable sinner that is condemned to it. For as the flesh burnt on the altar has salt rubbed upon it, in consequence of which it burns so much the more fiercely, so every one of those unhappy creatures, the victims of Divine justice, shall be (as it were) salted with fire; and, instead of being consumed by it, shall, in those wretched abodes, continue immortal in the midst of their flames; whereas every acceptable sacrifice shall be seasoned with another kind of salt, even that of Divine grace, which purifies the soul and preserves it from corruption.

In allusion to this, you, my disciples, may remember, I have formerly called you the salt of the earth, (Mat. v. 13, p. 203.) and as salt is a very good thing, so will you, if you answer that character, be inestimable blessings to the world, by purifying and preserving it from corruption, and diffusing the savour of that knowledge and grace, with which you are seasoned: but as I added then, if the salt itself be grown insipid, with what will you season it? or what can restore you, if you are corrupted, who should be the means of curing or restoring others? See to it therefore, that you have this excellent salt.

1 Shall be salted with fire.] Grosius, Spanheim, Gatker, Le Clerc, and Dr. Mill, have abundantly answered the favourite criticism of Scaliger, by which he would have read πιστεύαν instead of πιστεύα, that it might be rendered, Every offering made by fire shall be salted.—The learned and laborious Wolfius has proposed a multitude of interpretations on this text. He and Mons. L'Enfant think, it refers to the fiery trial through which Christians must expect to pass; but this neither seems a natural sense of the phrase itself, nor does it so well suit the context, by which it should seem to be a reason why the internal fire is never quenched. I know it may be answered, that it is however a reason why the disciples should practise the mortification required above: but it seems desirable, where it can be done, to interpret the particles in their most usual sense, though sometimes it is necessary (as we have elsewhere observed, page 270, note;) to recede from it.—To suppose, as Dr. Clarke and some others do, that here is a reference to the ambiguity of the Hebrew word פדוע, which signifies either to be salted or consumed, seems very unwarrantable; since מנהטב has no such ambiguity; not to say how much it would impair the force of the sentence, leading to an idea, the very contrary to what Christ had suggested above no less than three times.

m Every sacrifice shall be seasoned with salt.] It is well known that the Mosaic law required this. See Lev. ii. 13.—Heinsius thinks that as salt contracts and binds, it was therefore used as an emblem of friendship, which he supposes our Lord afterwards to refer to; and that it was the foundation of the figure, by which a perpetual engagement is called a covenant of salt; Num. xix. 19. It should rather think it intended as a circumstance of offering, that the meat of God's table should be salted; and conclude that, if it had any emblematical meaning, it was in recommendation to the worshipper an incorrupt heart, seasoned with savoury sentiments of wisdom and piety. Sinners are elsewhere represented as the victims of Divine justice: (Isa. xxxiv. 6. Jer. xii. 3. xvi. 10. Ezek. xxi. 9, 10. and xxxix. 17.) And good men (as in the end of this verse) are represented in another view, with regard to their consecration to God, as acceptable sacrifices. Rom. xii. 1. xv. 16. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 5.
salt in yourselves; and, as one instance of it, be careful to maintain peace with each other, and do not give way to those very unbecoming disputes and emulations which have been the occasion of my present discourse.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark IX. 50. How deeply is pride rooted in the heart of fallen man; when neither the daily instructions, nor edifying example of the humble Jesus could prevent it from appearing, even among the apostles themselves, in so mean and unworthy a manner! Still did worldly interest and grandeur so intoxicate their minds, that they seemed even against hope to have hoped for it, and to have found out a strange kind of method of grafting these expectations, even on the very cross of Christ, which was intended to destroy them.

Mark IX. 36 How edifying and affecting are these lessons, which the meek and lowly Redeemer gave us, with this little child in his arms, whose example we are required to copy! Lord, give us of thy regenerating grace, that we may do it; that we may be converted, and become as little children, free from avarice and ambition, malice and prejudice! How melancholy is it to think, that many, who have by their office been employed to read and explain this lesson to others, and who have not been children in understanding, seem to have learnt so little of it themselves; as if it had never been at all intended for that order of men, to whom indeed it was immediately addressed! If there be any such yet remaining in the Christian ministry, let them seriously weigh the woe denounced on that man by whom the offence cometh. May the infinite mercies of God be extended to all professing Christians, who give themselves up to worldly pursuits and projects; and especially to those who make the church of Christ only a kind of porch to the temple of mammon, and the sacred office itself merely a convenient vehicle for swallowing down riches and honours! May Divine grace deliver us from such fatal snares, and form us to that self-denial and mortification, without which we cannot be the true disciples of Christ; but, after having pierced ourselves through with many unnecessary sorrows here, shall plunge ourselves deep into eternal perdition!

Mark IX. 43-48 May these repeated and dreadful representations of future misery, which we have now been reading, impress our souls in a becoming manner! Blessed Jesus! thou bringest good tidings; yet which of the prophets under the legal dispensation ever represented the terrors of the Lord in so awful a light, as that in which thou hast placed them! Let none of thy ministers be afraid to imitate thee herein! nor let any of thy followers presume to cen-
Christ will not have his little ones despised.

Our Lord farther enforces condescension and humility, and gives rules for the accommodation of disputes and offences among Christians. Mat. XVIII. 10—20.

Farther to promote the humility and moderation of his disciples, our Lord proceeded in the discourse which he began (as in the former section) with the little child in his arms, and said, Take special heed, that you despise not one of these little ones, or that you do not cast contempt on the weakest and meanest of my servants, nor slight even the soul of a child; for I say unto you, that their attendant angels, while in heaven, do incessantly behold the face of my heavenly Father; and if the highest courtiers in the world above do not disdain, on proper occasions, to minister unto them, much less should you disdain it. Especially when you consider, how much greater an instance of condescension you have continually before you, than it is possible even the angels should give; for the Son of man himself, that great and illustrious Personage, came not, as many have imagined, to reign and triumph upon earth, but

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

Their attendant angels while in heaven, &c. The fathers looked on this as an argument, that each good man has his particular guardian angel; (see Sueton. The- 

But, as St. Paul says, they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation; (Heb. i. 14.) I say, the highest, because to behold the face of God may signify sitting near his throne, and be an allusion to the office of chief ministers in earthly courts, who daily converse with their princes. See Grotius; and compare 2 Sam. xvi. 19. 1 Kings xii. 6. Esth. i. 14. and Luke i. 19.

For the Son of man himself.] The particle for here introduces another reason to enforce the caution not to despise these little ones, and not a proof of their angels beholding God's face. See note d on Luke xi. 36. p. 336. c Leisure
It is the Father's will, that none of them be lost.

but by all the offices of humility and endearment to save that which was lost and undone; and he takes a gracious and constant oversight of the least, as well as the greatest, of his redeemed ones. Compare Luke xix. 10. sect. cxliii.) What do you think would be the conduct of a faithful shepherd? If a man had a flock of an hundred sheep, and but one of them should wander from the rest, would he not leave the ninety-nine in their pasture or fold on the mountains, and go out with the most solicitous care and labour to seek that which is gone astray? 13 And if he happen to find it, I assuredly say unto you, that he will bring it back with greater pleasure, and the recovery of it will give him a more sensible joy, than the safety of the ninety-nine which had not wandered at all. (Compare Luke xiv. 4, 5, sect. cxxii.) Even so the love and tenderness of God for those, who are regarded by him as his children, is such, that you may be assured it is not the will of your heavenly Father that any one of these little ones should be lost, for want of your care in attending to, or through your negligence in seeking its recovery. 15 And, as in order to the recovery of your weaker brethren, admonition will frequently be necessary, let me lay down a rule, which, when larger societies are formed among you, it will be of great importance to attend to with the utmost care: If thou shalt know thy brother to be guilty of a fault, and he shall sin against thee, go and reprove him in the most convincing, yet the most gentle manner that thou canst; and that he may take it the better, let it be done between thee and him alone: if he will hear thee with due regard, it is well, for by this means thou hast gained thy brother; he will return to the way of his duty, and the friendship between you will thus be established on firmer foundations than ever, in consequence of this substantial token of thy impartial sincerity and frankness of temper. (Compare

12 How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, both he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? 13 And if so he that he finds it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. 14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

15 Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Leave the ninety-nine on the mountains. The original will bear either this construction, or that which is given in our common translation; but I have rather chosen to express it thus, as most agreeable to what we find in Luke, chap. xv. 4, sect. cxxii. Reprove him in the most convincing manner that thou canst. The word signifieth to convince as well as to admonish. Compare John viii. 9, 46; xvi. 8; 1 Cor. xiv. 24; Tit. i. 9; and James ii. 9.—The reader will observe I often choose to give the full force of a word in the paraphrase, rather than greatly to increase the number of words in the version, though so increased they might express no more than is expressed in a single word or two in the Greek.
16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, who are persons of character and reputation in the society, that their presence may add greater weight to the admonition given, and may be of service, either to silence his objections, and bring him to a sense of his fault, or to prevent disputes, and justify thy conduct, if the matter should be carried farther; as in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican.

(Compare Prov. xxviii. 23.) But if he will not hearken [to thee] take with thee one or two more, who are persons of character and reputation in the society, that their presence may add greater weight to the admonition given, and may be of service, either to silence his objections, and bring him to a sense of his fault, or to prevent disputes, and justify thy conduct, if the matter should be carried farther; as in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established more effectually, than it could otherwise have been. (See Deut. xix. 15.) But if he shall be still incorrigible in his fault, and disregard them in the advice they offer him for peace, then tell it to the whole church, or society of worshipping Christians to which he belongs, and among whom he has immediate communion in gospel ordinances; and if they concur in any admonition to the offender, and he be so far hardened as to disregard the whole church, or society of Christians, you have then done your utmost to reclaim him; and while he continues in this obstinate temper, you will do well to enter your protest against it, by forbearing any intimate

e Tell it to the whole church.] This is one of those many scriptures, which would have been very intelligible, if they had not been learnedly obscurèd by ingenious men, whose interest it has been to spread a cloud over them. I am more, and more convinced that the vulgar sense of the New Testament, that is, the sense in which an honest man of plain sense would take it on his first reading the original, or any good translation, is almost everywhere the true general sense of any passage; though an acquaintance with language and antiquity, with an attentive meditation on the text and context, may illustrate the spirit and energy of a multitude of passages in a manner, which could not otherwise be learned. The old English editions of 1559 and 1541 render it, Tell it to the congregation; and, I think, properly enough. — The word church is unhappily grown into a term of art, and has by different persons a variety of secondary ideas annexed to it; as Dr. Watts has beautifully shown in his Essay on Uncharitableness, p. 7—10. But it signifies in general, an assembly, or number of people, called together on whatever occasion, as is well known. (Compare Acts xix. 32, 59.) It is in the New Testament generally used, as here, for a particular assembly (Acts xiv. 23; 1 Cor. iv. 17; xiv. 25; xvi. 19); but sometimes it is used for the whole body of Christians, because they are now called out from the world, and are at last to be gathered together in the presence of Christ their head (2 Thes. i. 1), and to dwell for ever with each other, and with him. (1 Thes. iv. 17.) Compare Mat. xvi. 18; Eph. i. 22; iii. 10; v. 24; and Col. i. 18, 23. — According to Bishop Stillingfleet's interpretation of this text (in his Irenicum, book ii. cap. 5, § 8) it should be rendered, Tell it to an assembly, or a select company. But it is certain, the force of the article is better preserved by our version; and as undoubtedly it must be an assembly of Christians (compare 1 Cor. vi. 1), so no interpretation seems so natural as, that it should be that assembly which was under a peculiar obligation to watch over the person in question (compare 1 Cor. v. 12, 13, and 2 Thes. iii. 14, 15), and that whose advice and remonstrances he was peculiarly obliged to hear. And this was likewise conformable to the usage of the Jews, who admonished offenders in their synagogues, and to many of their maxims, which commentators mention on this text. See Lock's Hor. Heb. in loc. and Selden's Synod. lib. i. cap. 9.
Where two or three assemble in his name, he is with them.

intimate friendship with such a person; and let him therefore in this case be to thee even as a heathen, and a publican, or other most notorious sinner; for to whom you would perform only the common offices of humanity, but would avoid his intimate society as scandalous, and to whom you are not under those peculiar obligations, whereby Christian brethren are bound to each other.

These are the maxims which you, my apostles, are to inculcate on my other followers, and let them see to it, that they duly regard you; for verily I say unto you, You shall be furnished with such Divine illumination and assistance, as shall abundantly confirm the authority of your decisions on every case and question which may occur; and fully prove (as I formerly told you) that whatsoever you shall bind even in this course of your humble ministry, on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. (See note h on Mat. xvi. 19, sect. lxxxviii. p. 463.)

And further, as a convincing token and demonstration of this, I say unto you, That this authority and power not only shall attend the actions of your whole united body, but even if any two of you shall agree together here on earth concerning any thing which they shall think it proper to ask in prayer for the miraculous confirmation of any of their determinations, it shall be immediately done for them by my Father in heaven. For where but two or three are assembled in my name, with a regard to my authority, and to the purposes of my glory, whatever the peculiar occasion be, I am there by my special, though invisible, presence, in the midst of them,

f As a heathen, and a publican, or other most notorious sinner.] If I am not much mistaken, that celebrated text in Titus relating to heretics (chap. iii. 10), which requires that a man who disturbs the peace, or subverts the faith of his Christian brethren, should be twice admonished, and then discarded by the society, may be much illustrated by this passage. When such a case occurs (as well as when an offended brother has just cause of complaint) each particular person concerned must judge as well as he can, remembering he is answerable to Christ for the impartiality of such judgment.

18 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

h It shall be done for them, &c.] That this refers to a miraculous answer of prayer may appear from comparing Mat. xxi. 21, 22; Mark xi. 23, 24; John xiv. 13, 14; 1 John iii. 22; v. 14, 15; and Jam. v. 16. See Tillotson's Works, Vol. III. page 307.
them, and will shew, by all proper interposition of my Divine power, the regard I have to their interest and their prayers.

IMPROVEMENT.

Thus happy are the meanest servants of Christ, in the care and favour of their heavenly Master, and in the angelic guard, which, by his high command, are continually attending even the lambs of his flock. So condescending are the blessed spirits above, that even the greatest of them do not disdain to minister unto the heirs of salvation; (Heb. i. 14.) Let not the wisest and greatest men despise those, whom angels honour with their guardianship and care; especially since the Son of man, that merciful Shepherd, has come forth into this wilderness to save that which was lost, and even to seek and recover us when we were gone astray, and should otherwise have wandered on to our eternal ruin.

What could have been more happy for the church of Christ than the observation of this plain and easy rule, which he has given for ending disputes among his followers! And yet who, that sees the conduct of the generality of Christians, would imagine they had ever heard of such a rule? Instead of this private exposition, which might often bring a debate to a speedy and amicable conclusion, what public charges! what passionate complaints! what frequent and laboured attempts to take, if the least scandalous, yet not the least pernicious kind of revenge, by wounding the characters of those, whom we imagine to have injured us!

As for church-censures, how lamentable is it, that they have been so little conformable to this rule, and in many instances so contrary to it, in almost every Christian nation under heaven! Is this the form in which ecclesiastical judgments do appear in the Popish, or even in the Protestant world? Are these the maxims by which they have been, or by which they are determined, even by those who claim the largest share in the promises made to the apostles, and boast with the greatest confidence of the presence and authority of Christ with them, to confirm their sentences, and to sanctify perhaps rapine and murder? Vain wretched confidence! Let us earnestly pray that this dishonour to the Christian name may every where be wiped away; and that true religion, and even common humanity, may not with such solemn mockery be destroyed in the name of the Lord.

Let humble submission be always paid to apostolical decisions in every difficulty; and let the promises made to these leaders in the Christian Church be some encouragement even to us, on whom the ends of the world are come. None but an Omnipresent, and
How often an offending brother should be forgiven.

**Sect. XCV.**

Consequently a Divine Person, could say, *Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

His power and his goodness can never be impaired; let it therefore be an encouragement to social prayer: and let the remembrance of our Redeemer's continued presence and inspection, engage us to behave ourselves agreeably to the relation that we claim to him, and to those expectations from him which we profess.

**Sect. XCV.**

*Our Lord cautions his disciples against a revengeful spirit, and inculcates mutual forgiveness, by the affecting parable of the unmerciful servant.* Mat. XVIII. 21. to the end.

**Mat. XVIII. 21.**

*Then,* when Jesus had given this advice for the accommodation of differences among his disciples, Peter, imagining it might be abused by ill-disposed persons, as an encouragement to offer injuries to others, came to him and said, *Lord, how often must I forgive my brother, if he offend against me?* must I go on to do it until he has repeated the injury seven times?

**22** And Jesus, in reply, says to him, *I do not merely say to thee, Till seven times, but even till seventy times seven:* in short, the precept is unbounded, and you must never be weary of forgiving your brethren, since you are so much more indebted to the Divine mercy, than they can be to your's.

**23** For this reason, or with respect to this matter, I may properly say, that *the kingdom of heaven, in its constitution and final process, may be likened to,* or be illustrated by, the instance of a certain king that ruled over a large country, who, as he had a great number of officers under him, was determined at length to settle an account with his servants. And when he began to reckon with them, there was brought to him one, who had so abused the eminent station in which he had been placed, and the high confidence which his prince had reposed in him, that he owed him a most immense sum, and stood accountable for ten thousand talents: And as he had nothing to

---

*a May be likened to, or be illustrated, &c.*

*b Oxed him ten thousand talents.*

---

See sect. Iviii. note 1.
as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not, to pay, which could be any equivalent for the debt, or any considerable composition for it, his lord, according to frequent custom in such cases (Exod. xxii. 3. Lev. xxi. 47. and 2 Kings xviii. iv. 1.) commanded him to be sold for a slave, and also his wife and children, and all the goods that he had, and payment to be made with the price of them, as far as it would go. The servant therefore fell down in helpless consternation, prostrated himself at his master's feet, and said, Lord, I beseech thee have patience with me for a while longer, and I will endeavour to pay thee all. Then the lord of that unhappy servant, whose affairs were so utterly desperate, being melted with compassion, graciously discharged him; and, knowing how vain it was to expect he should ever pay him, declared that, on condition of his future good behaviour, he frankly forgive him all the debt.

But just as that servant went out from the presence of his generous and indulgent sovereign, he met with one of his fellow-servants, who owed him but a very inconsiderable sum of money, no more than an hundred pence; and laying hold of him by the throat, and almost strangling him, he said, in a furious and outrageous manner, Pay me that which thou owest me immediately, or I will detain thee as my prisoner, And his poor fellow-servant fell down at his feet, as he had done at his lord's, and entreated him, saying, in the very words which he himself had used but just before on the like occasion, Have patience with me for a while longer, and I will endeavour to pay thee all. And he would not be prevailed

these were talents of gold, this would amount to seventy-two millions sterling: which is so immense a sum, that it seems strange Antiochus the Great should be able to pay it, as Estrinus tells us he did, to purchase a peace with the Romans: [Eust. ib. iv. cap. 2.] But, by Lact's account of the conditions of peace, they were talents of silver, of which Antiochus was to pay fifteen thousand talents, that is, five hundred talents down, two thousand five hundred when the senate should ratify the peace, and the remaining twelve thousand in twelve years, at a thousand talents a year: (Iscy Histor. lib. xxxvii. cap. 35, & lib. xxxviii. cap. 38.) And even thus the sum must have amounted to 6,750,000. See Prid. Connect. Vol. i. Pref. p. 20, and Vol. II. p.

180.—Our Lord seems to have mentioned so large a sum on purpose to intimate the number and weight of our offences against God, and our utter incapacity of making him any satisfaction.

5 On condition of his future good behaviour.] This is a circumstance exceeding natural, and by the revocation of the pardon afterwards it seems specially implied.

4 An hundred pence.] Reckoning the Roman denarius at seven pence halfpenny of our money, it amounted to three pounds and sixpence.
If we forgive not our brethren, we shall not be forgiven.

And when his other fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly grieved at such an instance of unexampled cruelty from a man in his circumstances, and came and gave their lord the king an exact and faithful account of the whole matter, who was highly incensed at so inhuman an action. Then his lord, having called him again, said unto him with just indignation, Thou wicked and barbarous slave, thou knowest that I frankly forgave thee all that vast debt which thou owedst me, because thou didst not entertain my pity: And shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, when in thy power, even as I but just before had compassion on thee? Thou art most inexusable in what thou hast done, and I am determined to treat thee accordingly.

And his lord, being justly incensed, revoked the grant of remission he had just before made, as forfeited by so vile a behaviour; and not only put him in prison, but delivered him to the tormentors there, to fetter and scourge him, till he should pay all that was due to him; which was equivalent to condemning him to perpetual confinement and painful imprisonment during life.

And Jesus concluded the discourse with saying, Thus also will my heavenly Father deal with you; if you do not every one of you from your very hearts forgive his brother his trespasses; and I leave it to your own consciences to judge, whether it be safe for you to tempt the strictness of his inexorable justice, by the severity of your conduct towards your offending brethren.

Improve—

1 Gave their lord an exact and faithful account.] This is the meaning of the word ἐκκαθάρισάν, as Albert has shown; Observ. p. 116.

2 Thou wicked slave.] The word ἡ παράνοια is not always a term of reproach, nor does it necessarily imply more than servant; (compare Mat. xxv. 21, 22.) Yet in this connection I thought it would well bear the version I have given it, which may best express the indignation which his lord is supposed to speak.

3 Delivered him to the tormentors, &c.] Imprisonment is a much greater punishment in the eastern parts of the world than here; state criminals especially, when condemned to it, are not only forced to submit to a very mean and scanty allowance, but are frequently loaded with chains or yokes of heavy wood, in which they cannot either lie or sit at ease; and, by frequent scourgings, and sometimes by rackings, are quickly brought to an untimely end. (See Somers's China, p. 225.) To this there is probably a reference here. Compare sect. xxxi., note b.
IMPROVEMENT.

How unreasonable and how odious does a severe and uncharit-itable temper appear, when we view it in the light of this parable! Yet what light can be more just than this? We are indebted to God more than ten thousand talents; from our infancy we begin to contract the debt, and are daily increasing it in our ripening years; justly, therefore, might he cast us into the prison of hell till we paid the uttermost farthing. And were we to fall at his feet, with a promise of paying him all on his patient forbearance, it must be the language of gross ignorance, or of presumptuous folly, when addressed to a Being who knows our poverty, and knows that, in consequence of it, we are utterly incapable of making him any amends. But he magnifies his grace in the kind offers of a free forgiveness; and shall we who receive it, and hold our lives and all our hope by it, take our brethren by the throat, because they owe us a few pence? or shall we carry along with us deep continued resentment, glowing like a hidden fire in our bosoms? God forbid! For surely if we do so, out of our own mouth shall we be condemned, while we acknowledge the justice of the sentence here passed against this cruel servant.

Christ himself has made the application: so shall my heavenly Father deal with you, if you do not forgive your brethren; and he has instructed us elsewhere to ask forgiveness only as we grant it; (Mat. vi. 14, 15). Let us then from this moment discharge our hearts of every sentiment of rancour and revenge, nor ever allow a word, or even a wish, that savours of it. And as ever we hope our addresses to the throne of Divine mercy should meet with a favourable audience, let us lift up holy hands, without wrath, as well as without doubting. (1 Tim. ii. 8.)

SECT. XCVI.

Christ reproves John for prohibiting one, who cast out demons in his name, because he was not of their company. Mark IX. 38—41.


MARK IX. 38.  
AND John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting

MARK IX. 38.  
IN the midst of the preceding discourse, relating to humility and self-denial, the apostle John (whether desirous of diverting him from a subject which he could not bear pursued without some consciousness of having deserved blame, or thinking it might receive some farther illustration by his remarks upon the case that he

should
A stranger acting in Christ's name, is not to be forbid.

Sect. xcviii.

Mark IX. 58. should mention) interrupted our Lord, and answered him, when he had just been urging a readiness to receive one of the least of his servants in his name (Mark ix. 37. sect. xcviii.) by saying, Master, while we were in our late progress, we saw one casting out demons in thy name, who does not follow us, nor converse with us as brethren: and we forbade him to do it any more, because he does not follow thee among us, and never had, as we apprehend, any regular commission from thee, and so might possibly have proved an occasion of neglect or reproach to the rest of thy disciples.

39 But Jesus said unto him, Do not forbid, or go about to hinder him at present; for, by thus making use of my name, he appears to have some reverence and regard for me, and will not therefore set himself against me; since there is no man who shall be seen to work such a miracle in my name, that can quickly, or on any slight occasion, speak evil of me, or say anything dishonourable of that name, for which he professes such a regard: And be that regard ever so imperfect, I would not discourage one who acts thus, now: for, with respect to such, and in a case like this, I may use a proverb (the reverse of that which I mentioned on a different occasion), and say, Whosoever is not against us, is for us; and therefore I would by no means condemn a man for doing that, by which the kingdom of Satan is in fact weakened and my name

39 But Jesus said [unto him.] forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. [Luke IX. 50.]

40 For he that is not against us, is on our part. [Luke IX. 50.]

a Interrupted our Lord.] I have inserted this story apart here, that the thread of the preceding discourse might not be broken; that the xviii. section might not be lengthened beyond due bounds; and that I might have room to illustrate and improve this passage, which, though short, has both its difficulty and its use.

b Casting out demons in thy name.] Probably this was a case something resembling that of the sons of Seba, (Acts xix. 13—16.) and God might see reason now to grant that efficacy to their adjuration, which he afterwards denied, when the evidences of the gospel were proposed so much more distinctly and fully, after the descent of the Spirit.—Dr. Clarke supposes that he was one of John the Baptist's disciples.

c Whosoever is not against us, is for us.] Our Lord had formerly said (Mat. xii. 50.) He that is not with me, is against me; thereby giving his hearers a just and necessary admonition that, on the whole, the war between him and Satan admitted of no neutrality, and that those who were indifferent to him would finally be treated as his enemies. (See sect. xvi. p. 323.) But here, in another view, he very consistently uses a different and seemingly opposite proverb, the counterpart of the former, directing his followers to judge of men's characters in the most candid manner, and charitably to hope that they, who did not oppose his cause, wished well to it; a conduct peculiarly reasonable, when his cause lay under so many discouragements. Probably many who now concealed their regard to him, were afterwards animated courageously to profess it, though at the greatest hazard. I cannot, with Mr. Baxter, think an express declaration of regard to Christ, to have been more necessary in the former case, than now; but it is most obvious, that Christ requires us to be more rigorous in judging ourselves, than he allows us to be in judging each other,
name glorified, though he have not my immediate and express commission. I rather take it in good part, as I am willing to do any thing that looks like a token of esteem and affection to me, be it ever so inconsiderable; for, as I formerly told you, (Mat. x. 42, p. 492), whoever shall present you with a cup of cold water only in my name, that is, because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his proportionable reward. And so he went on to warn them of the danger of offending any of the weakest of his disciples, in the manner recounted and explained above. (See Mark ix. 42. sect. xciii.) And when he had concluded that discourse he not long after quitted Galilee. Compare Mat. xix. 1. sect. cxxxv.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

It is sad that the spirit, which remains in so many Christians, and in this instance appeared even in the beloved Saint John, should (as the apostle James expresses it) lust unto envy; Jam. iv. 5.) How ill does that spirit become a disciple, and much more a minister, of the benevolent Jesus! The apostle Paul had learnt and taught a better temper, when he rejoiced, that Christ was preached, even by those who were his personal enemies, (Phil. i. 18.) To seek our own glory, is not glory, Prov. xxv. 27.) and to confine religion to them that follow us, is a narrowness of spirit which we should avoid and abhor.

Christ here gives us a lovely example of candour and moderation: he was willing to put the best construction on dubious cases, and to treat those as friends, who were not avowed and declared enemies. Perhaps in this instance, it might be a means of overcoming a remainder of prejudice, and perfecting what was wanting in the faith and obedience of the persons in question; at least it suited the present state of things, in which men are to be judged of by their professions and actions, as their hearts cannot immediately and certainly be known.

But let us judge ourselves with greater severity, remembering there is an approaching day, in which the secrets of all hearts will be made manifest; in which those, who have indeed been neutrals in the war between Christ and Satan, will be treated as enemies; and those other words will be fulfilled, He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad, (Mat. xii. 30. and Luke xi. 23.)

In that day, may the sincerity of our hearts be discovered, and then
then we may rejoice in this repeated assurance, that the least of our services shall be kindly remembered, and abundantly rewarded according to the riches of Divine bounty and grace.

SECT. XCVII.

Our Lord sends out the seventy disciples with large instructions, like those he had before given to the twelve apostles. Luke X. 1.—16.


AFTER these things, before he departed from Galilee, the Lord Jesus intending, when the approaching feast of tabernacles was over, to make one journey more over the country, in the last half year he was to spend on earth, fixed upon seventy others of his disciples also, besides the twelve apostles so frequently mentioned before (see Luke ix. 1. & seq. sect. lxxiv.) and sent them out before him, two and two, together into every city, and more private place, into which he himself intended shortly to come; and thus, as it were, he divided the whole country into thirty-five lesser circuits.

2 And at their setting out, he gave them many important instructions, nearly resembling those which he had before addressed to the apostles; and as it was a large and copious field for service, on which they were to enter, he said therefore to them, as he had formerly done to their brethren.—I shall elsewhere give my reasons why I suppose the story of the Samaritans refusing him entertainment (though recorded Luke xix. 15—16.) to have happened later than this. (See sect. cxxxvii. note a.) At present I would only observe, that the expression, after these things, in the beginning of this chapter, may either refer to the stories immediately preceding, in the close of the former, from vers 55. to the end, or to the general series of events recorded above, though (as I think the evangelist himself strongly intimates) one little history be transposed.

2 Therefore he said unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

LXXIII.

AFTER these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every city, and place, whither he himself would come.

2 Therefore he said unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.
brethren, (Mat. ix. 37, 38. p. 387,) The harvest is indeed great, and many souls are to be gathered in, but the faithful labourers are as yet very few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would, by his immediate access to the spirits of men, thrust forth more labourers into his harvest, though the work may prove so fatiguing and hazardous, that they are naturally averse to it.

3 Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way.

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house:

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

And as for you, go your ways with all the resolution and zeal you can employ in your ministry, as indeed you will need it all; for behold, I send you forth as so many defenceless lambs in the midst of ravenous and cruel wolves. Yet as you go under the singular care of Divine Providence, carry not, with you any purse of money, nor even a scrip for your provisions, nor any more shoes than you have now on your feet; nor stay so much as to salute any man as you pass by him on the way; but let it evidently appear to all who see you, that your thoughts are full of the great errand on which you go.

And, in all the stages of your journey, carry along with you those benevolent affections which are so well suited to the design of your mission: into whatever house therefore you shall happen to come, at your first entrance say, Peace be upon this house and pray that prosperity and happiness may attend the whole family. And if any son and heir of peace, or any truly good man who is worthy of such blessings, be there in the house, your prayer for peace and prosperity shall be answered, and shall rest upon it; but if not, it shall not be entirely lost, but shall return upon you, and you shall be the better for those kind and friendly sentiments, even though the wishes they dictate be not exactly answered.

sisent with what Luke has said at the beginning of his gospel.

c That he would thrust forth more labourers, &c.] As both Luke here, and Matthew in a parallel passage, (Mat. ix. 38.) use the word ἐκθέλει, which literally signifies to thrust out, I was willing to express the force of it in the version as well as the paraphrase. (See note k on Mat. ix. 38. sect. lxviii. p. 387.)—So many of the expressions used in this discourse are to be found in that to the twelve, sect. lxiv. lxv. that it is generally sufficient to refer to the paraphrase and notes there for the explication of them here.

d Nor stay to salute any man, as you pass by him on the way.] Our Lord did not intend by this to forbid his disciples in general, nor even any of his ministers, a decent use of the customary tokens of cordial respect to others, any more than he forbids the use of shoes and purses; only while they were employed on this particular message, he required the forbearance of them; that every one, who saw them pass by, might perceive that their minds were full of the most important business, and that they were earnestly intent on the immediate dispatch of it. (Compare 2 Kings iv. 29.) This was the more necessary, as they were so much straitened for time. See above note a.
And when you are entered into any lodgings, continue in the same house as long as you stay in the town, cheerfully and contentedly eating and drinking what you find with them; for as, on the one hand, the common labourer is worthy of his reward, and therefore you who take so much pains to bring them to the greatest blessings, have much more right to your entertainment; so, on the other, it is beneath you to be very solicitous and nice about the manner of it; and therefore do not create an unnecessary trouble in the family where you are, or go from one house to another, in hope of better accommodations, during the short stay you make in a place.

And, I repeat it again, Into whatever town or city you come, and they receive and entertain you freely and cheerfully, be ready to accept their kindness to you, and without any difficulty eat and drink such things as are set before you:

And I am sure I put it into your power to make them an abundant recompense, when I commission you, as I do now, to heal the sick that are in it, and to say unto them, The long-expected kingdom of God is come near unto you, and therefore prepare yourselves thankfully to receive the blessings of it, which are thus freely offered to you by the Messiah.

But into whatsoever city you come, and they perversely set themselves against you, and do not entertain you, nor regard your message, go out into the streets of it, and say, in a most public and solemn manner, Since you reject so gracious and important a message, we cannot but consider you as rejected by God, and devoted to certain and inevitable destruction; we therefore separate ourselves from all that belongs to you, and wipe off from our feet, as a testimony against you, even the very dust of your city, which cleaves to us; nevertheless, know this assuredly, that the kingdom of God is come near unto you, and in the midst of all the calamities which are to befall you, let your consciences witness that mercy hath been offered.

7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say:

Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you; notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.
12 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

13 Wo unto thee, Chorazin, Wo unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell.

16 He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

He repeated the pathetic lamentation. [Sr.] Considering the affectionate temper of our Lord, it is no wonder that he should renew his lamentation over those unhappy places, where he had so intimately conversed; and that he should do it in such words as these, so well calculated to alarm and impress all that should hear or read them. Oh! that they might never have their due weight with those who might pass them over too slightly, when they occurred before, in Mat. x. 20-24. (See sect. Ix. p. 309, 310.) Oh! that every intelligent creature who reads them might know that the sentence of his own condemnation is now before his eyes.
Christ is urged by his brethren.

even the Father himself, whose credentials I bear, and who will punish the despisers of the gospel, as impious rebels, who presume to contemn his Infinite Majesty, and provoke his almighty power.

IMPROVEMENT.

So unwilling was the blessed Jesus to give over his kind attempts for men's salvation! He projected another circuit through the country, and sends forth other messengers, more numerous than the former company. He renews his invitations to perishing sinners, and his lamentations over those, who had hitherto rejected the counsel of God against themselves; (Luke vii. 30.) Thus let us love the souls of men; thus let us use repeated endeavours to deliver them; endeavours which would probably be much more successful than they are, if these wise and gracious directions of Christ to his ministers were more attentively observed by those who are honoured with that important office.

3, 4 Let all such cast their care upon God; let them go forth cheerfully in a dependence on his protection and favour; let them carry about with them hearts full of affection for the whole human race, seeking and praying for the peace of all around them;

5 cheerfully contenting themselves with such things as they have (Heb. xiii. 5); and neither pursuing the grandeur nor the delicacies of life with any eager attachment.

2 Send forth, O Lord, such labourers into thine harvest, and animate them to a becoming zeal in their work, by a deep sense of that dreadful condemnation, which those will incur, who despising Father, in whose name he was sent! May God preserve our country from that guilt and ruin! The kingdom of God is come nigh unto us, and we are lifted up to heaven by our privileges: may we not, after all, be cast down to hell for the abuse of them! but may Divine grace make such a way for the gospel into our hearts, that we may cordially receive all who faithfully proclaim it, and bid them welcome in the name of the Lord!

SECT. XCVIII.

Christ discourses with his brethren about his going up to the feast of tabernacles, and stays some time after them. John VII. 1—13.

AFTER these things, that is, after he had miraculously fed the five thousand, walked on the sea to his disciples, and discoursed with the multitude
multitude concerning the bread of life, Jesus for some time walked, or travelled, as we before observed, in Galilee, and there instructed his disciples (see sect. xcviii.) for he would not then walk or converse familiarly in Judea, because the Jews, and more especially their rulers, incensed by the growing fame of his miracles, and the freedom of his discourses, sought an opportunity to slay him, either by private assassination, tumultuous assault, or legal process.

And a very noted feast of the Jews was then near, which is [called] the feast of tabernacles; instituted in commemoration of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness, and celebrated in booths erected for that purpose, with great solemnity and joy. (See Lev. xxiii. 34, & seq.)

Therefore his brethren, or near kinsmen in Galilee, said unto him, We would advise thee to remove from hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also who are there, may, for the confirmation of their faith in thee, behold thy miracles, and see the mighty works which thou performest here: For this retirement seems not at all to suit the great pretensions thou art making to a public and extraordinary character; as it is well known that no man will choose to act any remarkable thing in secret, that is himself desirous, like thee, to be publicly known and talked of: if, therefore thou art really the promised Messiah, and performest these things, which we so often see at home, by a Divine commission, go up to Jerusalem, and there manifest thyself to the great men of the world, and appear in places of the most public concourse; and thou canst not have a better opportunity of doing it, than at this celebrated feast, which brings together so many, not only from the land of Israel, but from neighbouring countries. This they said, not out of any real friendship and respect, but

---

a After these things, &c.] Those that I have mentioned are the last which had been recorded by John. See a more particular account of them, sect. lxxviii.—lxxxii.

b He would not walk in Judea.] This may be an intimation, either that he was not at Jerusalem the preceding Passover, or at least made no public appearance or long abide there. I am inclined to think the former was the case. —Undoubtedly, his omission of a journey thither, at some of the great feasts, might be vindicated by his extraordinary character, and those intimations he might have from his heavenly Father, of being dispensed with, for reasons not particularly known to us, who have no concern with them. See note b, sect. lxxviii. p. 438.

c That is himself desirous to be publicly known and talked of.] This seems to be a very invidious and groundless insinuation, as if he was actuated by ostentations views; the contrary to which appeared so evidently in the whole of his conduct, that nothing but base envy could suggest such a charge.

d Neither

---

To go up to the feast of tabernacles.
but to make farther trial of him, and in some measure to upbraid him with those precautions which he thought proper to observe; for, notwithstanding all the evidences he had given of his Divine mission, yet neither did his brethren and kindred themselves believe in him, when they saw that he took no such method to raise himself and his family, as they thought inseparable from the character of the Messiah, whenever he should appear 4.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time either to manifest myself or to go up to Jerusalem, is not yet come; but your time is always ready, and such a circumstance in your case is comparatively of very little importance. You have no reason to fear any injury or assault, as the world cannot hate you 5, because it is on principles of carnal wisdom that you act, and so have nothing in your conduct that may draw upon you any particular opposition; but me it hates, not on account of any ill action which I have committed, but because, from a zeal for truth, and a desire of its reformation, I bear my testimony concerning it, that its deeds are evil. Do you therefore go up to this feast, whenever you please, without waiting for me; and acquiesce in what I now tell you, that I do not as yet go up to this feast; for that which I judge my most convenient time of doing it, is not yet fully come, nor do I need to

4 Neither did his brethren believe in him, &c.] It is astonishing that these near relations of Christ, who must have had so many opportunities of seeing the glories both of his character and miracles, which ast they here expressly acknowledge) should continue in unbelief. But they unhappily laid it down as a first principle, that the Messiah must be a temporal Prince; and finding this mark of his miss on wanting, and seeing (more strongly than others, not so minutely conversant with it, I could do) his aversion to any such scheme, they would yield to no other proofs; and were, I fear, on the fatal list of those who perished, as thousands now do, by opposing hypothesis to fact. See Dr. Sykes on the Truth of Christianity, p. 128.

5 The world cannot hate you.] These words, genic as they may appear, contain a most awful intimation, that these his kinsmen were persons governed entirely by carnal views, and therefore destitute of the love of God, and all well-grounded hope from him.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.

7 The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come.
to be directed by you in my conduct on such occasions as these.

Now when he had said these things unto them he left them to go up alone, while he continued [still] in Galilee for a few days longer. But when his brethren or kindred were gone up, then to he also unset went up to the feast, not publicly with a train of attendants, as he had often done, but as it were in secret, with as much privacy as he could.

The Jews therefore, not seeing him appear as usual, sought for him at the beginning of the feast, and said, What is become of Jesus, and where is he? or what can have prevented his coming up to the feast? And there was, in the mean time, a great murmur among the people concerning him; for some said (as they had, from the whole tenor of his life, the utmost reason to conclude) Surely he is an admirably pious and a good man: but others, under the force of strong prejudices, suspected the worst, and said, Nay, that cannot be, but he certainly seduces the ignorant populace, however he comes by this power of doing it; and the wisest part of mankind must see that he will undoubtedly at last draw his followers into ruin, as some other impostors have lately done. (See Acts v. 36, 37.) Thus they privately debated the matter; howbeit, no one, that thought favourably of him, spoke his mind with freedom concerning him, for fear of the rulers among the Jews, who were jealous of his growing fame, and looked with a very malignant eye on all who took any peculiar notice of Jesus.

But when he had said these things unto them he left them to go up alone, while he continued in Galilee for a few days longer. But when his brethren or kindred were gone up, then he also unset went up to the feast, not publicly with a train of attendants, as he had often done, but as it were in secret, with as much privacy as he could.

The Jews therefore, not seeing him appear as usual, sought for him at the beginning of the feast, and said, What is become of Jesus, and where is he? or what can have prevented his coming up to the feast? And there was, in the mean time, a great murmuring among the people concerning him; for some said (as they had, from the whole tenor of his life, the utmost reason to conclude) Surely he is an admirably pious and a good man: but others, under the force of strong prejudices, suspected the worst, and said, Nay, that cannot be, but he certainly seduces the ignorant populace, however he comes by this power of doing it; and the wisest part of mankind must see that he will undoubtedly at last draw his followers into ruin, as some other impostors have lately done. (See Acts v. 36, 37.) Thus they privately debated the matter; howbeit, no one, that thought favourably of him, spoke his mind with freedom concerning him, for fear of the rulers among the Jews, who were jealous of his growing fame, and looked with a very malignant eye on all who took any peculiar notice of Jesus.

**He afterwards goes, and the Jews are divided about him.**

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit, no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

---

8. He also went up to the feast.] *Our Lord might know at some circumstance of particular danger, which might have rendered his going up at the usual time, and in company with his brethren, unsafe, and therefore improper.*

9. Nay publicly with a train of attendants, &c.] I look on this as *a most certain argument that the story in Luke ix. 51—56, cannot (as most commentators suppose) relate to this journey; since it is so evident he was then attended with a numerous train of followers.* Compare note a, sect. xcvii.

1. Where is he? or what can have prevented his coming up to the feast? ] *If our Lord had abstained himself from the two preceding feasts (which perhaps the expositions of his brethren, ver. 5, 4, imply) there was yet an obvious reason for the surprise which this question expresses; or undoubtedly our Lord used generally to attend on these occasions,* See p. 438, sect. lxviii. note b.

3. Surest.] *It is possible, as our translators have supposed, that the word εἰκόνις, here may be only an expostulation; but to me it seems probable that it may not in propriety be rendered *surely, or truly, which is accordingly the sense that I have sometimes given it. We should not, I think, unnecessarily conclude a word to be quite insignificant in any writer of credit and character, especially in the sacred pensman. *No one, that thought favourably of him, &c.] *The reason afterwards given renders such a restriction absolutely necessary. Those that thought contemptibly of Christ might have spoken their minds as freely as they pleased.*

5. Q 2
We see how little the greatest external advantages can do without the Divine blessing, when some of the nearest relations of Christ himself, by whom he had been most intimately known, were not prevailed upon to believe in him. Who then can wonder if some remain incorrigible in the most regular and pious families? How much more valuable is the union to him, which is founded on a cordial and obedient faith, than that which arose from the bands of nature? and how cautiously should we watch against those carnal prejudices, by which even the brethren of Christ were alienated from him?

Our Lord, we see, used a prudent care to avoid persecution and danger, till his time was fully come; and it is our duty to endeavour, by all wise and upright precautions, to secure and preserve ourselves, that we may have opportunities for farther service.

In the course of such service we must expect, especially if we appear under a public character, to meet with a variety of enemies; but let us remember that Jesus himself went through evil report and good report; by some applauded as a good man, but by others, and those the greater part of his countrymen, condemned as deceiving the people. Let us learn of Christ patiently to endure such injurious treatment; and endeavour to behave ourselves so, that we may have a testimony in the consciences of men, and in the presence of God, that, after the example of our great Master, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have our conversation in the world; (2 Cor. i. 12.) Then will our names be had in remembrance, and the honour and reward of our faithful obedience continued, when the memories of those that reviled us are perished with them.

SECT. XCIX.

Christ, going up privately to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, vindicates his conduct, and farther urges the proofs of his Divine mission. John VII. 14—24.

Thus were the Jews divided in their sentiments about our blessed Lord, and though they eagerly inquired after him, they knew not where to find him: but now in the midst of the feast of tabernacles, about the third or fourth day,
went up into the temple, and taught.

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

18 He that speaketh of himselfSeeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the scribes could attain to by a learned education.—Compare Mark i. 29, and Mat. vii. 29, p. 249, note e.

a How does this man understand letters?] I see no reason to believe that our Lord adorned his discourses with quotations from, or references to, the writers that were then most celebrated for their learning, or shewed any extraordinary acquisitions in history, antiquities, &c. The evangelists have given us no specimen of this kind; and it is certain that foreign literature was then in great contempt among the Jews. The words undoubtedly refer to our Lord's great acquaintance with the scriptures, and the judicious and masterly manner in which he taught the people out of them, with far greater majesty and nobler eloquence than

b Be determined to do his will.] This seems to be the import of those words, ἀπέριστον ἐπιθυμεῖν τὸν τούτον. (See sect. xxii. note 3, p. 126.)—This important passage seems an express declaration that every upright man, to whom the gospel is proposed, will see and own the evidence of its Divine authority; which indeed might reasonably have been concluded from the awful judgment pronounced on those, who presume to reject it.

c No
They seek his life for a miracle wrought on the sabbath:

sect. xcix. himself by secular views; and a sagacious observer will soon see that he is seeking his own glory and interest, even under the most self-denying forms: but he that in the whole of his conduct shews that he seeks the glory of God, as of him that he declares to have sent him, gives great reason to believe that he is true and sincere in that declaration, and that there is no unrighteousness or imposture in him.

VII. 18. But your character is the very reverse of this, and you cannot but know it in your own conscience: for let me upon this occasion call you to reflect on your own conduct, and appeal to that: hath not Moses given you the law, and do you not eagerly contend for its Divine original? and yet none of you observes the law, which he has given you. If you deny the charge, let me remind you of that grand precept, "Thou shalt not kill," and then ask you, Wherefore do you go about to kill me, though an innocent and upright person, who am come to bring you a most important message from God?

This Jesus said with reference to what he knew to be the secret design of some of his hearers, who were even then plotting his destruction; but the multitude, who were not aware of it, ignorantly and rudely answered and said, Surely thou art possessed, and distracted " to talk thus; dost thou not safely travel from place to place, and appear in our most public assemblies, even here at Jerusalem, and who goes about or desires to kill thee?

Jesus, referring to the design which he knew some of them had of renewing their prosecution against him as a sabbath-breaker, because he had commanded the disabled man at the pool of Bethesda to carry his bed on that day (compare John. v. 16. p 255), answered in the gentlest manner, and said unto them, I have some time ago seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil; who goeth about to kill thee?

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

---

c No unrighteousness or imposture in him.] The word ἀδίκημα, in this opposition to ἀθέμιτος, must signify imposture. Yet I think it the fairest way to translate the original words in all their extent, and content myself with suggesting in the paraphrase those limitations, which the particular connection requires.

d Thou art possessed, and distracted.] So some of them express it, John x. 20, He hath a devil, and is mad: which plainly shews (as many have observed) that they thought some of the worst kind and degrees of lunacies proceeded from the agency of some demon: as many considerable Greek writers plainly did (See Bas, Exercit. p. 41—43.) But it can never be argued from hence, that possession and lunacy are universally synonymous terms. When joined together they seem to signify different things; the former being put for the cause, and the latter for the effect.

c I have
If a man receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whith whole on the sabbath-day?

I have some time ago performed one remarkable work, and you all, to this very day, wonder on account of it, that I should order the man to cure his wound on the sabbath-day: Yet a little reflection might convince you that your cavil is very unreasonable, even on your own principles: for Moses gave you a precept, which required circumcision, (not that it is originally of Moses his institution, but had been formerly established by the observation of Abraham, and of the other fathers of our nation, many ages before Moses was born, which therefore could not properly be altered by him;) and you scruple not to circumcise a man-child on the sabbath day, if it happen to be the eighth from his birth. If [then] to prevent the violation of Moses his law by deferring this sacred rite, you acknowledge it fit, that a man should receive circumcision on the sabbath itself; [why] are you incensed against me, that, by speaking a word, I have cured a man, who was entirely disabled, on the sabbath; as if it was a more servile work to heal than to wound? or how do you imagine that I have not power, when I have thus healed him, to manifest the perfection of the cure, by commanding him

I have not made with elsewhere, but have

Yet they scruple not to circumcise on that day.
him to carry his couch? Judge not according to these prejudices, which the meanness of my appearance tends to produce; but judge righteous and equitable judgment; which if you do, you must necessarily acknowledge my Divine mission to be as evident and certain as that of Moses himself, to whose precepts you profess so great a regard.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let us learn of our meek and humble Master to refer the homily of all we know and do to Divine instruction communicated to us, and Divine grace working in and by us; that, seeking the glory of God, we may have the surest evidence, that we are truly his. Let us on all occasions remember that integrity and uprightness will be a certain security to us against dangerous mistakes in matters of religion. If the light we already have, be faithfully improved, we may humbly hope that more will be given in; nor shall we then fail of convincing evidence, that the gospel-doctrine is of God; for the experience of its power on our hearts will check our passions, and destroy the prejudices, that would prevent the truth from taking place in our minds.

Let us receive his doctrine as Divine, and hearken unto Christ as sent of God; and whatsoever be the vile reproaches we may meet with from a wicked world, and the malicious designs it may form against us, let us be resolute and steadfast in the practice of the duties he has taught us, that with well-doing we may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. (1 Peter ii. 15.)

Our Lord was reviled as a demoniac and a lunatic; but instead of rendering railing for railing, he replied in the words of gentleness and sobriety. So let us endeavour to conquer the rudeness of those attacks we may meet with in his cause; that we may, if possible, remove the prejudices so fatal to those that entertain them, and form men to that equitable and impartial judgment, which would soon turn all their cavils against Christ into admiration, praise and obedience.

SECT.

† That I have not power, when I have thus healed him, &c.] So our Lord himself states the argument in a case nearly resembling this, (Mat. ix. 5, 6, p. 248;) and might probably here intend to insinuate it, though in an oblique manner.

a He
SECT. C.

The Jews pass a variety of censures on Christ; and the sanhedrim, alarmed by the regard which some expressed towards him, send officers to seize him; but Christ openly declares that their purposes should not immediately take effect. John VII. 25—30.

John VII. 25. THEN said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? 26 But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him: Do the rulers know indeed, that this is the very Christ?

27 Hovbeit, we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and

a He is to be born in a miraculous way of a virgin.] It is evident from Mat. ii. 4, 5, that the Jews apprehended the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem; and from a multitude of other places, that they knew he was to be a descendant of David; (compare ver. 42.) I know not how therefore to account for their saying that, when Christ came, no man would know whence he is, but by supposing, with Archbishop Talboton, (Vol. II. p. 454.) that the words refer to an expectation they had that he would be born of a virgin. —As for the notion which Justin Martyr mentions, that the Messiah should for a while be hid, it seems more modern; and they must put a strange interpretation on Isa. lxi. 6. Mic. v. 2. and Psal. ex. 4. to draw any such consequence from them, as Dr. Whitby and Mr. L'Enfant suppose they did.

b Do ye both know me, and know whence I am?] So Bishop Chandler would render these words (see his Defence, p. 331); and it seems necessary, in order to vindicate the propriety, and indeed the veracity, of the reply; unless with Beza and Camerarius we suppose it to be spoken ironically.
The sanhedrim send officers to take him.

John VII. 28.

object, yet, it is most certain, that I am not come of myself, but he who sent me is true to all his promises and predictions, whom nevertheless, with all your boasts, ye know not. But I know him in a most intimate manner; for I am sprung from him by a mysterious and Divine generation, in consequence of which I am infinitely better acquainted with him than you, or any mere creatures, can be; and he hath sent me among you, as his Ambassador, on an errand of the highest importance.

Then they were so provoked by this claim of a Divine original, and by the charge advanced against them, as ignorant of that God, in whom they gloried as so peculiarly their own, that they sought an opportunity to seize him; yet God impressed their minds in such a manner, that no one of them would be the first that laid hands on him: and they were kept under this visible restraint, because his appointed hour of suffering was not yet come, but he had farther services in life to dispatch, before he was delivered to them.

And many of the people were so much affected with these discourses, that they secretly believed on him, and said to each other, When the Messiah comes, will it be possible he should do greater miracles than these which this [Jesus] has done here at Jerusalem, and over the whole country?

This, however, could not be so privately said, but some information of it was sent to the Pharisees, who, when they heard that the people whispered such things concerning him, were greatly displeased, and alarmed at it: and the Pharisees and the other members of the grand sanhedrim, particularly the chief priests, among whom there were many Sadducees (see Acts iv. 1), sent officers from the chamber in which they held their council, into the adjacent court of the

and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

29 But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

30 Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

32 The Pharisees heard, that the people murmured such things concerning him: and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

- Is true to all his promises and predictions. There seems a reference here to the accomplishment of some of the prophecies already fulfilled in him, together with a cheerful faith in what was yet to come.

- I should have chosen to render παντί· συνέκκ., with him, as I did in the first edition to avoid a tautology; but I am sensible on farther reflection, that I want a sufficient authority for such a version. I therefore acquiesce in our own: but I see no occasion to vary any thing in the paraphrase, since in either sense it suggests so strong a reason for believing that Christ had the most intimate knowledge of the Father.

From the chamber in which they held their council.] See sect. xxiv. note 5, p. 128.
53 Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

54 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

55 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

36 What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?

Then Jesus said to them, as soon as they appeared, I know the design on which some of you are come, but God will not permit you immediately to execute it; for yet a little while longer I am to continue with you, and [then] I am to go again to him that sent me. And when I am returned to him, I shall be entirely out of your reach; so that you shall seek me, and wish that you had me in your power again, but you shall not find me, and where I am, or where I shall then, and always be, you cannot possibly come: which he said, referring to his speedy exaltation to the heavenly world, and to the impotent malice with which they should then oppose his triumphant cause.

But he was not understood in that sense; the Jews therefore who were present said among themselves, Whither he is about to go, that we shall not find him? Will he leave Judea, and go to the remainders of the holy seed, who are dispersed among the Greeks and other nations? and will he teach them, or the Greeks themselves, even the idolatrous Gentiles, after his being thus rejected by his own nation at home and abroad? What [sort of] saying is this which he has now spoken. You shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, you cannot possibly come? Thus they continued cavilling at his words; yet were so overawed by his presence, that they did not dare to offer him any violence, notwithstanding the commission with which some of them came.

IMPROVEMENT.

So confident is error in its own decisions, and so vain in its self-applauses! These unhappy people, every way mistaken, censure

† Will he go to the dispersed among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? By Greeks we are here to understand idolatrous Gentiles, and not Hellenists, or Jews that used the Greek language; for these were the dispersed among them. There is therefore, I think, a sting in these words beyond what commentators have observed. They insinuate, that if he was to go into foreign countries, to address himself to the Jews there, who might be supposed not so well instructed as those that lived in Judea and at Jerusalem, he would not be able to make any proselytes, even among these; but would be constrained to apply himself to the ignorant and stupid Gentiles, to seek disciples among them: which to be sure appeared to these haughty scorners one of the most infamous circumstances that could be imagined, and most incompatible with the character of the true Messiah.

3 R 2
censure their rulers for a supposed credulity, in seeming, as it were, to acquiesce in Christ's claim to be the Messiah; and imagined themselves, no doubt, exceeding wise in rejecting him, while they blindly took it for granted he was the son of Joseph, and had not patience to wait for the authentic story of his miraculous conception. Surely men had need to look well to the force of those arguments, on which they venture their souls by rejecting the gospel.

28 Our Lord answered their secret reasoning, in a manner which might justly have alarmed them, charging them with ignorance of that God, whom they pretended to know, and whom, with a presumptuous confidence, they claimed as theirs. And oh, that it may not be found at last, that many who have appeared most confident of their interest in God, neither know him, nor are known by him!

29 The blessed Jesus, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person, has the completest knowledge of the Father. May we be so wise and happy as to seek instructions from him, that the eyes of our understandings may be enlightened, and the temper of our hearts proportionably regulated, by all the discoveries of the Divine Being which he makes!

How obstinate and desperately hardened were the hearts of those, who, notwithstanding all the proofs that Jesus gave of his Divine mission, were yet so far from hearkening to him, as to seek opportunities to destroy him! So dangerous and fatal is the prevalence of error in such as like not to retain God in their knowledge, that they will even venture on the greatest wickedness, when once they are given over to a reprobate mind, (Rom. i. 28.) —May God preserve us from a spirit of delusion, and fill us with that wisdom, that we may know the things belonging to our peace; and, being ready to receive the truth in the love of it, may we acknowledge and attend to Christ as sent of God!

34 May we learn this heavenly wisdom in time, since the hour is approaching, when Christ will be sought in vain, and all correspondence between him and sinners will be finally cut off! Where he is, they cannot then come; and to be excluded from him will at length appear insupportable misery, even to those, who, with proud folly and fatal self-sufficiency, are now most ready to say unto him, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thee or thy ways. (Job xxi. 14.)
Christ invites his hearers to come and imbibe the spirit from him; and by these and other gracious discourses disarms the resolution of the officers, who return to the sanhedrin without him; where a short debate arises between Nicodemus and his brethren. John VII. 37, to the end.

John VII. 37.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture

Such were the discourses, which our Lord made to the people in the presence of those who were sent by the sanhedrin to seize him; and this happened in the eighth and last day, that great [day] of the feast of tabernacles, when, according to the institution of Moses (Lev. xxiii. 34, 36; Numb. xxix. 33), there was to be an holy convocation, attended with some extraordinary sacrifices. Now on this day, when it was customary for the priests to surround the altar with their palm-branches, and to pour out water in the temple, as an expression of the general desire of the Messiah’s appearance, and the pouring forth of the Spirit by him, Jesus stood on an eminence, that he might be the better heard and seen, and proclaimed with a loud voice, saying, If any man thirst, that is, if he ardently desire true happiness, and long for the blessings promised under the administration of the Messiah, let him come unto me by faith, and drink his fill; for I am most ready freely to communicate every needful blessing, and particularly those supplies of the Spirit, which you profess so earnestly to desire. (Compare Isa. lv. 1.) For he that truly believeth on me, as the scripture hath in many places said and promised, shall receive those supplies.
supplies in so great an abundance, that he shall not only be refreshed himself, but out of his belly or from within him, shall flow vital streams, and, as it were, rivers of living water, for the refreshment and comfort of others.

39 Now this, which was true in a more extensive sense, he peculiarly spake of the Spirit, which they who believe on him should receive, and which some of them should also be enabled to communicate to others. But it was not then generally understood: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given in that extraordinary manner, because Jesus was not yet glorified; and it was the wise and gracious purpose of God to send him down on the church, after the ascension of Jesus, as a triumphant Conqueror, into his Father’s presence. (See Eph. iv. 7—12. John xvi. 7. and Acts ii. 33.)

40 Then many of the people, when they heard this gracious saying, which was indeed a more free declaration and profession than he commonly made, said, Surely this [man] is at least a prophet, and probably comes to introduce the Messiah. And others said, Nay, this is certainly the Messiah himself: but, in opposition to this, some objected, and said, shall the Messiah, when he appears, come out of Galilee, as we know this Jesus of Nazareth does? Hath not the scripture said, expressly, That the Messiah is to come from the seed of David? and hath it not also added, that he is to arise from the town of Bethlehem Judah, where David was [born], and which was the ancient seat of his family? (Compare Isa. xi. 1. and Mic. v. 2.) And thus they were divided in their sentiments, and there was a division which refer to the effusion of the Spirit by the Messiah under the similitude of pouring out water; and accordingly I have paraphrased the words in that view of the connection. See Isa. liii. 15; xlv. 3; lviii. 11; and Joel ii. 28.

c Out of his belly, or from within him.] The belly is frequently put for the mind or heart. Compare Job xv. 35; xx. 69; and Prov. xx. 27, 30.—It sometimes signifies, in a more general way, the inward part of a thing (1 Kings vii. 20; Mat. xii. 40), and may perhaps have some allusion here to the prominence of that capacious golden case from which the water was now poured out in a large stream.

d This he spake of the spirit.] It is strange that, when the evangelist has thus plainly commented on these words of Christ, a late eminent writer should venture to advance a different interpretation, and explain them as spoken of the doctrine of the gospel.

e Surely this man is a prophet.] As the article is prefixed, it might seem natural to render it the prophet, were it not afterwards distinguished from the Christ. On this account I conclude that here, as also John i. 21. ὁ γεγονός, signifies only a prophet, that is, one of the ancient prophets revived. See sect. xx. note c, p. 119.
was a warm dissension among the people on his account.

And the officers also, who had been sent to apprehend him, were at a loss what they should do, and some of them would have seized him; but, struck with the regard which several of the people expressed towards him, and above all, impressed by the dignity and sweetness of his discourses, and the secret hand of heaven, which wrought for his deliverance, they were so far restrained, that no man laid hands on him.

Then the officers came back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, without accomplishing the purpose for which they were sent: and when the sanhedrim perceived they had not executed their commission, they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him with you as your prisoner, according to the orders you received from us?

The officers replied, we could not find in our hearts to attempt it; for surely no man living ever spake in so engaging and irresistible a manner as this man doth; and had you heard him yourselves it must have disarmed your resentment against him.

Then the Pharisees, far from being softened by the account they gave them, answered them in a scornful and upbraiding way, What, are you also deceived by his artful and popular address? Surely you cannot be so weak as to be thus infatuated! Pray consider the conduct of those who are most capable of judging of this point: have any of the rulers believed on him, or [any] of the Pharisees of a more private station? Yet you

1 A warm dissension.] So I apprehend the word ἀντριμοι always signifies. And thus the word schism, which is just the same with an English termination,) expresses, not merely nor necessarily a separation from each other, but an angry debate, whether it be or be not attended with separation.

2 No man ever spake as this man doth.] Plutarch mentions it as a memorable proof of the extraordinary eloquence of Mark Antony, when Marius sent soldiers to kill him, that when he began ἐπιστατήσας Ἰωάννης to plead for his life, he disarmed their resolution, and melted them into tears, (Plutarch Vit. p. 431.) But these officers are thus vanquished merely by hearing Christ’s gracious discourses to the people, which is a circumstance much more remarkable. They return in a kind of amaze, and, instead of seizing him as their prisoner, or making a laboured apology for their failure, only break out into a pathetic exclamation, that no man in the world ever spake like him. It is a reflection which I hope we often make as we read his discourses.

3 Have any of the rulers believed on him, or any of the Pharisees?] I cannot think, with Grotius, that this is any intimation that, if there were any of the Great Council who had favourable thoughts of Jesus, they were the Sadducees. The interpretation of the paraphrase is much easier. There is no reason to believe any of the Sadducees were inclined to receive the gospel; and if the Pharisees had secretly suspected them of such an inclination, they would hardly have afforded them by such an insinuation in this grand assembly, considering the high rank in which many of that sect were.
The Pharisees are angry, but Nicodemos stands up for him.

You know these are most eminent for their acquaintance with religion, and are the most authentic interpreters of the sacred writings in which it is contained: But this wretched herd of people, who are so enchanted with him, know and regard not any thing of the true meaning of the law, and, it is easy to be seen, are cursed with a judicial blindness, and given up to the most absurd and fatal mistake.

Upon this, Nicodemos, whom we before have mentioned as the person who came to [Jesus] by night, (see John iii. 1. & seq. p. 141,) being both a ruler and a Pharisee, and sitting in the sanhedrim as one of them, took so much courage, that he said to them. Doth our law which you boast so much acquaintance with, judge and condemn any man before the magistrate appointed to execute it summon him into his presence, that he may hear from him what he hath to say in his own defence, and know from credible witnesses, what he hath done to deserve punishment? See Deut. xvii. 8—11. and xix. 15. & seq.)

But they, without entering farther into the argument, answered him only by saying, in a slight and superficial manner, What art thou thyself also of Galilee, that thou favourest the pretences of this contemptible Galilean? Search a little farther into the matter, and thou wilt soon see the unreasonableableness of doing it; for it is notorious, even to a proverb, that no prophet is raised up from Galilee but will God ever honour that contemptible country with such a production.

But this people who know not the law, are cursed.

Nicodemos saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night being one of them,) Judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth?

They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

This people who know not the law, are cursed.] I see no ground to think, with Grotius, that this refers to Deut. xxvii. 26, and is built on a supposition that the ignorance of the populace must always expose them to a curse. It rather intimates an apprehension that God had given them up to a spirit of fatal infatuation.—Instances of their contempt of the common people may be seen in Lighfoof, (Hor. Heb. in loc.) and Vitringa (Observ. Sacr. lib. iii. cap. 2, p. 498.)

Doth our law, which you boast so much acquaintance with.] Soft as these words seem, there is a severe sting in them and they may effect a great charge, that while they professed such a knowledge of the law, and zeal for it, they either knew not, or regarded not, some of its plainest precepts, and were even unmindful of those which, as they were a court of judicature, were their peculiar concern.

No prophet is raised up from Galilee.] As it is plain that Jonah, and probable that Nahum also, was a Galilean, Sir Norton Knatchbull, and others, who imagine that these rulers could not be ignorant of that, suppose that ἐναρένθης here signifies the Great Prophet, or Messiah. But probably, had this been their meaning, they would rather have quoted the text which mentions Bethlehem as the birth-place of the Messiah. The answer must therefore be acknowledged to be very mean and trifling; and the abrupt manner in which theassembly was broke up, seems to intimate their consciousness that it would not bear examination.
53 And every man went unto his own house. 

And, having said this, they would not wait for a reply, but immediately broke up the court; and so every one went away to his own house.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what delight and thankfulness should we hear this gracious proclamation of Christ, which he now made in the temple, and a while after repeated from the throne of his glory! If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink; yea, whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely; (Rev. xxii. 17.) Blessed Jesus, had we been allowed to have prescribed to thee a form of words, in which thy kind purposes towards us should have been expressed, what could we have invented more pathetic, more condescending, or more reviving!—May we thirst for the blessings of thy grace, and in the confidence of faith apply unto thee for them; and particularly for these communications of thy Spirit, which are so highly excellent and desirable, and indeed so necessary for us! Supply us with them, we entreat thee, in so rich an abundance, that we, in our different spheres, may supply others, and from us there may flow rivers of living water!

Well might such gracious words as these disarm the rage of enemies and persecutors. Let us add our testimony to theirs, and say, Never man spake as Jesus speaks. Let us hear him with calm and thankful attention, while his voice still sounds in his word. Happy are those that know the joyful sound! (Psal. lxxxix. 15.) The Pharisees, like deaf adders, stopped their ears against the voice of the Charmer; and, while they proudly censured the populace as a brutal herd, and gloried in their own superior wisdom, rejected the counsel of God; rashly judging without serious inquiry, and weakly borne down by vulgar senseless prejudices against names and places, which is all the senate of Israel opposes to the solid argument of Nicodemus! That good man, already considerably improved by his interview with Jesus, was undoubtedly confirmed in his adherence to him, by observing the methods of their opposition: and where magistrates arm their authority to overbear argument, they will probably, in the judgment of impartial men, produce a suspicion, at least, that they know their cause to be incapable of a rational defence.
SECT. CII.

Christ, having spent the night in retirement, returns to the temple, where an adulteress is brought before him; but he avoids giving judgment in her case, and turns the consciences of his enemies on themselves. John VIII. 1—11.

**SECT. CII.**

**THUS** the Pharisees debated the case, and in such dissension their assembly broke up; but Jesus, choosing to retire in the evening, that he might by secret converse with his heavenly Father, be animated to all the labours and dangers before him, went up to a mountain in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, which lay to the east of the city, on the other side of the brook Cedron, and is well known by the name of the Mount of Olives, where he spent the night in meditation and prayer.

2 But, that his retirement might not break in upon the opportunity of public service, which the present concourse of people gave him, he returned to the temple early in the morning; and all the people who came to worship there before they returned to their respective habitations in the country (the feast being now ended) flocked around him to receive his instructions; and, such was his courage and zeal, notwithstanding the late conspiracy which had been formed against him, that, sitting down in one of the cloisters, he instructed them as freely, as he had ever done.

3 And, while he was engaged in this exercise, the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman who had just been taken in the commission of adultery, having been unhappily betrayed into it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOHN VIII. 1.</th>
<th>JOHN VIII. 1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.</td>
<td>2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple; and all the people came unto him, and he sat down and taught them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECT. CII.</strong></td>
<td>3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VIII. 1.</strong></td>
<td><strong>VIII. 1.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus, choosing to retire in the evening, that he might by secret converse with his heavenly Father, be animated to all the labours and dangers before him, went up to a mountain in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, which lay to the east of the city, on the other side of the brook Cedron, and is well known by the name of the Mount of Olives, where he spent the night in meditation and prayer.</td>
<td><strong>And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Footnote:* It is well known that this story is wanting in the Syriac version, as well as in the Alexandrian and Bodleian copies, and indeed in most of the oldest manuscripts; which engaged Beza to question, and Le Clerc, with many others, to reject its authority. But I acquiesce in the reasoning of the learned Dr. Mill, to whom I refer the reader for the arguments to prove it authentic; the critical examination of these matters lying quite out of the sphere of my present design. A mistaken apprehension that some circumstances in the story were indecent, and an excessive rigour with respect to those who had fallen into this truly detestable crime, might perhaps be the occasion of this omission, if it was not accidental, in some early copies. Erasmus conjectures, it might be added by St. John after some copies of his gospel had been taken; and Grotesus, that some, who heard the story from the apostle's mouth, recorded it with the approbation of Papias and other eminent persons in the church. The notice that Eusebius (Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. ult.) Jerom. (adv. Pelag. lib. ii. cap. 6.) and other ancient writers
A woman taken in adultery is brought before him.

when they had set her in the midst,

it among those intemperances, which too often attend public feasts; and, as the court of judicature, before whom she should have been tried, was not yet assembled, they took that opportunity of laying a snare for Jesus, by setting her before him, in the midst of the people who were attending his discourse. And, as if they were desirous of information from him, they craftily said unto him, Master, as thou protestest thyself an extraordinary Teacher, we desire thou wouldst pronounce thy judgment on this case; here is a woman who was taken in the very act of adultery: Now Moses in the law has commanded us, 5 that such infamous women should be stoned⁵, (Lev. xx. 10, and Deut. xx. 22.) but, as thou takest upon thee, either to supersede many of his precepts, or to interpret them in a very singular manner, we would be glad to hear thy determination in an affair of so great importance; what therefore dost thou say? This they said tempting him, that, which way soever he should determine, they might have an opportunity to accuse him; either to the Jewish rulers, if he acquitted such a criminal; or to the Romans, if he ventured, though on the authority of the law, to pronounce a capital sentence against her, which he had no authority from the Romans to do⁶, and

writers have taken of the dubiousness of this passage, with a few other instances of the like nature, shews that critical exactness, with which they examined into the genuineness of the several parts of the New Testament, and so, on the whole, strengthens the evidence of Christianity, which (as I have shown at large in the ninth of my Ten Sermons) is so inseparably connected with the genuineness and purity of the New Testament.

b Such women should be stoned.] If they spoke accurately, this must have been a woman who had been betrothed to a husband, and had been guilty of this infamous crime, before the marriage was completed; for such only are expressly condemned to be stoned. (Deut. xxii. 22—24.) The Jewish writers tell us, that when (as in the case of other adulteries) only death in general was denounced, without specifying the particular kind of it, strangling was to be used. Curtius indeed (as Grotius observes) might have introduced stoning in all these cases (compare Ezek. xvi. 38, 40.) yet that would not justify what they here say. But our Lord's Spirit was too noble to take the advantage of such a slip, if it was a mistake: he had a much greater view, and silenced them in a far more effectual manner.

c To accuse him—to the Romans, if he ventured, &c.] It is very evident, that the Jewish sanhedrim sat by licence from the Roman governor; and though they had a right to try capital cases, it was necessary (as it seems from passages elsewhere examined) that the sentence they passed, should be recognized and allowed by the Romans before it could be carried into execution. (See sect. clxxxvii. note c, on Matt. xxvii. 2. and sect. clxxxviii. note e, on John xix. 10.) For Christ therefore to have undertaken the decision of this case would, ipso facto, have rendered him obnoxious to the Romans, as well as to the sanhedrim: and had he condemned her, a new occasion of offence must have arisen, in consequence of that—to Pilate, if execution had been ordered without an application to him,—and to the Jews, if Christ had directed such an application to be made. So that the snare here was much the same with that afterwards laid for him (Matt. xxi. 17—22, sect. civ.) in the question about the lawfulness of paying tribute.
and which the Jewish rulers themselves had at present no power to execute. (Compare John xvi. 27.)

But Jesus, stooping down, wrote something on the ground with his finger, choosing (as it were) to speak to them by that action, rather than by seven words. But as they, thinking that they had him at a great advantage, continued asking him with greater importunity, he raised himself up, and, without replying directly to their demand, only said to them, Let him of you that is without sin, in this or any other respect, pursue the prosecution, and throw the first fatal stone at her, when she is condemned; (compare Deut. xvi. 7.) thus prudently avoiding a decision of the case, and leading them to reflect on their own guilt. And stooping down again, he wrote on the ground, as he had done before, and left them to their own reflections.

But having heard [his answer], and being by a secret energy, which went along with the word of Jesus, in a very awful and powerful manner, convicted in their consciences of their own personal and aggravated guilt, they were ashamed even to look each other in the face; and so went out one by one, beginning from the eldest, whose age

\[d. \text{Wrote on the ground with his finger} \]
The following words, μυ παραμενων, as though he heard them not, or (as I would render them) as not regarding them, are wanting in the most valuable manuscripts. Dr. Mill therefore, I think, justly omits them, as several other printed editions of the Greek Testament do. Were they admitted, they would cut off most of the conjectures, which learned men have advanced as to what Christ wrote; a question which it is impossible for us to determine, and which we have no need at all to be solicitous about. I am inclined to think, there was a language in the action itself, either to intimate that these hypercritical Pharisees should be themselves (as the prophet expresses it, Jer. xvii. 15.) written in the earth, or that they were to attend to what was written: but I can determine nothing, and must say with a great critic on these words, Nescire velle, quae magister optimus nescire nos velit, erudita insecutia est: "To be willing to continue ignorant of what our great Master has thought fit to conceal, is no inconsiderable part of Christian learning."

\[e. \text{Let him of you that is without sin, throw the first stone at her.}\]

Le Clerc makes the supposed impropriety of this reply a further argument against the genuineness of this text: since the law did not require the witnesses or executioners to be free from sin, in order to the efficacy of such a prosecution. But it may be answered, that our Lord's certain knowledge of what the effect would be, vindicated the wisdom of his putting the matter upon this issue, by which it is plain in fact he escaped their snare.

Went out one by one, beginning from the eldest. It is strange any should have interpreted this clause so rigorously, as to imagine that every particular person went out just according to his age. It seems only to intimate that those elders of the people, who had been most eager in the prosecution, appeared under the most sensible confusion, and were some of the first that left the assembly. And in this view it is very remarkable; especially considering that they were now in the presence of the multitude, before whom they would, no doubt, be desirous to keep up the strictest appearance of virtue, in order to maintain their influence over them.—Though (as Dr. Whitby shews, on ver. 7.) adultery prevailed much among the Jews about this time,
age and office tended to increase their shame and remorse; and the impression passed even to the last, or the youngest and meanest of them. And Jesus was left alone by all the accusers, and the woman standing in the midst of the crowd, with which he had been surrounded before she was brought in.

And Jesus raising himself up, and seeing none 10 of those who had been soliciting his judgment, but only the woman they had brought before him, said to her, Woman, where are those thine ac- cusers? Has no man condemned thee, or is there none remaining to bear witness against thee? And she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I take upon me, at this time, and under this circumstance, judicially to condemn thee, though thy crime has been undoubtedly great: go thy way therefore, without any impediment from me; but, as the Messenger of God, and Friend of souls, I warn thee, that thou sin no more; for such enormous practices as these, must subject thee to a severer judgment from God, than man can pronounce or inflict.

IMPROVEMENT.

The devout retirements of Christ, and his early renewed la-Ver.

bours, so often come in view, that, after having made some pro-

gress in his history, we are ready to pass them over as things of course. But let us remember, that in some degree they call upon us to go and do likewise; and will another day condemn those, who, while they call themselves his disciples, are given up to ease and luxury, and suffer every little amusement or sensual gratification to lead them into an omission of their duty to God and their fellow-creatures; an omission especially aggravated in those, whom he has appointed to be teachers of others, and who have therefore so many peculiar errands to the throne of grace, and

sect, ch. VIII. 9.

10 When Jesus had lift up himself, and saw none but the wo-

man, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine ac-
cusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Je-
sus said unto her, Neither do I take upon me, at this time, and under this circumstance, judicially to condemn thee; go, and sin no more.

time, yet I see no reason to conclude, that their conscience convicted every one of them of this particular crime.—Their par-
tiality (as Dr. Lardner well observes) seems to appear in bringing only the woman, not the man, when the law condemned both. (Lord, Creedib. part i. Vol. I. p. 79)

Sin no more.] Elmsly (Obscr. Vol. I. p. 318), and Swirctt (Thesaur. Vol. I. p. 205), have shewn that the word appropinquens, to sin, is used by the most elegant Greek classics (as the correspondent word pecare is by the Latin) to signify the commissione of adultery; which strongly intimates that even the light of nature taught many of the Heathens the exceeding sinfulness of it: which is the more worthy of notice, as not only the greatest of their men, but (according to their scandalous theology, the greatest of their gods too, gave it all the sanction it could have from example.
Christ speaks of himself as the light of the world.

SECT. CII.

and so many engagements in the morning to sow, or to prepare the
seed of religious instruction, and in the evening not to with-hold
their hand from dispensing it. (Eccles. xi. 6.)

While Jesus is teaching, his enemies address him, not only as
an instructor, but as a judge: and yet, by this specious form of
6 honour and respect, they sought only to insnare and destroy him.
So unsafe would it be always to judge of men's intentions by the
first appearances of their actions! But our Lord, in his answer,
7 united, as usual, the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence and
gentleness of the dove; and in his conduct to this criminal shewed
at once that tenderness and faithfulness, which might have the
most effectual tendency to impress and reclaim her; if a heart
capable of such insidelity and wickedness could be impressed and
reclaimed at all. Go thy way, said he to this adulteress, and sin
no more. Perhaps the charge may have little weight with such
abandoned transgressors as she; but let all learn to improve their
escapes from danger, and the continued exercise of Divine pa-
tience towards them, as an engagement to speedy and thorough
reformation.

9 Let the force of conscience, and the power of Christ over it (both
which so evidently appeared in this instance), teach us to re-
verence the dictates of our own minds, and to do nothing to
bring them under a sense of guilt; which, through the secret
energy of our Redeemer, wrought so powerfully on these Phari-
sees, that, hypocritical and vain glorious as they were, they could
not command themselves so far as even to save appearances; but
the eldest and gravest among them were the first to confess their
guilt, by withdrawing from the presence of so holy a Prophet,
from the temple of God, and from the criminal whom they came
to prosecute. A like consciousness of being ourselves to blame
will abate the boldness and freedom of our proceedings with
others for their faults, if, while we judge them, we are self-con-
demned; nor will the authority of a superior age or station of life
bear us out against these inward reproaches.

SECT. CIII.

Our Lord speaks of himself as the light of the world, urges the con-
current testimony of his Father, and gives the Jews repeated
warning of the danger they would incur by persisting in their

SECT. CII.

John VIII. 12.

THEN Jesus, after the interruption that he
met with, while he was speaking to the peo-
ple in the temple, by the Pharisees bringing in

John VIII. 12.

THEN spake Jesus again unto them, saying,
saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

15 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I came, and whither I go.

15 Ye judge after the adverseness, resumed the work he was before engaged in, and again proceeded to instruct the people; and observing the sun lately risen, and shining with great lustre and beauty, he spake unto them, saying, I am the true light of the world, in whose appearance you ought chiefly to rejoice: this sun arises, in a few hours to descend again, and may fail many of you before your intended journey is dispatched; whereas he that follows me, and governs himself by the dictates of my word and Spirit, shall not be left to walk in the darkness of ignorance, error and sin, but shall have the light of life continually shining upon him, to diffuse over his soul knowledge, holiness and joy, till he is guided by it to eternal happiness.

Some of the Pharisees therefore, who were then present, but different persons from those who had brought in the woman, enraged at the late disappointment of their brethren, said unto him, Thou bearest witness of thyself, and therefore, by thine own confession (chap. v. 31.) thy testimony is not to be admitted as true, but may rather be suspected of vain-glory; nor can we believe such great things of thee, unless we have some farther proof than thine own affirmation.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I indeed bear witness of myself, [yet] as I speak from my own certain knowledge, and have already shewn that I am come with a Divine commission, my testimony is entirely and perfectly true, and as such you ought to admit it: for I well know from whence I came, and whither I am going, and the most evident demonstrations of it have been given you, both in the nature of my doctrine, and in the miracles which I have wrought among you; but you are so perverse, that, as often as I have hinted or declared it, you know it not to this day from whence I come, and whither I am going: Which is not to be ascribed to the want of sufficient evidence, but merely to the force of your own prejudices; for you

a I am the true light of the world.] The Messiah was often represented under this view. Isa. xlii. 6, xlix. 6, and Mal. iv. 2. Compare Luke ii. 32. John i. 4.—9. iii. 19. ix. 5, and xvi. 16.

b The sun arises to descend again, and may fail many of you, &c.] The reader will remember this was the morning after the conclusion of the feast of tabernacles, and probably might be before the morning sacrifice: after which, no doubt, many would be setting out for their habitations in the country.
They neither knew his Father nor him.

You judge according to the maxims of flesh and sense, and will believe nothing in opposition to these principles, which you have so rashly imbibed, and by this means are justly liable to condemnation: but I wave that for the present, as I now judge no man, but rather appear under the character of a Saviour. (Compare chap. 16.)

Yet if I should judge, my determination and sentence is apparently true and right, and you would justly be condemned for not receiving my testimony; for I am not alone in what I say, but I and the Father that sent me, as we are in other respects inseparably united, do evidently concur together in the testimony that I give. And it is written in your own law, for which you profess so sacred a regard, that the testimony of two men is to be admitted as true, and matters of the greatest consequence are without scruple to be determined by it. Deut. xvii. 6, and xix. 15.)

Now I am [one] who bear this witness of myself, in a fact, the truth of which I cannot but certainly know; and the Father who sent me is another, and surely a most credible Person, who also bears his testimony to me; thereby asserting the truth of every doctrine I teach, and the justice of every sentence I might pass.

Then said they to him, Where is this thy Father, to whom thou so frequently appealest? mention him plainly, that we may know how far he is to be regarded, and produce him as a witness. Jesus answered, You may well ask; for it plainly appears by your conduct, that you neither know me, nor my Father, however you may boast an acquaintance with him: and indeed, if you had known me aright, and regarded me as you ought to have done, you would also long ere this have known who and what my Father is, in another manner than you now do; for I bear his complete resemblance, and it is my great business to reveal him to those who submit to my instructions.

These words Jesus spake with the greatest freedom, as he was teaching in the temple, in a certain part of it called the treasury, where the temporal Prince and Deliverer. And the admission of false principles, which are constantly taken for granted, and never examined, will, I fear, be attended with fatal consequences to thousands more.
they that rejected him should die in their sins.

man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come.

chests stood in which the people put their gifts for the service of that sacred house (see Mark xii. 41, sect. elix.) the stores of which were laid up in chambers over that cloister, and though he so plainly intimated that God was his Father, and charged the Jews with being ignorant of him, in whom they boasted as so peculiarly their God, yet their spirits were kept under such a powerful, though secret restraint, that no one seized him; which was the more wonderful, as it was a place from whence it would not have been easy to have escaped without a miracle, and which was much frequented by his greatest enemies: but the true reason was, because his hour was not yet come in which he was, by Divine permission, to be delivered into their hands.

Confiding therefore in the protection of Divine Providence, Jesus then said to them again, as he had done before (chap. vii. 33, 34, p. 519.) I am speedily going away from among you, and you shall seek me, and enquire after the Messiah in vain; but, as a just punishment for your having rejected me, you shall die in this your sin, and perish for your unbelief by a singular stroke of Divine vengeance, which shall sink you into final condemnation. Remember then, that I have warned you with the greatest faithfulness, and now again I solemnly repeat the warning, That though you should be ever so desirous of admittance to me, it will be in vain; for you cannot come to the place, whither I am now going, either to molest me, or to secure yourselves.

The Jews then said, with a very perverse and foolish contempt, What, will he kill himself, that he says, You cannot come, whither I am going? We shall not desire to follow him upon those terms.

And he said to them yet more plainly, So vile and malicious an insinuation as this, evidently shews that you are from beneath, the slaves of earth, and the heirs of hell; while, on the other hand, I am from above, and shall quickly return thither: you are originally of this world, and your treasure and hearts are here; but as I am not of this world, my thoughts therefore naturally turn to that celestial abode, from whence I came, and I incessantly labour to conduct men thither. But as to you I labour in vain: and therefore I just now said unto you, that you shall die in your sins; and it is really a great and

Vol. vi.

3 T
Christ only speaks, what the Father had taught him.

25 Then said they to him, in proud derision, *Who art thou, that such great regard should be paid to thee, and that it should be so fatal a thing to neglect thee? And Jesus said to them, Truly, because I am still speaking to you this very day*

26 *In so plain and affectionate a manner, I have many things to say and judge concerning you; and justly might upbraid you with the utmost severity, and pass an immediate sentence of condemnation upon you: but, for the present, I content myself with reminding you, that he who sent me is true; and, as I speak to the world only those things which I have heard from him, he will finally verify my words, and it will be at the peril of your souls, if you continue to treat me with such perverseness and contempt.*

27 These things were very intelligible, when compared with what he had said before; [*yet* so exceeding stupid were they, and so blinded by awful truth, and deserves another kind of regard than you give it; so that I yet again would call you to consider it; for if you believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.]

---

'd That I am he, &c. ἐν τῷ παρασκέυασθεν.]

There is evidently an *ellipsis* here, to be supplied by comparing it with ver. 12. Compare John xiii. 19, Mark xiii. 6, and Acts xiii. 25.

c *Are in effect the murderers of your own souls.* The repetition of the threatening here, from ver. 21, is a very awful rebuke to the folly of their answer, ver. 22, as if our *Lord* had said, "It very ill becomes you to trifle and amuse yourselves with such silly and spiteful turns, when your life, even the life of your souls, is at stake; and to talk of my *killing* myself, when by your unbelief and impertinency you are plunging yourselves into eternal death." This do those passages in *our Lord's discourses, which to a careless reader might seem flat *tautologies, appear, on an attentive review, to be animated with a most penetrating Spirit, and to be full of Divine dignity. A remark which will frequently occur, in especially in reading those important discourses of Christ, which John has, through the infinite goodness of God to his church, recorded after they had been omitted by the other evangelists.

They understood not that he spoke —303.) that all the difficulty of these words arises from a mistake in the *pointing*, as they stand in most *copies*; and I think his method of restoring the true *reading* and sense the easiest and justest I have ever met with. He would point them thus, *τινί εἴρη, εἰ μὴ λοιπὸν ἡμᾶς, τοῦτον εἶναι ἀρετήν* ἢ μηδεμίαν. All that know any thing of the Greek language, know that *τινί εἴρη* often signifies *indeed*, or *truly*; and so the *translation* I have given is very *literal*, and makes a very good sense. Mr. Fleming would render it, *I am, as I said unto you, The Beginning, that is, the Person spoken of, Gen. i. 1 and elsewhere, under that title: but this, as well as our own version, is not any thing like a just and grammatical translation; though to be sure there is a sense in which Christ may most properly be called the Beginning. Compare Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 8. xvi. 6. xxii. 13. (See Fleming's Christology, Vol. I. p. 281.) I shall only add, that some would render it, *The same I am speaking to you of:* but the version here given is more agreeable to the *original*, and by a proper *pointing* would appear natural and easy, if what should be considered as one *sentence* had not been separated into two *parts* by a wrong *division* of the *verses.*
by the prejudices of their minds, that they did not understand that he spake to them of God the Father; as the Person who sent him.

Jesus therefore said to them, I know that, notwithstanding all I have said, you will be still so obstinate as to persist in your infidelity, till you proceed even to take away my life; but when, after all your professed desire of his appearance and kingdom, you shall have lifted up that glorious Person, the Son of man, from the earth, and have even proceeded so far as to put him to a violent death, instead of seeing his cause and interest overborne by that outrageous attempt, you shall then know, by some new and convincing tokens, that I am [he], and [that] I do nothing separately of myself, but, in exact agreement with him, speak all these things according as my Father has instructed me: And even now he that sent me is graciously present with me, to bear his testimony to the truth of what I say, and to support and vindicate me: and whatsoever you may foolishly surmise, the Father has not left me alone, nor will he ever leave me; for I always do the things which are most pleasing to him, and faithfully and constantly pursue the important work, which he has committed to my trust.

IMPROVEMENT.

Such may our character ever be, as we desire the supports of the Divine presence! Whoever be displeased, may we always do the things which please him; and with all diligence let us labour, whether present in the body, or absent from it, to be still approved and accepted of him! (2 Cor. v. 9.)

Our blessed Redeemer is the light of the world. With how much pleasure should we behold his rays! With how much cheerfulness should we follow, whithersoever he leads us; as well knowing that we shall not then walk in darkness; and God forbid, we should ever
Many believe and are inclined to follow him.

sect. ciii. ever choose to continue in it, as the shelter and screen of wicked works!

Ver. May we, with all candour and humility, regard and submit to the testimony, which the Father has borne to him in so express and incontestable a manner! Dreadful would be the consequence of our refusing to do it. The doom of these wretched Jews would be ours, to die in our sins. And oh, how insupportable will that guilty burden prove in a dying hour, and before the tribunal of God? How will it sink us into condemnation and despair! In vain shall those, who now despise him, then seek admittance to the world where he is: thither they cannot come; and if excluded from him, must be excluded from happiness.

25, 26 Justly might it long since have been our case: for surely he has many things to say of us, and to judge concerning us, should he lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, after his having been so long with us, yea, after we have, as it were, seen him lifted up and set forth as crucified among us. (Gal. iii. 1.)

28 May this faithful admonition prevail to our conviction and reformation; that our everlasting condemnation may not farther illustrate the reasonableness, yea, the necessity of it, and the madness of hardening our hearts against it!

SECT. CIV.

Our Lord continues his discourse with the Jews in the treasury, the day after the feast of tabernacles; and labours to convince them how vain their pretences to liberty and to the privileges of the children of Abraham were, while they continued to reject and persecute him. John VIII. 30—47.

THUS did Jesus warn the Jews of the danger of rejecting him, and appeal to his heavenly Father as authorizing the whole of his administration; and, as he was speaking these words, many of his hearers were so struck with them, that they believed in him, and were strongly inclined to follow him as the Messiah.

Then a Many believed in him.] One can hardly think that the ambiguity of the expression of the Son of man’s being lifted up. (ver. 28) engaged them to this, in hope that it might intimate some exaltation to a temporal kingdom. It is more reasonable to believe that they felt their hearts impressed with what they heard from him in the whole preceding discourse. Yet it is observable, that in the series of it he advances no new proof of his mission: so that probably these people were wrought upon by what they observed in the temper and conduct of Christ; bearing the perverseness of his enemies with so much patience, speaking of an ignominious and painful death with such holy composure, and expressing so genuine and lively a sense of his heavenly Father’s approbation, and so sweet a complacency in it. And, perhaps, would ministers generally allow themselves to open with freedom the native workings of a heart deeply impressed with the gospel, the secret charm might subdue those, whose subtlety and prejudice might be proof against the most conclusive abstract reasoning. b The
Then Jesus, knowing the weakness and treachery of the human heart, and the difficulties which would lie in the way, if they attempted to put that inclination into practice, said to those of the Jews who were now ready to profess that they believed in him, if you continue steadfast in your adherence to my word, and yield a constant and universal obedience to it, [then] you are my disciples indeed, and I will finally own you as such. And you shall then know the truth of my gospel in its full compass and extent, so far as it is necessary to your salvation, or conducive to your comfort; and the truth shall make you free, and fix you in that state of glorious liberty, which is the privilege of my disciples alone.

But some that heard him were not a little displeased at this, as an insinuation that they were not already free; and strangely forgetting the servitude of Egypt and Babylon, and how often their nation had been conquered by others, and even how low it was at present reduced by the Roman power, they confidently answered him, We are the seed of Abraham, a person always free, and the peculiar favourite of heaven; and we have never been in slavery to any man whatever, nor do we fear that God will permit us to be so; how then dost thou say to us, You shall be made free upon becoming my disciples?

Jesus, having what he might easily have replied as to their former history, and the present state of their civil affairs, that he might give no unnecessary offence, answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, and recommend it to your consideration as a most important truth, That every one who habitually practises sin, and goes on in a course of it, is the slave of sin; and that is a servitude by far meaner and more dreadful

b The truth shall make you free.] According to Sir Isaac Newton (on Prop. p. 149) these words were spoken in a sabbatical year, when at the feast of tabernacles, which was just about the beginning of the civil year, great numbers of servants were set at liberty: and he supposes that the answer of the Jews (ver. 33) is to be explained with a particular reference to this, and contains two distinct thoughts: ‘We are Abraham’s seed, and consequently, had we ever been in bondage, we should have been set at liberty at this season, though Gentile slaves are still detained; and, besides that, we never were in bondage to any man at all.’ But the arguments by which this is fixed to a sabbatical year are dubious, and the words will make a good sense, independent of this peculiar interpretation; which yet seemed remarkable enough to deserve a mention here.

c Who habitually practises sin.] Here again seems a phrase of the very same import with working iniquity. I have therefore rendered it practises sin, as that word generally signifies an habitual course of action.

d The
If the Son made them free, they should be free indeed.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye know that no prophet is of himself.

If the servant doth not always abide in the family, but the son abideth (theor.) always.

I think Dr. Clarke's ingenious and pious paraphrase and note on these words contain an excellent illustration of them. The main sense of what he says on this passage is much the same with what I have given above (much as I had writ it several years ago): the casting out Ishmael, though a son of Abraham by the bondwoman, beautifully illustrates the remark and the connection. It is strange that Dr. Clarke should think that Moses was the servant here meant; and stranger yet that Dr. Clarke should adopt so unnatural an interpretation. See his Sermons, Vol. III. p. 4, 5.

e If the Son make you free, &c.] Archbishop Tillotson. (Vol. III. p. 578.) thinks that this alludes to a custom in some of the cities of Greece, and elsewhere, whereby the son and heir had a liberty to adopt brethren, and give them the privileges of the family.

f I know that ye are the posterity of Abraham.] It seems probable that our Lord speaks this, not to those who believed in him, but to some others in the company; and that the phrase, They answered him, ver. 33, only signifies that some of those who were present made such a reply.
ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father._

—Jesus said unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a Man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father._

—Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father even God.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came

able to his mind and will; and ye do that which you have seen with your father, and shew a visible conformity in your works to him: by which he intimated, that their works as much resembled the nature of the devil, as his doctrine answered to that of God.

But they replied with some warmth, and said 39 to him, Take heed on whom this reflection may fall; for Abraham is our father, and surely thou wouldest not insinuate any thing to the injury of that holy patriarch's memory, who was expressly called the friend of God.

Jesus says to them, If you were indeed, and in the most important sense, the children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham, and would make it the great business of your life to imitate so wise and so holy an example. But 40 now you seek and contrive to slay me, a blameless and innocent Man, for no other reason, but because I am one who has faithfully told you the truth, which I have heard and received in commission from God: Abraham, your boasted ancestor, did not any thing like this; but gave the readiest credit, and the most joyful welcome, to all the messages which God sent him. Never-41 theless, though you are so far from doing the works of Abraham, I may well say, as I have just now intimated (ver. 38.) that you do the works of him who is indeed your father._

Then said they to him, We would have thee to know that we are not born of fornication; we are not bastard Jews, whose blood has been contaminated with idolatrous alliances; but, by virtue of our descent from his people, and our profession of his religion, we have all one great and common Father, [which is] God._

Jesus said to them, If God were indeed your 42 Father, as you pretend, instead of attempting to take away my life, you would honour and love me: for, to speak without any reserve on this important head, I renew the declaration. That I proceeded originally, and do come from God, and appear

*I proceeded originally, and do come from God.] This seems to be the proper distinction between ἀρχής and ἀρχαῖος. The sectary (as several commentators have observed) use the first of these words to express the descent of children from their parents; (compare Gen. xv. 4. xxxv. 11. and Isa. xi. 1.) The form in which the other stands, favours the rendering I have given (do come from God), and may intimate not only its first mission, but his exact attendance to every particular message._
But imitate the devil, and he therefore is thy father.

The case indeed is sufficiently plain, nor do I fear to represent it in the most express terms: I tell you therefore, You are the genuine children of your father the devil; and the malicious and abominable lusts of that accursed spirit, whom I justly call your father, you will resolutely and obstinately persist to do; and even now there is the plainest evidence of your resemblance to him, in your design to murder me, and in your opposition to the truth that I deliver to you; for he has always acted as the enemy of mankind, and was a murderer from the beginning, in his attempt to bring destruction on the world by sin; (compare 1 John iii. 8.) And to accomplish his destructive purpose, as his original integrity was lost by his apostacy from God, he threw off all regard to what was right, and continued not in the truth, but, by an audacious and most pernicious lie, ruined the first parents of the human race, because there was and is no truth in him: and, indeed, when he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, and indulges the bias of his own fraudulent and perfidious nature; for he is himself a liar, and was the father of it, or the first forger of that detestable and pernicious crime. And, as you are of such a disposition, if I would flatter your prejudices and vices, you would hear me with pleasure; but because I plainly and faithfully speak

came I of myself, but he sent me.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.
46. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47. He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

May we approve ourselves the sincere disciples of Jesus, by Ver. continuing in his word, and being faithful even unto death, as ever 31 we expect a crown of life! (Rev. ii. 10.) Without this, external privileges will turn to but little account. The children of Abraham may be the children of Satan; and they are so, if they imitate the temper and works of the accursed fiend, rather than of the holy patriarch. The devil was from the beginning a liar, and a murderer; and all falsehood and malice are from him. Let us earnestly pray, that we may be freed from them, and from the tyranny of every other sin, to which we have been enslaved; that Christ, the Son, may make us free of his Father's family, and of his heavenly kingdom! Then we shall be free indeed, and no more be reduced to bondage.

May we prove that we are the children of God by our readiness 47 to hear and receive the words of our blessed Redeemer, the words of incarnate truth, and wisdom, and love; whom none of his enemies could ever convict of sin, nor ever accused him of it, but to their own confusion! May we resemble him in the innocence and holiness of his life; that we may the more easily and gracefully imitate that courage and zeal, with which he reproved the haughtiest sinners, and bore his testimony against the errors and vices of that degenerate age and nation in which he lived!
SECT. CV.

Jesus promising immortality to his followers, and speaking of his own existence as prior to that of Abraham, the Jews in the temple attempt to stone him; but he miraculously escapes from their hands. John VIII. 48, to the end.

JOHN VIII. 48.

NOW when the Jews heard Jesus so expressly declaring that they were ignorant of God, and were the children, not of Abraham, but of the devil, they answered him therefore with great rage and contempt, and said unto him, Do we not well say, that thou, who speakest of Israelites in such language as this, art a Samaritan, rather than one of the holy seed, and art possessed by a demon, who hurries thee on to such outrage and madness a.

49 But to this insolent charge, Jesus meekly answered, It is plain, from the whole series of my discourses and actions, that I am not a demoniac nor can any of you produce any thing in all that I have said or done which looks like lunacy or impiety; but the truth is, I honour my Father, by bearing a steady and consistent testimony to the doctrine he sent me to reveal to the world; and, because this is contrary to your corrupt prejudices and passions, therefore you dishonour me by such opprobrious reflections, to hope of discrediting my message. But as for what personally relates to me I am little affected with it; for I seek not my own glory; nevertheless, I know there is one that seeketh, and will secure it, and who now judgeth of all that passes, and will at length evidently shew the exact notice he has taken of it, to my honour and to your confusion.

50 For God will not only finally glorify me, but will confer the highest honours and rewards on all my faithful servants! and therefore, verily, verily, I say unto you, If any one keep my word, he shall never see death b, but shall assuredly be entitled

a Possessed by a demon, who hurries thee on to such outrage and madness.] See noted on John vii. 20. sect. xxxix. c 13.

b He shall never see death.] The turn given to this expression in the paraphrase accounts, not only for this passage, and that in John xi. 26, (sect. exl.) but for what is said of Christ’s having abolished death (2 Tim. i. 10,) having destroyed the devil (Heb. ii. 14,) and raised up Christians with himself, and made them sit with him in heavenly places. (Eph. ii. 6.)—Death is as nothing, compared to what it would otherwise have been to the sinner; and the felicity of heaven is so sure and so near, that, by an easy and common figure, true Christians are spoken of as already there, see the following note. c Yet
entitled to eternal life, and shall immediately be advanced to so glorious and happy a state, that the dissolution of this mortal nature shall, with respect to him, hardly deserve to be called death.

Then the Jews, thinking he had asserted that his disciples should be exempted from the common lot of mortality, said again to him in a reproachful way, Now we assuredly know that thou hast a demon dwelling in thee, which murries thee on to this madness and pride, otherwise thou couldst never talk at this extravagant rate: for Abraham, the friend of God, and the great founder of our nation, is dead: and all the holy prophets, whom God raised up in succeeding ages, were so far from being able to bestow immortality on their followers, that even they themselves are long since dead; and yet thou presumptuously sayest, If any one keep my word, he shall never taste of death. What, art thou greater than that venerable patriarch our father Abraham, who is dead, and than all the most illustrious prophets, who are also dead? Whom dost thou then pretend thyself to be, that thou shouldst thus assume such a distinguishing glory to thyself?

Jesus replied, If I only glorify myself, by high encomiums on my own dignity and excellence, while I neglect the honour and service of my Father, my glory is nothing: but a mere empty sound; [but] it evidently appears by all the series of my converse and miracles, compared with each other, that it is my Father himself that effectually glorifies me, even he, of whom you confidently say, that he is your God, though in this respect you pay so little regard to his testimony: And notwithstanding all your boasts, yet nevertheless you have not truly known him; but I well know him; and if I should deny it, and say that I know him not, or retract my pretensions

52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God:

55 Yet ye have not known him, but I know him: and if I should say that I know him not, or retract my pretensions.

c Yet thou sayest, If any one keep my word, he shall never taste of death.] This is not the phrase which our Lord used, ver. 51, though perhaps its signification is nearly equivalent. But I think it shews how improper it would be to interpret the preceding words, έρωτάς μη ψωφίζεις με, την ονομα, He shall not see death for ever; as if they signified, He shall not die eternally: for on this interpretation of the words there could have been no shadow of force in the argument they use, unless they had meant to assert that Abraham and the prophets were dead, ιη της ανομα, for ever: than which nothing could be farther from the thoughts of any of the Jews, except the Sadducees, who do not seem to have been the persons speaking here. See note on John iv. 14. p. 165.
Abraham desired to see his day, and saw it, and rejoiced.

And I will tell you farther, that though you despise me, as unworthy of your notice, your father Abraham himself was even transported with a joyful desire that he might see my day, or the time of my appearance and glory; and in some degree he saw [it] by faith, and rejoiced in the distant and imperfect view, thankfully receiving every intimation of the purposes of my coming which God was pleased to give him.

Then the Jews said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou, who but half a century ago was not in being, any room to pretend that thou hast seen and conversed with Abraham, who has been dead more than two thousand years?

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, and solemnly affirm it as a most certain truth, how incredible soever it may seem, that before

_\textsuperscript{a} Was even transported with a joyful desire that he might see my day: ἵππος ἔχον τῷ θεῷ τῇ σοι.\_ It is necessary to translate the word ἵππος thus, not only to avoid the tautology, which our translation occasions, but also to preserve the force of the words ἥν ἔδει. And indeed the expression may with the strictest propriety signify looking forward with joy to meet the object of our wishes, as well as exulting in the possession of it. See \textit{Blocke, Sacred Classics}, Vol. i. p. 46—48.

_\textsuperscript{b} He saw it by faith, and rejoiced in the view.\_ I cannot think with Mr. Fleming (\textit{Christology}, Vol. i. p. 221) that the appearance of Christ to Abraham, Gen. xviii. 1.) could with any propriety be here referred to as Christ's day. It seems much more reasonable to conclude with Dr. Scott and Mr. Henry, that it intimates some peculiar discoveries which the Spirit of God might make to Abraham for his own private consolation, though not expressly recorded in scripture. And thus, with regard to him as well as many other saints under that dispensation, the secret of the Lord might in an extraordinary manner be with them, and he might show them much more of his covenant than they could have discovered without such extraordinary assistance.— Compare Psalm xxv. 14, and see Dr. Scott's \textit{Christian Life}, Vol. v. p. 194.—Since I drew up this note, the reverend and learned Dr. Warburton has shewn that there was great reason to believe our Lord here particularly refers to a special revelation made to Abraham, when he received that command from God to offer up Isaac; by which he was informed that the sacrifice then enjoined him was a symbol of the method which God would really take for the redemption of sinful men, by the death and resurrection of his own Son. See \textit{Divine Legation}, Vol. ii. p. 589—597, and the vindication of it, in the second volume of \textit{Occasional Remarks}. 5 Thou art not yet fifty years old.\_ Christ was not now five and thirty; but Erasmus thinks that, worn with labours, he might appear older than he was. Lightfoot imagines that as the Levites were discharged from the temple service at fifty (compare Num. iv. 3, 22.) that age was proscribially used; as I think it might have been, without any such institution relating to them. It is little to the credit of Irenaeus's judgment to have inferred from hence, or admitted on an uncertain tradition, fathered on St. Luke, that Christ was now turned of forty. See \textit{Iren., lib. ii. cap. 39, 40.}

\textit{Before}
before Abraham was born, I had a glorious existence with the Father, and I am still invariably the same, and one with him. This appeared to them so direct a claim to the name and properties of the eternal Jehovah, that, being ignorant of the divine nature of Christ, they thought it intolerable blasphemy; and though he was then discoursing in so sacred a place as the temple, they immediately took up some loose stones, with which they were repairing either the pavement or the building, that they might cast them at him to destroy him: but Jesus in a miraculous manner concealed himself from their sight, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them unknown, and so passed on to another place, till their fury was a little appeased.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what patience did our blessed Redeemer bear, and with Ver. what meekness of wisdom did he answer the most virulent and opprobrious language? When he was rudely charged with being a Samaritan, and having a demon, he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, (Heb. xii. 3.) and being thus reviled, he reviled not again, (1 Pet. ii. 23.) And shall we too keenly resent the reflections which are thrown upon us! May but our conscience witness for us, and we need not fear all that are against us!

Christ honoured his Father, and sought not his own glory. So 19, 50 may we be careful of the honour of God, and cheerfully commit to him the guardianship and care of our reputation! And we shall find, there is one that seeketh and judgeth in our favour.

It is a great and important promise which our Lord here makes, If any one keep my word, he shall never see death. Sense seems to plead against it; but he is the resurrection and the life, and hath assured us he will make it good. Let us therefore be strong in faith,

6 Before Abraham was born.] Erasmus observes, that this is the meaning of

59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

8, 48, 49. Compare Heb. xiii. 8. I have long (with Chrysostom and many others) looked on this text as at least a strong intimation of the Deity of Christ, nearly parallel to Heb. i. 12, so is a aster is, unto the same, —I cannot apprehend that ἐπεξεται can ever be used for ἐπιθυμεῖν; nor imagine that if our Lord had been a mere creature, he would have ventured to express himself in a manner so nearly bordering on blasphemy, or have permitted his beloved disciple so dangerously to designate his meaning.

k Going through the midst of them.] The omission of these words in this passage, as quoted by Chrysostom and Augustin, as well as in some copies of 50, has led some to suspect they were added from Luke iv. 30. See sect. xxxii. note p. 180.

2 His
The seventy return, rejoicing in their power over Satan.

SECT. CVI.

The seventy disciples return with joy: Christ foretells the greater success of his gospel, and prays his heavenly Father for the wise, though mysterious dispensation of it. Luke X. 17—24.

AFTER these things, Jesus determined to take his last, and, as it seems, his most successful circuit through Galilee; and, before he set out upon it, the seventy disciples, who had been sent before him as his harbingers (sect. xcvii. p. 504, returned to him again with great joy, attended with some mixture of surprise, saying, Lord, we have not only cured diseases, according to the power thou wast pleased to give us (ver. 9, p. 506), but, though thy commission did not directly express so much, yet it appears that even the demons themselves are subject

---

a His last circuit through Galilee.] St. Luke has given us a large account of several occurrences in it, omitted by all the other evangelists; and I think there can be no doubt but it must come in here. It was dispatched between the feast of tabernacles and the dedication (mentioned John x. 22, sect. exxxiv), or between the months of September and December.—I call it his last circuit through Galilee, because it is strongly intimated, that after the conclusion of it, he returned thither no more before his crucifixion. (See Luke xiii, 31—33, and John x. 40—42—Quick-ly after his resurrection, which was the next spring, we find five hundred brethren in Galilee. (1 Cor. xv. 8.) It is probable most of them might be converted in this journey; for we never find him attended by greater multitudes, nor his enemies more alarmed, than about this time.

b The seventy disciples returned to him again.] I presume not to determine when or where they met him; but considering they were by the law obliged to attend this feast at Jerusalem, it seems most probable that was the time and place.

c I saw
And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

And he said to them, I know that it is and must be so: for I myself saw Satan, the great prince of the demons, falling like lightning from heaven on his first transgression, and well remember, how immediate and dreadful his ruin was; and I foresee, in spirit, that renewed, swift and irresistible victory, of which this present success of yours is an earnest, which the preaching of the gospel shall shortly gain over all these rebel powers, which even in their highest strength and glory were so incapable of opposing the arm of God. And, that you may more successfully pursue this conquest, behold, I now give you a miraculous power, securely to tread upon serpents and scorpions, those venomous and hurtful creatures (compare Mark xvi. 18, and Acts xxviii. 5), in token of your triumph over the infernal spirits, and over all the might of Satan the great enemy, which he may set in array against you; and I will so effectually support you in all the trials you shall meet with, that nothing shall by any means be able to injure you, while you continue faithful in your adherence to my service. (Compare Psal. xxi. 13, and Gen. iii. 15). Nevertheless, rejoice not so much in this, that the evil spirits are thus subject to you, and that you are enabled miraculously to control them; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven, and that you stand enrolled among the heirs of that glorious world, as the peculiar objects of the Divine favour and love.

In that remarkable hour, Jesus, in a pleasing contemplation of the success that should attend his gospel, though it was to be propagated by such weak instruments, exceedingly rejoiced in his spirit, and said in the words he had used on a former occasion d (Mat. xi. 25, 26, p. 311),

I ascribe glory to thee, O Almighty Father, the Creator and Lord both of heaven and earth, that

c I saw Satan, &c.] I think this answer to the seventy loses much of its beauty and propriety, unless we suppose Satan to have been the prince of the demons they spoke of, and also allow the reference hinted at in the paraphrase to the first fall of that rebellious spirit. Compare 2 Pet. ii. 4, and Jude, ver. 6.—For the remainder of this section, and some of the following, the reader may consult the notes in the parallel passages referred to, which have been considered in their proper places above.

And said in the words he had used on a former occasion.] They are here repeated with evident propriety, in the view of that glorious success which should attend those his despised servants, as the destined conquerors of the infernal legions, by whom thousands of the poor should be brought to receive the gospel.
They were much happier than the ancient kings and prophets. and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Verse And are not our obligations in some measure proportionable to theirs, while these glorious sights are reflected to our eyes from the mirror of his word, and these glad tidings are echoed back to our ears! Have not we also reason to adore the peculiar favour of God to us, and to admire the sovereignty of his love, that he has
has been pleased to reveal his Son in us, and has given to such
babes, as we must own ourselves to be, that spiritual knowledge
of him, which he has suffered to remain hidden from the great,
the learned, and the wise! Even so, Father, must we also say, for
so it seemed good in thy sight: thou hast mercy on whom thou will
have mercy, and often exaltest the riches of thy grace by the mean-
ness and unworthiness of those, on whom it is bestowed.

Have we reason to hope that our worthless names are written go
in heaven? let us often think of that glorious society, amongst
whom we are enrolled as members, and rejoice in the thought of
those privileges, which result from such a relation to it: privileges,
in comparison of which, a power to heal diseases, and eject demons
with a word, would hardly deserve our joy. In a grateful sense
of them, let us adore the grace which gave us a place in the Lamb's
book of life, and be ever solicitous to behave in a manner worthy
of so illustrious a hope.

We have great encouragement to expect that he, before whom 18, 19
Satan fell like lightning from heaven, will enable us finally to
trample on his power. Let us not servilily fear that condemned
criminal, already marked with the scars of the Divine vengeance;
but let us cheerfully hope, that the triumph over him will be
renewed by the preaching of the gospel. Quickened by that hope,
let us more earnestly pray, that the ruin of his gloomy kingdom
may be daily more and more apparent, especially among us; that
our gracious Redeemer, who reckons the interest of souls his
own, may have renewed reason of joy and praise on that account.
Exert, O blessed Jesus, thine own almighty arm for that great
purpose; and, as thou alone canst do it, reveal thine heavenly
Father to those who, by neglecting thee, shew that they know not
him!

SECT. CVII.

Christ answers the scribe, who asked what he should do to inherit
eternal life; and illustrates his answer by the parable of the good

LUKE X. 25.

And behold, a certain lawyer stood
up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what
shall I do to inherit eternal life?

VOL. VI.

LUKE X. 25.

While our Lord was discoursing in this
manner with his seventy disciples, an
assembly of people gathered round them; and
behold, among the rest, a certain man who was
a lawyer, or one of those scribes who made it
their profession to study and teach the law of
Moses, and to resolve many curious questions
relating
relating to it, rise up with a design to try him; and, to judge of the skill of Jesus in divine matters, said, O thou great Master and Teacher in Israel, what must I do that I may inherit that eternal life which thou so frequently professest as the main object of our pursuits, and which is indeed most worthy of them?

26 And Jesus, as he knew what design he had proposed the question, wisely returned it on himself, and said to him, What is written in the law, which thy profession must engage thee to have made thy study? how dost thou find the case to be determined there? and what is it thou dost so frequently read there?

27 And he replying, said, It is there written as the sum of all the commandments (Deut. vi. 5. Lev. xix. 18), "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thine understanding; thou shalt unite all the faculties of thy soul to render him the most intelligent and sincere, the most affectionate and resolute service; and thou shalt also love thy neighbour as sincerely and impartially as thou lovest thyself."

28 Jesus readily approved his answer; but was desirous to convince him at the same time how far he was from coming up to what the law required: and, in this view, he said to him, Thou hast answered right: do this, and thou shalt live: do it perfectly, and thou wilt have a legal claim to

a With a design to try him.] Dr. Burrow concludes, it was with an intent to pursue him: the question being so determined by the Jewish doctors, that for a different answer he might have been accused of heresy; (see Burrow's Works, Vol. I. p. 221) but I see no certain proof of so bad an intention.

b How dost thou so frequently read there?] Vitringa with great pertinency observes, that what the scribe replies, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. was daily read in their synagogues, which made the answer more apparently proper. (Vitring. Synag. p. 106.) And that this passage of scripture is still read by the whole assembly, both in their morning and evening prayers, and is called, from the first word of it, the Shemah, may be seen in Pedalbus' Ceremonies of the modern Jews, p. 49 and 115; only it is observable they leave out that clause, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. See Walton's Miscell. Vol. I. p. 171—194.

c Thou shalt unite all the faculties of thy soul, &c.] I apprehend, with Archbishop Tillotson, we may acquiesce in this general sense of the passage, without being solicitous to seek a particular distinct idea to each of the words used here. Otherwise I should think καρδιά, the heart, a general expression, illustrated by the three following words; even with all thy soul, (ψυχή), that is, with the warmest affection; and with all thy strength, (δύναμις) that is, with the most vigorous resolution of the will; and with all thine understanding, (νοῦς) that is, taking care to form rational ideas of him, as a guide to the affections and resolutions. Accordingly we may observe, that, in a parallel place (Mark xii. 33), the word νοῦς is used instead of νοῦς. And this very word is justly translated Understanding, Eph. i. 18; iv. 18; and 1 John v. 20.

d Passing
Christ delivers the parable of the good Samaritan.

23 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at

to life; or cultivate this temper sincerely, and God will not leave thee finally to perish, but will give thee all necessary discoveries of his will in order to thine eternal salvation.

But he, willing to justify himself as to the integrity of his inquiry, and to display the virtue of his character, not at all doubting but he sufficiently understood his duty to God, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour, whom by this latter precept I am obliged to love? for I would fain know the whole of my duty, that I may practise it in all its extent.

And Jesus replying, spake the following para-

ble, which was intended to shew, in the most lively manner, that every human creature, who needs our assistance, is to be considered by us as our neighbour, of whatever nation, or faith, or profession he may be: and he said, A certain man of our own country went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and, passing through those wild deserts and dangerous roads, he fell among some of those cruel robbers who so often assault such as travel that way: and these ruffians, having both plundered, stripped, and bound him, and having also wounded him in a cruel and dangerous manner, went off, leaving him half dead. And it happened, that while he was in these deplorable circumstances, a certain priest went down that way, who was going to Jericho, where so many of that profession were settled; and though by virtue of his sacred office he ought to have been a peculiar example of humanity to the afflicted, yet seeing him lie at some little distance, and being willing to avoid the trouble or expense which a more particular inquiry might have occasioned, he crossed [the road,] and went on, proceeding in his journey without any farther notice. And in like manner too, a Levite going that way, when he was at the place just came

\[d\] Passing through those wild deserts and dangerous roads.] This circumstance is well chosen; for so many robberies and murders were committed on this road, which lay through a kind of wilderness, that Jerome tells us it was called 

\[\text{the bloody way}.\]—Jericho is said to have been seated in a valley, and hence the phrase of going down to it.

\[c\] Wounded him in a cruel and dangerous manner.] This is strongly implied in the expression, 

\[\text{having laid on wounds}.\]
He showed him whom he should consider as his neighbour.

Come and looked on this miserable object, and immediately crossed and passed by, without doing any thing at all for his relief. And thus the distressed creature might have lain and perished, but for a certain Samaritan, who, as he was travelling the same way, came to the place where he was, and seeing him in this sad condition, though he might easily know, or at least guess him to be a Jew, yet, notwithstanding the general hatred of these two nations to each other, he was moved with very tender compassion to wards him: And going to him, he bound up his wounds in the best manner he could, when, as the only means he had to cure them, he had poured in some of the oil and wine which he had taken with him as a part of the provisions for his journey (compare Gen. xxviii. 18.) and setting him on his own beast, because he was incapable of walking, he held him up as he rode, and with the tenderest care brought him safely to an inn, where he had some acquaintance; and there took farther care of him, that he should be lodged and accommodated in a proper manner that night.

And the next morning, as he departed from the inn, he took out of his purse two denarii, or Roman pence, and gave them to the landlord of the house; and at the same time said to him, Take all possible care of this poor wounded stranger, and supporting him in his arms as he rode, as well as making such generous provision for him at the inn.

Bound up his wounds, &c.] As the Jew was stripped by the robbers, ver. 30, we may probably suppose the Samaritan used some of his own garments for this purpose; which was a farther instance of wonderful goodness, perhaps fearing them to make a more convenient bondage. Of the use the ancients made of wine and oil, in dressing fresh wounds, see Boz. Exerc. p. 24, and Wolthus on this text.

Two denarii, or Roman pence.] These were in value about fifteen pence of our money. It is a very probable circumstance that a man travelling without any attendants, and now going out to a considerable distance from home, should not have more to spare, especially as he was to travel through so dangerous a road; and so it would have been very imprudent to charge himself with much more money than he was like to want in his journey; which would be the bst, as it was usual for travellers in those parts to carry their provision with them. Compare Gen. xxviii. 18, and Josh. ix. 12, 13.
him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

and let him want for nothing; and whatsoever more thou shalt spend on his account, I will repay thee as I come back.

Now, said our Lord to the lawyer he was dis-coursing with, which of these three persons, the priest, the Levite, or the compassionate Samaritan, dost thou think was the neighbour of this poor man that fell among the robbers? And he said, Undoubtedly it was he that had mercy upon him, notwithstanding he was a person of another nation and religion. Then said Jesus to him, If this seem so amiable an example to thee, go, and do thou likewise; and if thou findest even a Samaritan in the like distress, consider him as thy neighbour, and as cheerfully perform all these beneficent and friendly offices to him: for those pretensions to religion are but vain, which do not inspire men with such universal humanity and benevolence.

IMPROVEMENT.

Of how great importance is it, that we should every one of Ver. us be in good earnest making this inquiry, which the scribe ad-25 dressed to our Lord, What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life! What ought we not willingly to do, and to bear, that we may secure so great a felicity? Still will our Lord answer us from his 26 word, that we must keep the commands of God, while we are looking to him as the end of the law for righteousness; (Rom. x. 4.) Happy are they that faithfully do it, that through the grace manifested in the gospel they may have a right to eat of the tree of life! (Rev. xxii. 14.)

May this abstract and summary of the commandments be written, as it were in golden characters, on the table of each of our hearts! May we love the Lord our God with all the united powers and 27 faculties of our souls, and our neighbour as sincerely and fervently as ourselves! And may we learn, from this beautiful parable of the good Samaritan, to exercise our charity to our fellow-creatures in the most amiable manner!

The Jewish Priest and Levite had, no doubt, the ingenuity to 31, 32 find out some excuse or other for passing over to the other side; and might, perhaps, formally thank God for their own deliverance, while they left their brother to bleed to death for want of their assistance. Is it not an emblem of many living characters, perhaps of some, whose sacred office lays them under the strongest obligations to distinguished benevolence and generosity? But the 33 good Samaritan acted the part of a brother to this expiring Jew.
Christ comes to Bethany, and is entertained there.

SECT. cvii.  
O seed of Israel, O house of Levi and of Aaron! will not the day come, when the humane virtues of heathens shall rise up in judgment against thee!

Luke X. 34, 35.  
Let us reflect with shame, what are the differences between one Christian and another, when compared with those between a Samaritan and a Jew! Yet here the benevolence of a good heart overcame even these; and, on the view of a wounded dying man, forgot that he was by nation an enemy. Whose heart does not burn within him, whose eyes do not overflow with tears of delight, while he reads such a story? Let us go and do likewise, regarding every man as our neighbour who needs our assistance. Let us exclude every malignant sentiment of bigotry and party zeal which would contract our hearts into an insensibility for all the human race, but a little select number, whose sentiments and practices are so much our own, that our love to them is but self-love reflected. With an honest openness of mind let us always remember the relation between man and man, and feel and cultivate that happy instinct by which God, who has formed our hearts in many instances alike, has in the original constitution of our nature strongly and graciously bound them to each other.

SECT. CVIII.

Christ visits his friends at Bethany, and commends the diligence, with which Mary attends his preaching, while her sister Martha was too anxious about the entertainment of her guests. Luke X. 38, to the end.

About this time our Lord quitted Jerusalem, and set out with his disciples on his last journey from thence to Galilee, the feast of tabernacles (as was observed above) being fully concluded. Now it came to pass, as they were on their journey, he entered, with many of his attendants, into a certain neighbouring village, called Bethany, (compare John xi. 1, sect. cxxxix.) and a certain pious woman, whose name was Martha, with the most cheerful hospitality received him into her house, thinking herself greatly honoured by such a visit.

And she had a sister called Mary, who, being earnestly desirous to improve this happy opportunity to know. It might very possibly be just at this time; at least, the want of any sufficient reason for transposing it, obliges me, on the rules I have laid down to myself, to introduce it here.

Sat.  

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which
tunity of advancing in divine knowledge and religious temper, sat down at the feet of Jesus, as an humble disciple; and heard with most diligent and pleasing attention his wise and gracious discourse, which, as his usual practice was, he began as soon as he came in to address to those that were about him.

But Martha, too solicitous about the variety and elegance of the entertainment she intended for her sacred Guest and the company with him, was exceedingly hurried and perplexed about much serving; and coming in to the room where Jesus was, she, not without some warmth and discontent, expressed how much she was offended at her sister’s sitting still, and said, Lord, dost thou not mind that my sister has left me to provide and serve up the entertainment alone, which is more than I can well manage; while she sits here as calmly as if she had no concern in it? I would not take upon me to call her away from thy presence myself; but I beg that thou wouldst interpose in the matter; speak to her therefore, that she may lend her helping hand with mine, and let her then sit down to hear thee discourse when the entertainment is over.

And Jesus in reply said to her, O Martha, Martha, thou art over anxious and disturbed with restless agitation of spirit about many things which are not worth so much solicitude, and might well have been spared on such an occasion as this: But let me tell thee, my dear friend, that there is one thing absolutely necessary, and of

b Sat down at the feet of Jesus, as an humble disciple. It is well known that this was the posture in which learners attended on their teachers (compare Luke viii. 35, and Acts xxii. 5), and likewise grew into a proverb for humble and diligent attention. See the authors cited by Wolfius in loc, and especially Vitringa, Synag. lib. i. part 2, cap. 6.

c Was exceedingly hurried. The word properly signifies to be drawn (as it were) different ways at the same time and admirably expresses the situation of a mind surrounded with so many objects of care that it hardly knows which to attend to first. She had probably servants to whom she might have committed these affairs; and the humility and moderation of our blessed Redeemer would have taken up with what had been less exactly prepared; especially as she had so valuable and so signal an opportunity of impressing her mind in divine knowledge.

d Lend her helping hand with mine.] This is the exact import of avasshah, which is also with the utmost propriety used for the assistance which the Spirit of God gives to the infirmities of our frail nature. Rom. v. 26.

e Disturbed with restless agitation of spirit.] The word is not used in the New Testament. It seems to express the restless situation of a person in a tumultuous crowd, where so many are pressing upon him that he can hardly stand his ground; or of water in great agitation.

f There is one thing absolutely necessary: vv. 13, 14.] This is one of the gravest and most important apothegms that ever was uttered; and one can scarce pardon the frigid impertinence of Theophylact and Basil, who explain it as if he only meant, One dish of meat is enough.

z The
of infinitely greater importance than any of these domestic and secular cares; even the care to have the soul instructed in the saving knowledge of the way that leads to eternal life, and to secure a title to it: and Mary is wisely attending to that; therefore, instead of reproving her, I must rather declare, that she has chosen what may eminently be called the good part, which, as it shall not be finally taken away from her, I would not now hinder her from pursuing; but rather invite thee to join with her in her attention to it, though the circumstances of our intended meal should not be so exactly adjusted, as thy fond friendship could desire.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

38, 39 So steadily and zealously did our blessed Lord pursue his work, with such unwearied diligence and constant affection! No sooner is he entered into the house of this pious friend, but he sets himself to preach the word of salvation, and is the same in the parlour which he had been in the temple. O Mary, how delightful was thy situation! Who would not rather have sat with thee at the feet of Jesus, to hear his wisdom, than have filled the throne of the greatest prince upon earth! Blessed were thine eyes in what they saw, thine ears in what they heard, and thine heart in what it received and embraced, and treasured up as food, which would endure to everlasting life!

40 How unhappy was her good sister deprived of the entertainment of these golden moments, while hurried about meats and drinks, and tables with their furniture, till she lost, not only her opportunity, but her temper too; as it is indeed hard to preserve it, without a resolute guard, amidst the crowd and clamour of domestic cares! Happy that mistress of a numerous family, who can manage its concerns with the meekness and composure of wisdom, and adjust its affairs in such a manner, as that it may not exclude the pleasures of devotion, and cut her off from the means of religious improvement! Happy the man who, in a pressing variety of secular business, is not so cumbered and careful as to forget

---

*The good part.* That μείζων signifies a portion there can be no reasonable doubt; but that here is any allusion to the custom of sending the best portion of an entertainment to a guest to whom peculiar honour was intended, seems too great a refinement, and not exactly suitable to the occasion; though some considerable critics have defended it. (See Walfius, in loc. and Elsner, Observ. Vol. I. p. 225, 226. I think, rendering τον αὐτούς μείζων, the good part, is more forcible, as well as more literal than our translation; as it intimates nothing else to deserve the name of a good part, when compared with this. Compare Mat. xix. 17, sect. cxxxvii.)
Christ is requested by his disciples to teach them to pray.

Christ being entreated by his disciples to teach them to pray, repeats, with some additions, the instructions and encouragements relating to that duty which he had formerly given in his sermon on the mount. Luke XI. 1—13.

And it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

And he said unto them, When you pray, you may use

3 As John also taught his disciples.] Many learned men suppose that the Jewish masters used to give their followers some short form of prayer, as a peculiar badge of their relation to them. This John the Baptist had probably done, though we know not now what it was. And in this view only can we suppose the disciples could now ask Jesus to teach them to pray; for it is not to be thought, that, in the three preceding years of his ministry, he had not often given them instructions both as to the matter and manner of prayer. In this sense Mr. Joseph Mede and Dr. Lightfoot understand the request and answer before us; and I have never met with anything upon it, which has given me more satisfaction. See Mede’s Works, p. 1, 3, and Lightfoot’s Hor. Heb., in loc.
He repeats the form of prayer he had given them before.

Sect. cix.


use that form, which I before have given as a comprehensive model and directory for prayer (see Mat. vi. 9—13, p. 221, 222), and say in your addresses to God, ‘O God of the spirits of all flesh’, who dwellest in the high and holy place, with humble reverence we bow before thee, and with a filial confidence in thy mercy, and mutual love unto each other, we would look up to thee as our God and Father, who with the most amazing grace and condescension art ready to attend unto the supplications of thy children from thy throne in heaven: we adore thee as possessed of infinite perfections; and as our first concern is for thy glory, we offer it as our first request, May thy name be every where sanctified; may thy perfections be displayed through all the world, and be regarded with the highest veneration! And, that the honour of thy Majesty may be thus exalted, May thy kingdom come which thou hast promised to establish under the Messiah; may thy victorious grace be universally triumphant over all thine enemies, and thy people be willing in the day of thy power! And, as an evidence of its efficacy on the hearts of men, May thy holy will be done, as it is constantly in heaven, so likewise upon earth; and be as cheerfully submitted to, as fully acquiesced in, and readily obeyed in all things, as it is possible for us, in this imperfect state, to imitate those heavenly spirits, who delight in doing thy commandments, and hearkening to the voice of thy word!

3 During our continuance here on earth we would not be solicitous to seek great things for ourselves, but humbly beg that thou wouldest give us day by day our daily bread, and wouldest supply us, as our wants return upon us, with such a competent provision of the necessaries of life, as may enable us to serve thee acceptably, and to attend without distraction and uneasiness to the performance of our duty. And, though the guilt of our iniquities might justly separate between thee and us, and with-hold good things from us, we earnestly entreat thee to extend thy mercy to us, and to forgive

3 Give us day by day our daily bread:

4 And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive

b O God, &c.] I think it but justice to the reverend Mr. Godwin to let the reader know that this paraphrase on the 2d, 3d, and 4th verses was written by him. I had here only given a translation, having paraphrased this excellent prayer before in Vol. i. sect. xi. the notes on which may be consulted here.

c Who
He encourages them to importunity in prayer.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; and he shall answer from without, Who is there? and he shall say, A friend; and he will rise up and give him as many as he needeth.

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come unto me, and I have nothing to set before him:

7 And he from within shall answer, and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

10 For every one that asketh shall receive; and he that seeketh shall find; and to him that knocketh shall the door be opened.

11 Behold, a certain man was sick, of a fever and of a plague: and whensoever he was sick, the devils cast him down.

12 I say unto you, That, whereas devils cast him down, behold, they take him up again.

13 For this reason, I say unto you, That all things whatsoever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive, and ye shall have them.

14 And, when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have anything against any man; that your father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

15 But if ye do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 And when yeFast such accidental inaccuracies are sometimes to be found in the most approved authors. The sense is not the less plain.
vailed upon at length to give you what you stand
in need of, if you continue to be earnest and
importunate in your prayers to him: and I say
therefore to you, Whatever mercy you desire to
obtain, ask it of God with a continued fervency,
and it shall assuredly be given you: seek it with
diligence, and you shall find it; and if it be a
while delayed, knock with an earnest importuni-
ity at the door of Divine mercy, and it shall at
length be opened to you. And the success of
others may encourage you to this, as what in-
deed has been confirmed by happy and constant
experience: for every one that asks, with an un-
wearied fervency, receives; and he that dili-
gently seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocks
again and again, though for a while there may
be some delay, it shall at length be opened.
(Compare Mat. vii. 7, 8. sect. xlix.)

11 And, further to assist your faith on these oc-
casions, reflect upon the workings of your own
hearts towards your offspring, and consider,
What father is there among you, who, if a son of
his shall ask him for bread, will give him a stone?
or if he ask him for a fish, instead of a fish will
give him a serpent? Or if he ask him for an
egg, will be so unnatural as to give him a scorp-
ion? and, in the room of what is necessary for
the support of life, will offer him a thing that
would be useless or injurious to him? If you
then, who are, at least comparatively, evil, and
perhaps some of you inclined to a penurious and
morose temper, yet know how to give good gifts
to your children, and find your hearts disposed
to relieve their returning necessities by a variety
of daily provisions; how much more shall [your]
heavenly Father, who is infinitely powerful and
gracious, and who himself has wrought these
dispositions in you, be ready to bestow every ne-
cessary good, and even to give the best and the
most excellent gift of all, his Holy Spirit, to them
that sincerely and earnestly ask him for it; to
produce and cherish in their hearts those graces
which may fit them for the services of life, and
for the joys of an happy immortality? (Com-
pare Mat. vii. 9, 10, 11. p. 233.)

IMPROVEMENT.

Well does this petition become every disciple of Christ; Lord,
teach us to pray! Thou hast taught us by thine example, and by
the precepts of thy word; teach us also by thine Holy Spirit!
Excellent
Excellent is this form of sound and Divine words, which our great Master here recommends. God forbid, that any of his followers should censure their brethren, who think it still proper to use it, not only as a directory, but as a form too, though perhaps with some little variation from the original sense of some clauses of it. Let us attentively study it, that, concise and expressive as it is, our thoughts may go along with its several petitions.

Let us learn to reverence and love God, and to consider ourselves as brethren in his family. Let the glory of his name, and the prosperity of his kingdom, be much dearer to us than any separate interest of our own. Let it be our cordial desire that his will may be universally obeyed, and with the most entire consent of soul acquiesced in, by all his creatures, both in heaven and on earth. Let our appetites and passions be so moderated, that having even the plainest food and raiment we may be therewith content: and, on the other hand, how plentiful soever our circumstances may be, let us remember, that day by day we depend on God for our daily bread. Nor do we need even the most necessary supplies of life more than we need daily pardon; to which therefore we should be putting in our constant claim, heartily forgiving all our brethren, as we desire to be forgiven by God. Conscious of our own weakness, let us, as far as we can, endeavour to avoid circumstances of temptation; and when necessarily led into them, let us be looking up to heaven for support; labouring above all things to preserve our integrity, and to maintain a conscience void of offence.

Depending on the certainty of these gracious promises, and encouraged by the experience of so many thousands, who have on asking received, and on seeking found, let us renew our importunate addresses to the throne of Divine grace: and, remembering the compassion of our heavenly Father, let us be emboldened, in the full assurance of faith, to ask every necessary blessing, especially the communication of that enlightening and sanctifying Spirit, without which our corrupt hearts will find it a ready way to abuse the choicest of his providential favours to the dishonour of his holy name, and the deeper wounding of our own miserable souls.

---

\[d\] With some little variation from the original sense, &c.] Dr. Guise has excellently shown in his note on Matt. vi. 13, that this prayer in its original sense was peculiarly suited to the dispensation then present, as introductory to the Messiah's kingdom, and has given it a just and very expressive paraphrase of it in that particular view. But there is not a clause in it, which will not bear a more extensive sense, and express what ought to be our daily temper, and the breathings of our heart before God. No doubt, thousands of Christians have daily refreshment and edification in the use of it; and it is astonishing that any should venture to condemn their brethren for it, but I would hope there are few of any profession now remaining, who have so much of the spirit of opposition and censurlessness.
SECT. CX.

Our Lord dining at the house of a Pharisee, seriously admonishes him and his brethren of their guilt and danger; by which they are exasperated, rather than reformed. Luke XI. 37, to the end.

LUKE XI. 37.

NOW, after our Lord had delivered these things, it happened one day, that while he was speaking to the people about the great concerns of their eternal salvation, a certain Pharisee then present invited him to dine with him; and, with whatever view he might do it, Jesus, that he might not seem morose, or insensible of a civility, accepting the offer, went in to his house, and sat down to table.

38 And when the Pharisee who had invited him saw that he was regardless of the tradition of the elders, and did not first wash before dinner, according to the constant custom of their sect, he wondered [at it], considering the character he had for an extraordinary degree of sanctity.

39 But the Lord, perceiving his thoughts, and knowing that in some circumstances a faithful reproof is the most valuable token of friendship and gratitude, said to him, As I see you are now offended at my neglecting the ceremony of washing before dinner, I cannot but plainly tell you, that you Pharisees are too much like those vain people that cleanse only the outside of the cup and the dish, while the inside, which is of much greater importance, is left dirty and foul; for with regard to many of you, your inward part, even your very heart and conscience, is defiled being full of rapine, and of all the foulest kinds of pollution and wickedness. But let me seriously

ye fools, did not he

a It happened one day, that while he was speaking, &c.] The attentive reader will easily observe that I have here omitted what occurs from the end of the 13th to the beginning of the 37th verse. That passage is inserted, sect. lxi—lxiv. as being exactly parallel to Mat. xii. 22, & seq. and Mark iii. 22, & seq. Nor could I see any proof that the same discourse, with just the same circumstances, happened again here; and as this seemed improbable, in proportion to the variety and resemblance of those circumstances, I thought it was better thus to transpose Luke’s story, than to take the repetition for granted.—The phrase εν ει τω λαβηται, while he was speaking, will, I think, fairly admit the turn I have given it in the paraphrase; but if any judge otherwise, it will be easy to turn back to the passage as inserted before, p. 328, & seq. and all I have said above to introduce the section before us will be true on that supposition.

b O ye
The inward part is more to be regarded than the outward.

41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you.

42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgments, and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not thusly ask you, O ye thoughtless creatures, and let me charge you that ye ask yourselves, Did not he that made the outside, make also that which is within? Did not the same God that created the body, create the soul too? and must he not intimately know his own work, and discern and abhor all those secret abominations, which, in contempt of his omniscience, you study so artfully to conceal from your fellow-creatures?

(Compare Psal. xciv. 8, 9.)

I would therefore, from the sincerest concern for your true-honour and happiness, exhort you not only to purge yourselves from secret wickedness, but to abound in the exercise of universal goodness, and particularly to give alms with liberality in proportion to your substance: and then, if it be done from a right principle, behold, God, the great Proprietor of all, will accept and bless you; and though you should not be so exact in this outward washing, all things are pure to you, so that you may use them with comfort; whereas now you do, as it were, pollute and profane every thing you touch, and all the water in the world cannot wash away the stain. (See Tit. i. 15.)

But alas, you seem little disposed to attend to this kind and faithful advice; and therefore my character obliges me solemnly to warn you of those approaching judgments, which, if speedy repentance does not prevent, will shortly overtake your whole sect, numerous and honoured as it is. Woe therefore unto you, Pharisees! for, to gain the admiration of the priests and the people

b O ye thoughtless creatures.] As νοστη: is a milder word than μωσή, I chose to render it thus, rather than as in our translation; (see note m on Mat. v. 22. p. 208.) The learned Bluner. (Observ. Vol. I. p. 217.) explains the latter part of the verse as if it had been said, "There is a great deal of difference between cleaning the outside, and cleansing that which is within, and no such necessary connection between them as you seem to suppose." To justify this, he argues 2 Sam. xix. 24, and one passage in Aristophanes, where γειτων signifies to cleanse; but the sense is so unusual, and that commonly received, so much more lively and important, that I could not persuade myself to deviate from our translation here.

c In proportion to your substance.] Thus Grotius understands it. The learned Bos (Exercit. p. 26) has, I think, abundantly proved the words τα τοιαυτα (for τοιαυτα τοιαυτα) will very justly admit this sense, and are thus used by some of the best Greek classics. No other seems to agree so well with the connection; not even that ingenious turn of Rantheins, (Annot. ex Xen. p. 93—96,) who explains τα τοιαυτα by τα τοιαυτα τα τοιαυτα, Mat. xxiii. 26. or that which is within the cup and dish, as it had been said, "Give meat to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, and make a liberal distribution of those things that are within the cup and the dish." But the last view in which τα τοιαυτα had been mentioned was as expressing the temper of the heart, (ver. 40,) which is a strong objection against this great man's interpretation.
people, you most scrupulously pay the tithe of
mint, and rue, and every [other] trifling herb
that grows in your gardens, and expect to re-
commend yourselves to the Divine acceptance
by such kind of observances; but, at the same
time, you shamefully pass by and carelessly ne-
glect the practice of righteous judgment to your
fellow-creatures, and of the love of God your
Creator, as if they were matters of but little
importance; whereas indeed these are the duties
that you more especially ought to have done; and
yet I own, you ought not to neglect the other, as
even the least of God’s commands are to be
revered and obeyed. (See Mat. v. 19.)

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees, on account of your
pride, which appears on every occasion, and in
every affair of life! for you love the uppermost
seats in all assemblies, even in the very syna-
gogues, where you meet to humble yourselves
before God: and mightily affect salutations in the
markets and other public places, by titles of
distinguished respect, as the guides and fathers
of the people, the oracles of truth, and the
standards of holiness. (Compare Mat. xxiii.
6—10. sect, clviii.)

44 Woe unto you also, O ye scribes and Pharisees,
on account of your deceit, as under all those
appearances of the strictest sanctity you are the
most egregious hypocrites of the age d! for I
may truly say that you are like concealed graves,
which, being overgrown with grass, men walk
over, and are not aware of [them], till they
stumble at them, and are hurt, or at least de-
filed by the touch of them.

45 And one of the doctors of the law, who hap-
pended

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Woe unto you; scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

45 Then answered one

---

4 d O ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.] Though some copies want these words, and Groitus and Dr. Mill give them up, I think Dr. Whiby is right in retaining them; especially because they so much illustrate verse 45. See Whib. Exam. Mill. p. 46.

e Are like concealed graves. The discourse against the Pharisees, which is re-
corded Mat. xxiii. sect. civi. clviii.) was plainly delivered at another time, and in
very different circumstances. Our Lord
there compares them to withered sepulchres,
ver. 27. adorned on the outside, but defiled
within; but here to graves overgrown with
grass, which might often happen to be by
the way-side, (compare Gen. xxxv. 12.) and
so might occasion such accidents as
are here referred to.

f One of the doctors of the law.] I apprehend that vōcik persists may well be ren-
dered a doctor or interpreter of the law:
which I generally choose, rather than the
word lawyer, because that naturally suggests
to us a modern idea of an office which did
not exist among the Jews at this time, and
has strangely misled some interpreters.
These Jewish lawyers (as our translation
calls them) were the most considerable
species of scribes, who applied themselves
peculiarly to study and explain the law.
Probably many of them were Pharisees;
but it was no ways essential to their office
that they should be so. What touched the
person here speaking, was, that our Lord in
his last word, ver. 44. had joined the scribes
with the Pharisees.

g This
one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also.

46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye have lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets; and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye hear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres;

pened to be present, observing that in this last woe Jesus mentioned the scribes, who were a body of men to whom he and his brethren belonged, answered and said unto him, Master, in X. 43, saying these things, thou reproachest not only the sect of the Pharisees, but us too, in a manner unbecoming the dignity of our holy profession, as the depositaries of the sacred oracles.

But Jesus was so far from palliating the matter to ingratiate himself with them, that he plainly and courageously said, Nay, it is a righteous rebuke, and I intend it for you, and therefore particularly repeat it for your admonition: Woe unto you also, ye professed interpreters of the law! for, by your rigorous decisions on the ceremonial parts of it, and the human traditions which you have added to it, you load other men with insupportable burdens, and unmercifully lay them on, while you yourselves will not touch the burdens with one of your fingers; but suffer your lives to contradict your precepts, even in some of the most important instances.

I also solemnly denounce a woe unto you all, for the malignity and cruelty of your tempers under this mask of piety and devotion! for at a great expence you build and adorn the sepulchres of the prophets, as if you had a mighty veneration and affection for them, though your fathers slew them. But as you are regardless of the instructions that the prophets gave, and appear in your conduct to imitate your fathers, truly you bear witness to them, rather than against them, and in effect approve and vindicate the works of your fathers; for as they indeed slew them, and you build their sepulchres, one would imagine that you erected these monuments not so much in honour of the slaughtered prophets as of the persecutors by whom they were so wickedly destroyed. (Compare Mat. xxiii. 29. —32, sect. clviii.)

Therefore

* Will not touch the burden with one of your fingers. * Perhaps their consciences might charge them with some private contempt of the injunctions they most rigorously imposed upon others in ceremonial precepts as well as moral; or it may refer to the want of a due tenderness for the comfort of men's lives, which they indittered by such rigour. This seems to prove against Trigland (de Karaes, p. 55, sect.) that these lawyers were not Karaites; for these added not traditional burdens to the law.

n And in effect approve and vindicate the works of your fathers. * Archbishop Tillotson, Vol. II. p. 193, 196.) has set this text in a most strong and beautiful light, and hinted the turn which I have given it in the paraphrase.

Therefore
Therefore, also the wisdom of God hath said, and I am in his name commissioned to declare it as his determinate purpose, *I will yet send them* other prophets and extraordinary messengers, particularly the apostles, who shall declare my gospel to them, as the last expedient for their recovery and salvation; but such I know to be the hardness of their hearts, that they will generally despise and reject them; nay, [some] of them they will kill, and will persecute the rest: So that by filling up the measure of their sins, they will bring such a terrible destruction upon themselves, that the blood of all the prophets and martyrs, which has been cruelly shed from the foundation of the world, may seem to be required of this generation. Even from the blood of righteous Abel, who in those early ages for his distinguished piety was murdered by his inhuman brother, to the blood of Zechariah, one of the last of the prophets, who was slain between the altar and the temple (2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22). Yea, in the strongest terms I tell you, and repeat it again, The ruin, God will bring upon you in his righteous judgment, shall be so dreadful, that it shall seem as if the guilt of all their blood had been laid up in store, that it might be required at the hands of this generation, and heap aggravated ruin on their heads. (Compare Mat. xxiii. 34—36, sect. clviii.) And I will add, that the disguises thrown on scripture, and the methods used to conceal it from the people, have done a great deal to bring on this terrible sentence: *woe therefore unto you, interpreters of the law,* on this account! for by these unrighteous practices you have, as it were, taken

49 Therefore also the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 From the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Wo unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken

---

1 Thèrefore also the wisdom of God hath said.] Dr. Guise (with Markius, Exerc. p. 669) paraphrases this clause as the words of the historian, and supposes him here to apply this character to Christ, and to declare that Christ, the wisdom of God, farther said, *I will send them prophets,* &c.—I doubt not but Christ might with great propriety be spoken of by that phrase: but, with all due respect to that learned and pious interpreter, I cannot apprehend it to be the sense of this passage; not only because the phraseology is unexampled in the evangelists, but chiefly because our Lord does not say, *I send to you but to them.* Yet I see no reason to conclude (with Mr. Whiston, in his Essay for restoring the Old Testament, p. 238) that this is a quotation from any ancient writer. Christ was empowered, without any such voucher, to declare what the counsels of Divine wisdom had determined; and this manner of speaking strongly intimates that he was so; in which view it has on this interpretation a peculiar beauty and propriety.

k The blood of Zechariah.] What reason there is to conclude, the Zechariah here spoken of is that prophet of whose death we have an account in 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, & seq. will be shewn in note g on Mat. xxiii. 35, sect. clviii.
The scribes and Pharisees endeavour to ensnare him. 567

53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

1 The key of knowledge.] Vitringa understands this of one fundamental truth, which would have led them into the knowledge of the rest (Observ. Sacr. lib. i. p. 125): but all their endeavours to embarrass and bias the minds of men in their inquiries after truth might be intended here; as well as more especially their disguising the prophecies which related to the Messiah.—If a key was delivered to them as the badge of their office (see p. 463, note g. and Camero on this place), there may be a beautiful allusion to that circumstance; as if he should have said, You take that key, not to use, but to secrete it. See Archbishop Tillotson, Vol. I. p. 293.—Elster has well shewn on this text that the heathen priests were called ἵμαρτος, key-bearers. Observ. Vol. I. p. 295, 229.

m Fiercely to fasten upon him.] So ἰδίως properly signifies (see note g on Mark vi. 19, p. 158).—Several more of the words here used are metaphors taken from hunting. ἄνεργον might be rendered to mouth or bear down with the violence of their words, as Theophylact excellently explains it; but the addition of ἀλήθεια engaged me rather to translate it as I have done. Gravis and Casaubon have shown that it sometimes signifies to examine in a magisterial way; but Krauss's note is, on the whole, the best I have seen upon this word.

n To start some unguarded word.] οδηγοῖσα in this connection has a most beautiful propriety, and signifies the eagerness with which sportsmen beat about for their game to start it from its covert.—It is very probable as Mr. Cradock conjectures, that the Pharisee, who was master of the house, had invited a great many of his brethren and learned friends on purpose to make a more formidable attack upon Christ, and by their concurrent testimony to charge upon him any thing which might render him obnoxious: and the presence of so many of them made the discourse delivered at this time more proper, and the courage and zeal it expressed more remarkable. See Cradock's Harmony, part ii. p. 6.
Reflections on the guilt and danger of hypocrisy.

IMPROVEMENT.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; and such were the reproofs of Christ on this occasion. How well had all the entertainments of the Pharisee's table been repaid, had he and his brethren heard them with candour, humility, and obedience! These men despised them to their ruin; let us often review them for our instruction, that none of these dreadful woes may come upon us.

This discourse of our Lord is a most just and severe rebuke to every hypocritical professor, who is scrupulous and exact in matters of ceremony, while he neglects morality; and is studious to shine in the sight of men, while he forgets the all-penetrating eye of God. It exposes the ostentation of those who pride themselves in empty titles of honour, and eagerly affect precedence and superiority. And it evidently chastises those who press on others the duties they neglect themselves, and so are most righteously judged out of their own mouth.

How melancholy it is to observe, in instances like these, the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of the human heart, and its desperate and unfathomable wickedness! and to see how men impose upon themselves with empty appearances, like these Pharisees; who built the sepulchres of the former prophets, while they were persecuting those of their own day; and, in contempt of all that was said by the messengers of God, were filling up the measure of their iniquities, till the cloud which had been so long gathering burst on their heads, and poured forth a storm of aggravated wrath and ruin!

May that God, who has an immediate access to the hearts of men, deliver all Christian countries, and especially all Protestant churches, from such teachers as are here described: who take away and secrete the key of knowledge instead of using it, and obstruct, rather than promote, men's entrance into the kingdom of heaven! How loud will the blood of the souls they have betrayed cry against them in the awful day of accounts! and how little will the wages of unrighteousness, and the rewards of worldly policy, be able to warn them against destruction, or to support them under it!
Christ cautions his disciples against hypocrisy, and animates them against the fear of men by the promise of extraordinary assistance from his Spirit in their greatest trials. Luke XII. 1—12.

SECT. CXI.

Christ charges his disciples to beware of hypocrisy.


In the mean time, while Christ was thus discourseing at the Pharisee’s house, many thousands of people were gathered together, and pressed with so much eagerness to hear him, that they even trampled on each other: and [Jesus] going forth among them, began to say to his disciples in the presence of them all, See that you more specially beware, and above all things take heed to yourselves of being corrupted by the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy; a vice which secretly puts up their minds, and strangely spreads itself through their hearts and lives, so as to taint and spoil the very best of their duties. But seriously reflect upon the folly of it; for you may assure yourselves, as I have told you formerly (Mat. x. 26. Mark iv. 22. and Luke viii. 17.) that there is nothing now so secretly concealed which shall not be discovered, and be openly unveiled another day; nor any thing so artfully disguised or hid, which shall not then at least be made known, if God does not more immediately expose those shallow artifices, which he now discerns and abhors. So that whatever you have spoken with the utmost caution, in the thickest darkness, shall then be published and heard in the clearest effulgence of light: and what you have whispered in the most retired chambers and closets, shall then be proclaimed aloud as from the house-tops in the audience of all.

And therefore let it be your care, not merely to save appearances, but to maintain a good conscience, though at the greatest expense: for I say unto you, my dear friends, with all possible seriousness, and most tender concern for your everlasting

Many thousands of people were gathered together.] It would be more exactly rendered many myriads; but lest every English reader should not know that a myriad is ten thousand, I render it many thousands; nor is it necessary to take the word in its strictest sense. Perhaps this vast assemblage of people might be owing to an apprehension either that Christ might meet with some ill usage among so many of his enemies, or that he would say or do something peculiarly remarkable on the occasion.—Compare Luke v. 17, 19. sect. xlv.
Christ encourages his disciples against the fear of men.

In the mean time remember, that your enemies cannot hurt even your bodies without his knowledge and permission; for his Providence extends itself even to the meanest works of his hands: for instance, Are not five sparrows sold for so inconsiderable a sum as two farthings? and yet not one of them, minute and worthless as they are, is forgotten before God; but he attends to all the circumstances of their lives and deaths. Surely then you will not be overlooked by him: but may justly conclude that he has such a special and particular concern for you, as that even the very hairs of your head are all numbered, so that not one of them can perish without his notice. Fear not therefore; for as men, and much more as my servants and friends, you are more valuable than many sparrows, and will be more remarkably his care than they. But howsoever he may now permit you to be persecuted by your enemies for your fidelity to me, though he should even suffer you to sacrifice your lives in so honourable a cause, you will be far from being losers by it in the end: for I say unto you, That if any one shall freely acknowledge his faith in me before men, the Son of man himself shall also acknowledge his complacency in such a person, and his relation to him, even before the angels not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.

\[^h\text{For two farthings, aspariaw \\text{etc.]}\text{This was a Roman coin, that was then current in Judea, called as, or anciently assarius, which was the tenth part of the denarius or Roman penny, in value about three farthings of our money. Two sparrows might be bought for one, and five for two of these. Compare Mat. x. 29, sect. lxxvi.}\]

\[^c\text{If any one shall acknowledge me, &c.]}\text{The idioms of languages differ so much, that what is very elegant and proper in one may, if verbally translated, be contrary to grammar in another. This verse and the following are instances of it. It seems to me a kind of superstition to scruple such little changes as I have here made.}\]
9 But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.

10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.

11 And when they bring you unto synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how to answer, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. — It may be forgiven him. The common rendering of ἀφορίζων is more literal: but the connection shows it must be taken as here; for it would be madness to imagine that, in such a case as this, forgiveness must come of course, whether the blasphemer did or did not repent. What grammarians call an enallage of words and tenses is very frequent; and I shall not always think it necessary to trouble the reader with an apology, when the reason of the change is so evident.
your liberty, but your life in their hands, yet be not anxious how to behave, or what apology you shall make for yourselves, or what ye shall say in defence of the gospel you preach: For the Holy Spirit himself shall teach you in that very hour, or in the season of the greatest difficulty and extremity, what you ought to say, and what answer you should make to their most captious inquiries, or most invidious charges: (compare Mat. x. 19, 20, sect. lxxv.) Proper thoughts and expressions shall freely flow in upon you as fast as you can utter them; so that with undaunted courage you shall be able to vindicate the honour of your gospel, and to confound the most artful or most potent of your enemies.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let us from this discourse, which we have been reading, learn the folly of hypocrisy, as well as the wickedness of it. A lying tongue is but for a moment (Prov. xii. 19); and the great approaching judgment-day will shew all in their true colours. May we live as those, who are then to be made manifest! May the heaven of deceit, by Divine grace, be entirely purged out of our hearts; and all our conduct be so fair and equal, that it may appear more honourable and lovely, in proportion to the accuracy with which it is examined; as the whitest garments are recommended by being seen in the strongest light!

If we would preserve such an integrity of soul, let us endeavour to get above the servile fear of man; of man, that shall die, and of the son of man, that shall be made as grass; as if the oppressor had us in his power, and were ready to destroy: and where is the fury of the oppressor? (Isa. li. 12, 13.) With what infinite ease can God restrain it; and, when it is let loose in all its violence, how little can it do to hurt his faithful servants! Let this mean passion be over-awed by the fear of that God, who has our eternal all in his hands; whose vengeance, or favour, will reach far beyond the grave, and determine our final misery or felicity, as we are the objects of the one or the other.

While

\[\text{sect. exi.}\]

Luke XII. 12. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour, what ye ought to say.
Christ will not interpose in a dispute about property.

While we are in the world, let us labour after a firm faith in the universality of Divine Providence; from which the least of his creatures are not exempted, nor are they forgotten by it. Let us endeavour to enjoy the pleasure and comfort of such a thought; assuring ourselves, that He, who regards the life of birds and of insects, will not neglect the care and preservation of his children.

In a steady persuasion of this, let us determine courageously to confess and maintain his gospel in the extremest danger; knowing that thus only we shall secure the honour of being owned by Christ, amidst all the glories of his final appearance.

And, in a word, to animate us to this holy courage, and to assist us in every other duty, let us earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit; by whose influence the apostles were instructed and supported in the discharge of their difficult and various offices; whose grace therefore must be abundantly sufficient for us, to cause us to abound in every good word and work. (2 Cor. ix. 8.)

SECT. CXLII.

Christ, being desired to interpose in a dispute between two brethren about property, declines the decision of the case; and takes occasion to advance a caution against covetousness, which he inforces by the parable of the rich fool. Luke xii. 13—21.


And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

a He prudently replied. This appellant probably thought, that, as the Messiah he would act in the character of a judge, who would decide controversies relating to property.—My rendering the phrase, he said unto him, by the equivalent word replied, will not, I hope, be thought to need any apology.
Christ delivers the parable of the rich fool.

(Compare Exod. ii. 14.)

Luke xii. 15. And upon this occasion, though he would not interpose in the affair, yet, to prevent their being fond of the enjoyments of the world, and to preserve them from a covetous disposition, Jesus said to his disciples, and to them that were present. See to it, that with the utmost care and resolution you be upon your guard against all kinds and degrees of covetousness; for though it be a common, it is a very unreasonable vice; since it is evident, that the comfort and happiness of a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions; nor can the continuance of his life, even for the shortest period of time, be secured by that abundance.

16 And, to enforce and illustrate this remark, he spake a very instructive parable to them, and said, There was a certain rich man, whose ground bore fruit so plentifully, that he had no room to receive and lay up in store the vast produce of his harvest. And he found all his plenty an incumbrance to him, so that he reasoned with himself, not without some considerable anxiety of mind, saying, What shall I do? for I have not room at present to store up my crop, should I stow it ever so close. And, after some pause, he came to a resolution, and said, I will do this, as what appears to me the wisest scheme; I will pull down my old barns, and build new, which shall be larger, and much more commodious than they; and there I will gather in all my rich increase this year, and all my goods that I already have in store: And then I will retire from business, and sit down and enjoy the fruits of my former labours, and will say to my soul with complacency and confidence, O my soul, thou hast now an abundance of goods laid up, on which thou mayest comfortably subsist for many future years; repose thyself therefore after all thy fatigues; eat and drink freely, without any fear of exhausting thy stores; and be as merry as corn, and wine, and oil, shared with thy most jovial companions, can make thee. But God beheld him with

b See to it, that with the utmost care you be upon your guard against all kinds and degrees of covetousness.] ἐκτετάλισσεν ταῦτα ἐν εὐαγγελίῳ τῷ Κωνσταντίνῳ, as a lively phrase, the full force of which I have endeavoured to express in the paraphrase, not being able exactly to do it in the version. (Compare notes, on Mat. xvi. 6, p. 457.)

c Thg

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Some old versions and very good copies read it, from all covetousness; to which I have shown so much regard, as to insert the word all in the paraphrase: as it is certain, at least, that our Lord intended the caution in this extent, whether he did or did not so particularly express it.
to him. Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided.

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

with just displeasure, and by the awful dispensation of his Providence, in effect said to him, amidst all this gaiety of heart, in the variety of his schemes and hopes, Thou fool, who dost thus stupidly forget both the dignity and the mortality of thy nature, and thy continual dependence upon me thy supreme Lord! know to thy terror, that while thou art talking of a long succession of pleasurable years, this very night thy soul shall be demanded of thee, and be hurried away to its place; and then, where will all its boasted entertainments be, or who shall possess what thou hast thus laboriously provided, but shalt thyself never enjoy? And accordingly the unhappy creature died that night, and all his wealth could do no more for him than furnish out the expences of his funeral. And so, or such a fool in the Divine account, [is] 21 he that heaps up treasures to himself, here on earth, and is not rich with respect to God in acts of charity and piety, which would secure a fund of celestial treasures, lodged in his almighty hand, and therefore inviolably safe from such calamitous accidents as these.

IMPROVEMENT.

Most prudently did our Lord decline the invicious office of an arbitrator in civil affairs; and wisdom will require his ministers generally to avoid it likewise. It is more suitable to our office, like our blessed Master, to endeavour to draw off and disengage the minds of men from covetousness, and to pluck up the root of those eager contentions, which so often divide even the nearest relations, and inspire them with mutual aversions, more invincible than the bars of a castle. (Prov. xviii. 19.)

And that a covetous desire of the enjoyments of the world may not create contentions, and engage us in pursuits that will be fatal to our souls, let us seriously consider the true value of things, and reflect how little riches can do to make us happy if we obtain them;

a Rich with respect to God.] There is a force and propriety in the phrase to. This, which our language will not exactly express. It represents God as a depository, in whose hands the good man has lodged his treasure; and who has, as it were, made himself accountable for it in another and better world. Compare Prov. xiv. 17.

a Repeating
Christ cautions his disciples against anxious care;

SECT. CXIII.

Christ repeats the cautions and arguments against an anxious and
cowardly temper, which he had formerly given in his sermon on
the mount. Luke XII. 22—34.

SECT. CXIII.

THUS Jesus cautioned his followers against
setting their hearts on worldly treasures;
but as most of them were in such low circum-
stances as to be in greater danger of inmoderate
sollicitude about the necessary supplies of life,
he proceeded to caution them against this, by
repeating some of those admonitions which he
had formerly delivered in his sermon on the
mount. And accordingly he said to his disciples,
For this cause, that is, considering the great un-
certainty of riches, I say to you, and strictly
charge it upon you, That you be not anxious
about your life, what ye shall eat, or how you
shall procure food to support it; nor for the body,
what you shall put on to cover, defend and adorn
it. For you must needs be sensible, the life
itself, which you have received from God with-
out any care or thoughtfulness of yours, is much
more important than meat, and the body than
raiment;

---

a Repeating some of those admonitions, &c.] Most of the thoughts and expressions
used here occurred before, sect. xii. and are, I hope, sufficiently explained there. I
content myself therefore with referring the
reader to it.

b If
God clothes the lilies, and will much more take care of them. 577

body is more than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not: and yet I say unto you, That Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

29 And consider the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.

And do not be afraid of your life, nor yet of how ye shall be clothed; even thus is not the life of the birds, that they sow, or reap, or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

And if your father which is in heaven shall not give you bread, I say, Not will he give you the least addition to it.

b If then you cannot do the least matter,] was a proverbial expression for making the least addition to it.
They should seek the kingdom of God, and treasure in heaven.

And do not you then, who are acquainted with the care of Providence, and are particularly interested in it, be solicitous to seek what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor be like meteors in the air, that are tossed about by every blast of wind, hurried with anxious cares, and agitated with a variety of restless and uneasy thoughts.

For the Gentile nations of the world, who know little of Providence, or of a future state, seek after all these lower things with great solicitude; and they are more excusable in doing it: but you are directed to much nobler objects of pursuit, and furnished with a more substantial support against such anxieties, in that paternal relation which God avows to you; and as your heavenly Father well knows that you have need of these things, he will certainly provide them for you in a proper degree. Leave them therefore to his care; and, low as your condition is, be not uneasy and disquieted about them; but seek ye rather the kingdom of God, and labour to promote its interest among men; and then you may depend upon it, not only, that you shall obtain that most important prize, but likewise, that all these other necessary things shall be added to you, without your anxiety. (Compare Mat. vi. 31—33. p. 229.)

I repeat the encouraging thought; Fear not, ye little flock, my dear property and charge, however feeble you may seem; fear not, I say, that you shall be left destitute of these common blessings of Divine Providence; for it is your heavenly Father's gracious pleasure to give you what is infinitely more valuable, even the kingdom of eternal glory: and can you possibly imagine that, while he intends to bestow that upon you, and even takes pleasure in the thought of making you so great and happy there, he will

Nor be agitated with restless thoughts.] After all the various and perplexed thoughts which critics have had on this word, ἀρρητο ulus (of which a very large account may be seen in the learned Wofius), the sense I have taken is the most simple, and, especially here, the most natural. The authorities produced by Blamer (Ober. Vol. i. p. 239, 234), and several of those mentioned by Reislethin (Annot. i. 1. p. 97, 98), seem to me to favour this sense, though some of them are produced to establish another. It appears from them, that many speculations and musings, in which the mind fluctuates, or is suspended in an uneasy hesitation, might well be expressed by such a word.

d Takes pleasure in the thought of making you so great and happy there.] This is the beautiful and wonderful import of the word ἀδιόται, in this connection: which generally signifies a pleasurable acquiescence.
will refuse you those earthly supplies, which he liberally imparts even to strangers and enemies?

Animated therefore by such a hope and confidence, instead of being solicitous to increase your possessions to the utmost, rather be prepared, when Providence shall call you to sell what you already have, and distribute [it] in charity; and so you may provide for yourselves purses which do not grow old and wear out, even a never-failing treasure in heaven, that region of security and immortality, where no thief approaches to plunder the riches of its inhabitants, nor doth the moth corrode and spoil the robes of glory, in which they appear. And the more careful should you be about this heavenly treasure, because it is certain, that where that which you account your chief treasure is laid up, there will your heart be also fixed, and the whole tenor of your thoughts and affections will naturally flow in that channel.) Compare Mat. vii. 20, 21, 226.)

IMPROVEMENT.

Are we not all conscious to ourselves, that on such topics as these, we need line upon line, and precept upon precept, as being too deficient in our regard, though God speak once, yea twice? (Job xxxiii. 14.) We see our heavenly Father crowning the earth with his goodness: to this day does he clothe the grass and the flowers with the same profusion of ornament; to this day does he

And agreeable to this, it is most edifying and delightful to observe, how God is represented in scripture, as enjoying his own presence, as it were, with a peculiar relish, in the view of those glories which he has prepared for his people. Hence those emphatical phrases of wisdom rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, or in the prospect and idea of them, before they were actually made, (Prov. viii. 21.) of God's knowing the thoughts he thinks towards his people, (Jer. xxxix. 11.) and of his rejoicing over them with joy and silence resting in his love to them, (Zeph. iii. 17.) The tenderness and energy of innumerable scriptures depends on this remark; and many of those relating to election, predestination, &c. which have been as dry rods of controversy, when considered in this view, bud out into a thousand fair leaves and fragrant blossoms of hope and joy.

Sell what you have and distribute it in charity.) These words were probably as a fruitful seed in the minds of some who heard them; and the liberal sale of estates a few months after, by which so many poor Christians were subsisted, might be in a great measure the harvest, which sprang up from it under the cultivation of the blessed Spirit. Nothing is more probable than that some of the many myriads now attending our Lord, (ver. 14.) might be in the number of the thousands then converted; see Acts ii. 41-43.

Purses which do not grow old, and wear out. This may be fully taken as an allusion to the danger of losing money out of a hole worn in an old purse. Such is frequently the gain of this world, and so are its treasures hoarded up, and put into a bag with holes; (compare Hag. i. 6.) The rich men of Judah, so soon ravaged and destroyed
he feed the young ravens when they cry, (Psal. cxlvii. 9.) nor is the meanest species of insects perished. Still does he know our necessities; and still he addresses us in the same gracious language, and avows the same endearing paternal relation. The experience of his power, goodness, and fidelity, is increasing with every succeeding generation, with every revolving day. The life that he has given, is supported by his care; and the same hand that formed the body, nourishes and clothes it. Let us then cast all our care on him, as being persuaded that he careth for us;

(1 Pet. v. 7.) Feeble as his little flock is, it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom; and we are unworthy our share in so glorious a hope, if we cannot trust him for inferior blessings, and refer it to him to judge, in what manner our present wants are to be supplied.

Let the heathens abandon themselves to these low anxieties; but as for us, let us thank God, and take courage, opening our hearts wide to every sentiment of faith in God, and charity to men; and while we have this inexhaustible bank to draw upon, let us be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, so laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life! (1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.) the very hope and expectation of which, if our heart be set upon it, will give us incomparably sweeter delight than the surest possessions of this empty world, and the most ample magazines of its richest stores.

SECT. CXIV.

Christ exhorts his disciples to watchfulness and fidelity, in expectation of his coming, and of the final account to be given for all their advantages. Luke XII. 35—48.

Luke XII. 35.

Our Lord having thus exhorted his disciples to a due moderation as to their worldly possessions, proceeded to press upon them a serious preparation for their final remove from earth, and for the awful solemnities of death, judgment, and eternity. He therefore went on to say, Consider yourselves always as servants, who have a Master strowed by the Romans, particularly found it so.

A serious preparation for—death, judgment, and eternity.] I shall give the reason of my interpreting this passage thus a little below in note f, though I am sensible the generality of readers would rather have expected an apology, if I had gone about to interpret it otherwise.

b Let
And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39 And this know, that if the good man of the house had known that the hour in which the bridegroom should come, he would have clad his loins, and have been ready to meet him with joy.

b Let your loins be girded up, and your lamps burning.] As the Easterns wore long garments, it was necessary that, when they had any thing to do which required them to exert their strength or agility, they should tuck them up and gird them close; a practice to which there are frequent references, both in the Old Testament and the New. (See 1 Kings xvii. 46. 2 Kings iv. 29. Job xxxviii. 3. Jer. i. 17. Eph. vi. 14. and 1 Pet. i. 13.)—That the lamps should be found extinguished, might be an inconvenient circumstance to the master, and would be a demonstration of the servant’s idleness.—The expressions, taken together, may intimate the case we should take to inform ourselves in our duty, and the resolution, with which we should apply to the performance of it.

c From a marriage feast.] There is no particular mystery in this circumstance.

d And should come forth himself, and wait upon them.] It is true (as Græcius and many others observe) that the Roman masters did sometimes, during the Saturnalia, presume some condescensions like these to their slaves; but that was, perhaps, chiefly for their own diversion; and it is difficult to judge, how far Christ’s hearers might be acquainted with it; at least the words would be very intelligible without supposing any such reference.

e In the second or third watch of the night.] This included the time from nine in the evening to three in the morning: and was, as if he had said, whether he come early or late.

Our Lord might probably instance in this, because marriage feasts were generally the most splendid, and so prolonged to the latest hours.

f A1
Lord so comes as a thief in the night; and you know this, that there is none so negligent and stupid, where a house is plundered, but if the house-keeper, who isentrusted with the care of it, had been aware at what hour the thief would have come, he would undoubtedly have watched at that time, and would not have permitted his house to be broken open: he then, that acts with prudence will be always on his watch, that, as he knows not when the thief will come, he may not find him unprepared. Be you therefore also ready; for at such a season as you think not of, and may least of all expect it, the Son of man cometh; and as the day of final judgment will be a surprise to the world in general, so the day, when particular persons are called out of this life, is often a sudden thing, and too frequently a fatal surprise to the persons most intimately concerned in it. (Compare Mat. xxiv. 43, 44, sect. clxiii.)

41 Peter then said unto him, Lord, dost thou speak this awakening parable a to us thine apostles in particular? or is it also unto all in general, that what thou hast been saying is directed?

42 And the Lord said in reply, Though none are entirely unconcerned, yet you my ministers are more peculiarly to apply it to yourselves, and to consider me as asking each of you, Who is that faithful and prudent steward b, [whom] his Lord shall set over all the servants of his family, to deal

a At such a season as you think not, the Son of man cometh.] The coming of the Son of man often signifies his providential interposition for the destruction of Jerusalem; (see Mat. x. 23, note g, p. 396.) But here I think it cannot be taken in such a sense, because our Lord speaks of an immediate reward to be bestowed on all faithful servants, and an immediate punishment to be executed on all that were unfaithful; and expressly declares this to be a matter of universal concern; all which particulars have very little sense or propriety when applied to the destruction of Jerusalem. It must therefore be understood of his coming to remove them from the capacities of service here, to give up their account. And, if we suppose it to relate to death as well as judgment (which, by a consequence at least it undoubtedly does,) it strongly intimates his having such a dominion over the insensible world, that every soul removed into it might be said to be fetched away him. Compare Rev. i. 18.

b This awakening parable.] It may signify particularly the similitude of the Lord and his servants, or may extend to the whole of the discourse.

41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speak hast thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward? This interrogation had a lively force to turn their thoughts inward, that each might ask himself, Whether he was the man? The Persian version therefore (and that English one which follows it so close) loses much of the spirit of the passage in rendering it, If there be any faithful steward, &c.—

i The servants of his family.] So I render οίεροι, which (as Eisner shews at large, Observ. Vol. i. p. 235.) exactly answers to the Latin familia, all the servants of a family; for which we have no one English word, any more than for σοφοίς, which strictly signifies a determinate measure of wheat, but here is put for all the daily food; see Erasmus here.) By such a version the distinction between this and the 44th verse is set in a clearer light than critics have generally given it. To be raised from the care of giving out food
The Son of man comes at an hour we think not of.

43 Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delays his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidsens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken:

46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Food to the servants, to have the charge of the whole estate, was a noble preferment.

k If that servant I spoke of before, &c.] It is necessary thus to go back to ver. 42 for the explication of this; for it is most evident, from the whole tenor of scripture, that the servant who at his Lord's coming has passed his account in an honourable manner will never afterwards be in danger of incurring his displeasure.

1 Scourge him with such severity, that he will even cut him asunder.] Dr. Whitby has so clearly proved this to be the sense of κοπαλωμα, that I am surprised that any should since have coldly rendered it, shall separate him from the rest. But this is one instance of many, in which the version of 1728 has followed the Prussian Testament in some of those parts of it which are the least judicious. I know not on what authority it has been asserted that the word may only signify confounding his estate. Wherever it, or any of its derivatives, occur in the Septuagint, it has always the signification which is here given it by our version, and generally answers to the Hebrew תְּפָרָה. See Exod. xxix. 17. Lev. i. 8. Ezek. xxiv. 4. Septuag. m And appoint him his portion with the infidels.] It has been suggested to me by a person of great worth and eminence, that ἀντιστασία signifies unfaithful; and that had infidelity, or the disbelief of the gospel, been referred to here, the word would have been ἀτελείος. But I must beg leave to observe, that ἀντιστασία; does in several places evidently signify unbelieving: compare John xx. 27. 1 Cor. vii. 15. x. 27. xiv. 23. 24. (where there is an express opposition in ver. 22 between ἀντιστασία and πίστινας). 2 Cor. xi. 14. 15. 1 Tim. v. 8. And I cannot but think that the spirit of this text is much better expressed by such a rendering; especially when the next verse is compared with it, which shews that, though this wicked servant shall have his portion and abode with such (who, by the way, had they not been unfaithful, would not have been unbelievers), yet his punish-
Where much is given, much will be required.

sects.

Luke

XII. 47. And that servant, who, like him, I have been speaking of, knew his Lord's will by a particular declaration of it, and, disregarding the instructions given him, did not keep himself ready, nor set himself to do according to his will, shall have the sorest punishment inflicted on him, and be beaten with many [stripes]. (Compare Deut. 48 xxv. 2, 3.) But he who, like the heathen, did not know the particulars of his duty by a clear revelation, and yet, sinning against that degree of light he had, committed things which deserved stripes, shall be beaten indeed, but with fewer and lighter [strokes] than the other. For it is a received maxim among men, and God will make it the rule of his final judgment, that much improvement shall be required from every one to whom much is given; and where much is deposited, the more will be demanded in proportion to it. (Compare Numb. xv. 29, 30.)

47 And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself; neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

improve-

ment shall be more grievous; as there may be a great difference in the condition of criminals confined in the same prison.

b Knew his Lord's will by a particular declaration of it.] There is a force and propriety in these words beyond what is usually observed. A servant without express instruction, might know, that to beat his fellow-servants and plunge himself into debauchery, would be offensive to his master; and he would therefore deserve some correction: but such a conduct in a servant, to whom his master had committed some particular charge, with suitable instructions for performing it, was most monstrous, and consequently deserved severer punishment.

c Did not keep himself ready.] So Mons. L'Enfant renders the word desassey, I suppose, to distinguish it from the following clause; and I follow him, though not without some hesitation. Perhaps both may be joined thus, Did not prepare or set himself to do according to his will.—But since I wrote this, I perceive a great emphasis in these words, which I did not before observe. The sense rises on that of the foregoing verse; as if our Lord had said, "Think not, that I merely intend to forbid such gross immoralities as drunkenness, riot, oppression, &c. but be assured, that sins of omission, where there have been fair opportunities of learning your duty, will expose you to the Divine correction."—The opposition here and in the next verse is between a servant who receives an express message from his master, which he contradicts; and another who, though he receive no such express message, yet falls into such instances of misbehavior as he cannot but know to be inconsistent with his duty and office in general; by which he exposes himself justly to some punishment, though, other things being equal, he is less criminal than the former.

d Shall be beaten with many stripes.] Scourging was a usual punishment for negligent servants; but I cannot find that what is properly called giving the bastinado was in use among the Jews, though some suppose it to be referred to here—Brennus thinks that these words have a peculiar reference to the case of ministers, who have such singular advantages for KNOWING Christ's will; so that they will certainly be in the number of the most happy or the most venerable of mankind. May they seriously consider it, and rejoice with trembling in those distinctions of their office, which will draw after them such solemn and weighty consequences!

f Shall be beaten indeed, but with fewer strokes.] This strongly intimates that ignorance will not entirely excuse any, who have neglected God's service, since they might in general have known at least the main branches of their duty; as every servant may know in the main what kind of conduct his master will approve, though some may be much more fully instructed than others as to his particular pleasure.
IMPROVEMENT.

May our souls be awakened by these awful truths! and may we be engaged to gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and watch to the end! (1 Peter i. 13.)

Great are our encouragements to diligence, on the one hand; and, on the other, dreadful will be the punishment of our neglect. The time of our Lord’s appearance is uncertain; let us therefore always be ready; solicitous that, when he comes, he may find us so doing, as he has required; living not to ourselves, but to him, and employing ourselves about that particular thing, whatsoever it may be, which, all circumstances considered, we are verily persuaded, may most promote the great ends of life, and the important purposes of his glory.

How glorious are the rewards promised to such! How justly may they awaken our emulation! He will prefer them to stations of more honourable and important service. He will set them down at his table, and minister (as it were) himself to their delight, bringing forth the choicest dainties of heaven, and spreading before them an eternal banquet. Lord, may we, through thy grace, be found worthy to taste of that supper! May the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne feed us, and guide us to fountains of living water! (Rev. vii. 17.)

On the other hand, let us seriously consider the punishments to be inflicted on the unfaithful servant. Let ministers, if such there are, who abandon themselves to a life of idleness and luxury; who stain their sacred character by intemperance; who proudly censure their brethren, and either call, or wish, for the secular arm to smite their fellow-servants, perhaps more faithful than themselves; let such hear and tremble. Their Lord may come in a very un expected hour; (as indeed, when do such expect him?) and what are the stripes they have given others, when compared with those which they shall themselves receive? stripes which shall cut them asunder, and pierce deep into their very souls! How much more tolerable will it be, even for the worst of Gentile sinners, than for such!

Let all who are in any measure distinguished by the gifts of the Divine bounty to them, or by their stations, whether in civil or sacred offices, attentively dwell on this great truth, so solemnly repeated again and again; let them consider it with a view to their own account: To whomsoever much is given, of him will much be required. May Divine Grace so impress it on their hearts, that they may be distinguished by present fidelity, and future rewards, in proportion to the difference, which Providence has already made in their favour! And may they never have reason to reflect with confusion and anguish on what is now their honour and their joy!
Christ observes the evils which would be occasioned by his coming, yet declares his desire to complete his work, and warns the Jews of the great danger of neglecting the short remainder of their time of trial. Luke XII. 49, to the end.

**Luke XII. 49.**

Our Lord farther added in his discourse to his disciples and the multitude: After all that I have said to promote humanity and charity, yet it will in fact appear, that I am come to send fire on the earth; so opposite is my doctrine to the prejudices and the lusts of men, and such are the violent contentions that my gospel will occasion, through the wickedness of those among whom it is preached: and yet what do I wish? that the gospel might be suppressed? nay, but I rather say, Oh that this fire, fierce as it shall be, were already kindled by the universal propagation of a religion, whose blessings so abundantly counterbalance all the accidental evils which can attend it! But I have, indeed, in the mean time, a most dreadful baptism to be baptized with, and know that I shall shortly be bathed, as it were, in blood, and plunged in the most overwhelming distress: yet, far from drawing back on that account, how inexpressibly am I straitened and uneasy through the earnestness of my desire, till, terrible as it is, it be fully completed, and the glorious birth produced, whatever agonies may lie in the way to it!

But these benefits are to be secured in a very different manner from what some of you, my disciples, imagine: for you now suppose that

---

50 But I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

51 Suppose ye that I

---

a And what do I wish? Oh that it were already kindled! I think Sir Norton Knatchbull has abundantly established this version. Dr. Whitby (who here, as in many other places, transcribes from Grotius) seems fully to have proved that: sometimes has this force. Compare Luke xix. 42, and Numb. xxii. 29; Josh. vii. 7; Psal. lxxxvi. 13, Septuag. (Perhaps we may add Luke xxii. 42.) See Grotius, in loc.

b How am I straitened and uneasy till it be completed! The word συνάγωμαι seems to import an ardor of mind, with which a person is so borne on towards the object of his affection and pursuit, that the necessary impediments, which lie in his way, are uneasy to him; compare 2 Cor. v. 14.—Mr. Locke understands it of a kind of embarrassment which Christ was under to know, how faithfully to fulfil his ministry without giving such umbrage to the Roman power as would have drawn persecution and death upon him before the appointed time; (see Mr. Locke’s Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 134): but this seems to me a very foreign and unnatural sense.—That, which I take it in, is also favoured by Luke xxii. 15, sect. 168: but if Grotius, whose sense I have hinted in the paraphrase, judge rightly of the particular force and beauty of the word συνάγωμαι, it may be illustrated by John xvi. 91, sect. cxxviii.
And be followed, not with peace, but with division.

I am come to give peace on the earth, or immediately to establish that temporal tranquility and prosperity which you expect should attend the Messiah’s kingdom? Nay, but considering how my gospel, notwithstanding all its tendency to peace, will be opposed, and how it will be perverted, I may say to you, that I am rather come to occasion the most unnatural division. For such are the contentious heats and animosities that will attend the publication of the gospel, that, ere long, five in one family shall be so divided, that there shall be three against two on the one side, and two against three on the other: And this shall be the case when those families consist of persons in the nearest relations to each other: the father, for instance, shall differ with the son, and the son with the father; the fondest mother with the daughter, and the daughter against the mother: the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

54 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straight-way immediately to establish that temporal tranquility, &c.] There are so many prophecies of the peaceful state of the Messiah’s kingdom (compare Psa. lxxii. 7; Isa. ii. 4; xi. 6—9; lxv. 25), that it is hard to say how Christ could completely answer the character of the Messiah if he should never give peace on earth: but the error of the Jews lay in supposing he was immediately to accomplish it; whereas the prophecies of the New Testament, especially in the book of Revelation, shew, and those of the Old Testament most plainly intimate, that this prosperous state of his kingdom was not only to be preceded by his own sufferings, but by a variety of persecutions, trials, and sufferings, which should in different degrees attend his followers, before the kingdoms of the earth became, by a general conversion, the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ (Rev. xi. 15). See Dr. Leland’s Answer to the Moral Philosopher, p. 353—366.

d The mother-in-law with her son’s wife, and the daughter-in-law with her husband’s mother.] The original words, μητρὶκε, and γυναῖκα, are exactly expressed in this translation. The English words mother-in-law, and daughter-in-law, are more extensive, and rather, though not necessarily, lead us to think of [soverca, μακρυχα] a step-dame, or father’s second wife, and her husband’s daughter.—Our Lord might mention this relation, because, in consequence of the obligation which the Jewish children were under to maintain their aged parents, a young man might, when he settled in the world, often take his mother, if a widow, into his family, and her abode in it might occasion less uncialness than that of a mother-in-law in any other sense.
They are inexcusable in not discerning him to be the Messiah.

ly say, A heavy shower is coming; and it is so. And when [you find] the south-wind blowing from the desert of Arabia, and other hot climates, you say, There will be sultry heat; and so accordingly it comes to pass. Ye hypocrites, that pretend to ask for farther signs, as if you were really desirous to know, whether I be or be not a Divine Teacher; you know how by such remarks as these to distinguish the face of the earth and of the heavens, so as to foretell the changes in the weather before they come; but how is it that you do not discern and judge of the much more evident signs of this time, which are attended with such manifest and unparalleled tokens of the Messiah’s coming? (Compare Mat. xvi. 2, 3, p. 456.) Yea, why is it you do not even of yourselves judge what is fit and right, and gather from such obvious premises, how you ought in reason and conscience to treat so extraordinary a Person as I appear to be from the whole series of my doctrine, and conduct, instead of disregarding all the proofs that shew me to be sent from God?

This, however you may thoughtlessly neglect it, is a matter of the utmost importance: I must therefore enforce the exhortation I formerly gave you (Mat. v. 25, 26, p. 209), and press you to endeavour, with the greatest diligence, that the controversy may immediately be made up between God and your souls. For you count it a rule of human prudence, when you go to the magistrate with your adversary, who has a suit against you, to use your utmost endeavour to make up the affair with him while you are yet on your own ground. But Luke xix. 23, which I think a considerable argument for the common rendering, which is also more extensive.—Ἀποφθέγματι signifies, not merely any kind of deliverance, but such an agreement as secures the defendant from any farther danger of prosecution; as Elston accurately shows, Obser. Vol. I. p. 257.—It is well known that ἀποφθέγματι properly signifies a prosecutor, or one who has a suit at law against another, whether in a civil or criminal case.
he hate thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart hence till thou hast paid the very last mite,
on the way; lest he force thee before the judge, and the judge, having found thee to be indeed accountable, deliver thee to the custody of the serjeant, and the serjeant throw thee into prison.

It will not then be in thy power to compound the matter upon gentler terms, or to get free from thy confinement; but I tell thee that, when he has thee at such an advantage, thou shalt not be able to come out from thence till thou hast paid the very last mite of the debt thou owest. And thus if you are regardless of the proposals of God's mercy while the day of life and grace is continued, nothing is to be expected from the tribunal of his justice, but a severe sentence, which will end in everlasting confinement and punishment.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

To what a lamentable degree is human nature corrupted, that so noble a remedy as the gospel, so well adapted to the cure of a malevolent and contentious disposition, should in so many instances only irritate the disease! and that a scheme so full of love and goodness, and so well suited to promote peace and harmony in those, who cordially embrace it, should be opposed with all the violence of persecution, and be the means of introducing strife and division!

How monstrous is it, that any should hate their neighbours, yea, and their nearest relatives, for that disinterested piety, and regard to conscience, which might recommend strangers to their esteem and affection! Yet let not those, who meet with such injurious treatment, be discouraged; knowing they have a Father and a Saviour in heaven, whose love is ten thousand times more than all: nor let others be offended, as if Christianity had been the occasion of more evil than good; for such is the nature of eternity, that the salvation of one immortal soul will be more than an equivalent for the greatest and most lasting temporal evils, which the greatest number of persons can suffer for conscience sake.

Let this awaken our zeal to save souls, however great and ter-

h The very last mite of the debt thou owest.] The mite [δραχμή] was the least valuable of their coins (see Mark xii. 42), containing no more than half of their least kind of farthing, or of their κατάσκευα, or quadrans; which was itself but the fourth part of the as, or νομίσμα, or of the larger farthing, mentioned Matt. x. 29, and Luke xii. 6; so that the mite was but little more than the third part of an English farthing, and a sparrow was reckoned worth four of them.
to the rage, with which the enemy is endeavouring their destruction. May we be animated in it by the example of the blessed Jesus, who, with a view to this, even longed for those sufferings, which innocent nature could not but regard as the object of strong aversion!

54, 56 May we at all times be so wise as to discern the evidences, and to comply with the purposes, of the gospel, else our knowledge in natural things, should it extend not only to the most common, but the most curious appearances on the face of the earth or the heavens, will turn to no other account but to shame and condemn us!

58 If we have any reason to fear that, through obstinate impenitence, the blessed God is still an adversary to us, let us make it our first and greatest care, that, by an humble submission of soul to him in the methods of his gospel grace, that strict scrutiny of his justice may be prevented, and that sentence of his wrath averted, which would otherwise plunge us into endless ruin and misery; for when could we pretend to have paid the last farthing of the debt of ten thousand talents, which we have been daily contracting, and which is charged to our account in the book of his remembrance.

END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.