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Commentaries

**WESLEY'S NOTES
MATTHEW — ACTS**

By

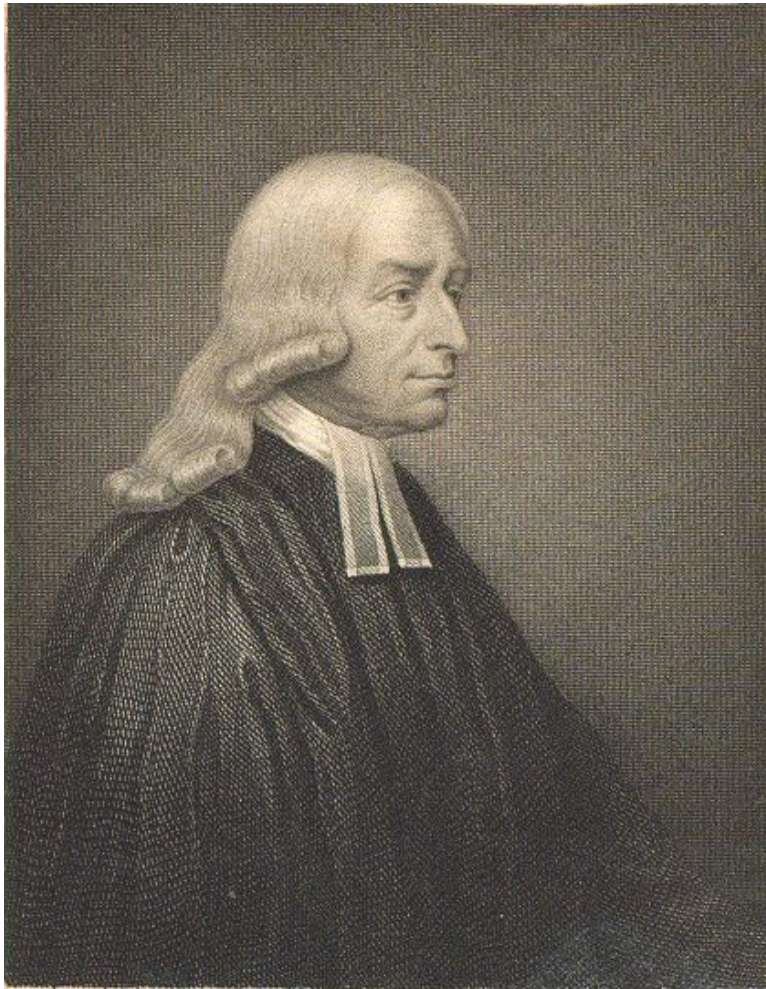
John Wesley, M.A.

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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JOHN WESLEY'S EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

PREFACE.

1. For many years I have had a desire of setting down and laying together, what has occurred to my mind, either in reading, thinking, or conversation, which might assist serious persons, who have not the advantage of learning, in understanding the New Testament. But I have been continually deterred from attempting any thing of this kind, by a deep sense of my own inability: of my want, not only of learning for such a work, but much more, of experience and wisdom. This has often occasioned my laying aside the thought. And when, by much importunity, I have been prevailed upon to resume it, still I determined to delay it as long as possible, that (if it should please God) I might finish my work and my life together.

2. But having lately had a loud call from God to arise and go hence, I am convinced that if I attempt any thing of this kind at all, I must not delay any longer. My day is far spent, and (even in a natural way) the shadows of the evening come on apace. And I am the rather induced to do what little I can in this way, because I can do nothing else: being prevented, by my present weakness, from either travelling or preaching. But, blessed be God, I can still read, and write, and think. O that it may be to his glory!

3. It will be easily discerned, even from what I have said already, and much more from the *notes* themselves, that they were not principally designed for men of learning; who are provided with many other helps: and much less for men of long and deep experience in the ways and word of God. I desire to sit at their feet, and to learn of them. But I write chiefly for plain unlettered men, who understand only their mother tongue, and yet reverence and love the word of God, and have a desire to save their souls.

4. In order to assist these in such a measure as I am able, I design first to set down the text itself, for the most part, in the common English translation, which is, in general, (so far as I can judge) abundantly the best that I have seen. Yet I do not say it is incapable of being brought, in several places, nearer to the original. Neither will I affirm, that the *Greek* copies from which this translation was made, are always the most correct. And therefore I shall take the liberty, as occasion may require, to make here and there a small alteration.

5. I am very sensible this will be liable to objections: nay, to objections of quite opposite kinds. Some will probably think, the text is altered too much; and others, that it is altered too little. To the former I would observe, that I never knowingly, so much as in one place, altered it for altering sake: but there, and there only, where first, the sense was made better, stronger, clearer, or more consistent with the context: secondly, where the sense being equally good, the phrase was better or nearer the original. To the latter, who think the alterations too few, and that the translation might have been nearer still, I answer, this is true: I acknowledge it might. But what valuable end would it have

answered, to multiply such trivial alterations as add neither clearness nor strength to the text? This I could not prevail upon myself to do: so much the less because there is, to my apprehension, I know not what, peculiarly solemn and venerable in the old language of our translation. And suppose this a mistaken apprehension, and an instance of human infirmity; yet, is it not an excusable infirmity, to be unwilling to part with what we have been long accustomed to; and to love the very words by which God has often conveyed strength or comfort to our souls!

6. I have endeavoured to make the notes as short as possible that the comment may not obscure or swallow up the text: and as plain as possible, in pursuance of my main design, to assist the unlearned reader: for this reason I have studiously avoided, not only all curious and critical inquiries, and all use of the learned languages, but all such methods of reasoning and modes of expression as people in common life are unacquainted with: for the same reason, as I rather endeavour to obviate than to propose and answer questions, so I purposely decline going deep into many difficulties, lest I should leave the ordinary reader behind me.

7. I once designed to write down barely what occurred, to my own mind, consulting none but the inspired writers. But no sooner was I acquainted with that great light of the Christian world, (lately gone to his reward,) Bengelius, than I entirely changed my design, being thoroughly convinced it might be of more service to the cause of religion, were I barely to translate his *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, than to write many volumes upon it. Many of his excellent notes I have therefore translated. Many more I have abridged, omitting that part which was purely critical, and giving the substance of the rest. Those various readings likewise, which he has showed to have a vast majority of ancient copies and translations on their side, I have without scruple incorporated with the text; which, after his manner, I have divided all along (though not omitting the common division into chapters and verses, which is of use on various accounts) according to the matter it contains, making a larger or smaller pause, just as the sense requires. And even this is such a help in many places, as one who has not tried it can scarcely conceive.

8. I am likewise indebted for some useful observations to Dr. Heylin's *Theological Lectures*: and for many more to Dr. Guyse, and to the *Family Expositor* of the late pious and learned Dr. Doddridge. It was a doubt with me for some time, whether I should not subjoin to every note I received from them the name of the author from whom it was taken; especially considering I had transcribed some, and abridged many more, almost in the words of the author. But upon farther consideration, I resolved to name none, that nothing might divert the mind of the reader from keeping close to the point in view, and receiving what was spoken only according to its own intrinsic value.

9. I cannot flatter myself so far (to use the words of one of the above-named writers) as to imagine that I have fallen into no mistakes in a work of so great 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. God forbid that I should make the words of the most gentle and benevolent Jesus a vehicle to convey such 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 all 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!

10. Concerning the Scriptures in general, it may be observed, the word of the living God, which directed the first patriarchs also, was, in the time of *Moses*, committed to writing. To this were added, in several succeeding generations, the inspired writings of the other prophets. Afterward, what the Son of God preached, and the Holy Ghost spake by the apostles, the apostles and evangelists wrote.- This is what we now style the *Holy Scripture*: this is that *word of God which remaineth for ever*: of which, though *heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall not pass away*. The Scripture therefore of the *Old and New Testament*, is a most solid and precious system of Divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God; and all together are one entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess. It is the fountain of heavenly wisdom, which they who are able to taste, prefer to all writings of men, however wise, or learned, or holy.

11. An exact knowledge of the truth was accompanied in the inspired writers with an exactly regular series of arguments, a precise expression of their meaning, and a genuine vigour of suitable affections. The chain of argument in each book is briefly exhibited in the table prefixed to it, which contains also the sum thereof, and may be of more use than prefixing the argument to each chapter; the division of the *New Testament* into chapters having been made in the dark ages, and very incorrectly; often separating things that are closely joined, and joining those that are entirely distinct from each other.

12. In the language of the sacred writings, we may observe the utmost depth, together with the utmost ease. All the elegancies of human composures sink into nothing before it: God speaks not as man, but as God. His thoughts are very deep: and thence his words are of inexhaustible virtue. And the language of his messengers also is exact in the highest degree: for the words which were given them accurately answered the impression made upon their minds: and hence *Luther* says, "Divinity is nothing but a grammar of the language of the Holy Ghost." To understand this thoroughly, we should observe the *emphasis* which lies on every word; the holy *affections* expressed thereby, and the *temper*s shown by every writer. But how little are these, the latter especially, regarded? Though they are wonderfully diffused through the whole *New Testament*, and are in truth a continued commendation of him who acts, or speaks, or writes.

13. The *New Testament* is all those sacred writings in which the *New Testament* or covenant is described. The former part of this contains the writings of the evangelists and apostles: the latter, the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the former is, first, the history of Jesus Christ, from his coming in the flesh to his ascension into heaven; then the institution and history of the Christian Church, from the time of his ascension. The revelation delivers what is to be, with regard to Christ, the Church, and the universe, till the consummation of all things.

BRISTOL HOT-WELLS, *January 4, 1754.*

NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

The **Gospel** (that is, good tidings) means a book containing the good tidings of our salvation by Jesus Christ.

St. **Mark** in his Gospel presupposes that of St. **Matthew**, and supplies what is omitted therein. St. **Luke** supplies what is omitted by both the former: St. **John** what is omitted by all the three.

St. **Matthew** particularly points out the fulfilling of the prophecies for the conviction of the Jews. St. **Mark** wrote a short compendium, and yet added many remarkable circumstances omitted by St. **Matthew**, particularly with regard to the apostles, immediately after they were called. St. **Luke** treated principally of the office of Christ, and mostly in a historical manner. St. **John** refuted those who denied his Godhead: each choosing to treat more largely on those things, which most suited the time when, and the persons to whom, he wrote.

The Gospel according to St. **Matthew** contains

I. The birth of Christ, and what presently followed it:—

- a. His genealogy Chap i, 1-17
- b. His birth 18-25
- c. The coming of the wise men ii, 1-12
- d. His flight into Egypt, and return 13-23 II.

II. The introduction

- a. John the Baptist iii, 1-12
- b. The baptism of Christ 13-17
- c. His temptation and victory iv, 1-11

III. The actions and words by which Jesus proved he was the Christ

- a. At Capernaum 12-16

Where we may observe

- 1. His preaching 17
- 2. Calling Andrew and Peter, James and John 18-22
- 3. Preaching and healing, with a great concourse of people 23-25
- 4. Sermon on the mount v, vi, vii,
- 5. Healing the leper viii, 1-4
- 6. the centurion's servant 5-13
- 7. Peter's mother-in-law 14-15
- 8. Many that were sick 16-17

b. In his journey (wherein he admonished two that offered to follow him) over the sea
Here we may observe

1. His dominion over the winds and seas	18-27
2. The devils passing from the men into the swine	28-34
c. At Capernaum again	Here, ix,
1. He cures the paralytic	1-8
2. Calls Matthew, and defends his conversing with publicans and sinners .	9-13
3. Answers concerning fasting	14-17
4. Raises Jairus's daughter (after curing the issue of blood)	18-26
5. Gives sight to two blind men	27-31
6. Dispossesses the demoniac	32-34
7. Goes through the cities, and directs to pray for labourers	35-38
8. Sends and instructs labourers, and preaches himself	x, 1; xi, 1
9. Answers the message of John	2-6
10. Commends John, reproves the unbelieving cities, invites the weary	7-30
11. Defends the disciples' plucking the corn	Chap. xii, 1-8
12. Heals the withered hand	9-13
13. Retires from the Pharisees lying in wait	14-21
14. Cures the demoniac, while the people wonder, and the Pharisees blaspheming, are refuted	22-37
15. Reproves them that require a sign	38-45
16. Declares who are his relations, and	46-50
17. Teaches by parables	xiii, 1-52
d. At Nazareth	53-58
e. In other places	
1. Herod having killed John, doubts concerning Jesus. Jesus retiring, is sought for by the people	xiv, 1-13
2. He heals the sick, and feeds five thousand	14-21
3. His voyage and miracles in the land of Gennesaret	22-36
4. Unwashen hands	xv, 1-20
5. The woman of Canaan	21-28
6. Many sick healed	29-31
7. Four thousand fed	32-38
8. Those who require a sign reproved	xv, 39; xvi, 1-4
9. The leaven of the Pharisees	5-12
IV. Predictions of his death and resurrection	
a. The first prediction	
1. Preparation for it by a confirmation that he is the Christ	13-20
2. The prediction itself, and reproof of Peter	21-28
b. The second prediction	
1. The transfiguration, and silence enjoined	xvli, 1-13
2. The lunatic healed	14-21

3. The prediction itself	22-23
4. The tribute paid	24-27
5. Who is greatest in Christ's kingdom	xviii, 1-20
6. The duty of forgiving our brother	21-35

c. The third prediction

1. Jesus departs out of Galilee	xix, 1-2
2. Of divorce and celibacy	3-12
3. His tenderness to little children	13-15
4. The rich man drawing back, and hence	16-22
Of the salvation of the rich	23-26
Of the reward of following Christ	27-30
Of the last and the first	xx, 1-16
5. The prediction itself	17-19
6. The request of James and John; humility enjoined	20-28
7. The two blind men cured	29-34 V.

V. Transactions at Jerusalem before his passion

a. Sunday

His royal entry into Jerusalem	xxi, 1-11
His purging the temple	12-17

b. Monday

The barren fig tree	18-22
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c. Tuesday, transactions

In the temple

1. The chief priests and elders confuted	
By a question concerning John's baptism	23-27
By the parables	
Of the two sons	28-32
Of the vineyard	33-44
2. Seek to lay hands on him	45-46
3. The parable of the marriage feast	xxii, 1-14
4. He is questioned, concerning paying tribute	15-22
The resurrection	23-33
The great commandment	34-40
5. Christ's question concerning David's Lord	41-46
Caution concerning the scribes and Pharisees	xxiii, 1-12
Severe reproof of them	13-36
and of Jerusalem	37-39

Out of the temple:

1. His discourse of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world	Chap. xxiv, 1-51
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2. The ten virgins, the talents; the last judgment	xxv, 1-46
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VI. His passion and resurrection

A. His passion, death, and burial	xxvi, 1-2
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a. Wednesday

His prediction	xxvi, 1-2
The consultation of the chief priests and elders	3-5
Judas bargains to betray him	6-16

b. Thursday

1. In the day time

The passover prepared	17-19
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2. In the evening

The traitor discovered	20-25
The Lord's Supper	26-29

3. In the night

1. Jesus foretells the cowardice of the apostles	33-35
2. Is in agony	36-46
3. Is apprehended, reproves Peter and the multitude; is forsaken of all	47-56
4. Is led to Caiaphas, falsely accused, owns himself the Son of God, is condemned, derided	57-68
5. Peter denies him and weeps	69-75

c. Friday

1. The height of his passion

In the morning

1. Jesus is delivered to Pilate	xxvii, 1-2
2. The death of Judas	3-10
3. Jesus's kingdom and silence	11-14
4. Pilate, though warned by his wife, condemns him	15-26
5. He is mocked and led forth	27-32

The third hour

The vinegar and gall: the crucifixion; his garments divided; the inscription on the cross; the two robbers; blasphemies	33-44
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From the sixth to the ninth hour

The darkness, his last agony	45-49
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2. His death 50

The veil rent, and a great earthquake	51-53
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The centurion wonders; the women behold	54-56
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3. His burial 57-61

d. Saturday

The sepulchre secured 62-66

B. His resurrection

1. Testified to the women by an angel xxviii, 1-8

By our Lord himself 9-10

2. Denied by his adversaries 11-15

3. Proved to his apostles 16-20

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. I.

V. 1. **The book of the generation of Jesus Christ**-That is, strictly speaking, the account of his birth and genealogy. This title therefore properly relates to the verses that immediately follow: but as it sometimes signifies the history of a person, in that sense it may belong to the whole book. If there were any difficulties in this genealogy, or that given by St. Luke, which could not easily be removed, they would rather affect the Jewish tables, than the credit of the evangelists: for they act only as historians setting down these genealogies, as they stood in those public and allowed records. Therefore they were to take them as they found them. Nor was it needful they should correct the mistakes, if there were any. For these accounts sufficiently answer the end for which they are recited. They unquestionably prove the grand point in view, that Jesus was of the family from which the promised seed was to come. And they had more weight with the Jews for this purpose, than if alterations had been made by inspiration itself. For such alterations would have occasioned endless disputes between them and the disciples of our Lord.

The son of David, the son of Abraham-He is so called, because to these he was more peculiarly promised; and of these it was often foretold the Messiah should spring. #Lu 3:31.

V. 3. **Of Thamar**-St. Matthew adds the names of those women also, that were remarkable in the sacred history.

V. 4. **Naasson**-Who was prince of the tribe of Judah, when the Israelites entered into Canaan.

V. 5. **Obed begat Jesse**-The providence of God was peculiarly shown in this, that Salmon, Boaz, and Obed, must each of them have been near a hundred years old, at the birth of his son here recorded.

V. 6. **David the king**-Particularly mentioned under this character, because his throne is given to the Messiah.

V. 8. **Jehoram begat Uzziah**-Jehoahaz, Joash, and Amaziah coming between. So that he begat him mediately, as Christ is mediately the son of David and of Abraham. So the progeny of Hezekiah, after many generations, are called the sons that should issue from him, which he should beget, #Isa 39:7.

V. 11. **Josiah begat Jeconiah**-Mediately, Jehoiakim coming between.

And his brethren-That is, his uncles. The Jews term all kinsmen brethren.

About the time they were carried away-Which was a little after the birth of Jeconiah.

V. 16. **The husband of Mary**-Jesus was generally believed to be the son of Joseph. It was needful for all who believed this, to know, that Joseph was sprung from David. Otherwise they would not allow Jesus to be the Christ.

Jesus, who is called Christ-The name Jesus respects chiefly the promise of blessing made to Abraham: the name Christ, the promise of the Messiah's kingdom, which was made to David.

It may be farther observed, that the word Christ in Greek, and Messiah in Hebrew, signify anointed, and imply the prophetic, priestly, and royal characters, which were to meet in the Messiah. Among the Jews, anointing was the ceremony whereby prophets, priests, and kings were initiated into those offices. And if we look into ourselves, we shall find a want of Christ in all these respects. We are by nature at a distance from God, alienated from him, and incapable of a free access to him. Hence we want a mediator, an intercessor, in a word, a Christ, in his priestly office. This regards our state with respect to God. And with respect to ourselves, we find a total darkness, blindness, ignorance of God, and the things of God. Now here we want Christ in his prophetic office, to enlighten our minds, and teach us the whole will of God. We find also within us a strange misrule of appetites and passions. For these we want Christ in his royal character, to reign in our hearts, and subdue all things to himself.

V. 17. **So all the generations**-Observe, in order to complete the three fourteens, David ends the first fourteen, and begins the second (which reaches to the captivity) and Jesus ends the third fourteen.

When we survey such a series of generations, it is a natural and obvious reflection, 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 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, how many are there whose names are perished with them? How many, of whom only the names are remaining? Thus are we likewise passing away! And thus shall we shortly be forgotten! Happy are we, if, while we are forgotten by men, we are remembered by God! If our names, lost on earth, are at length found written in the book of life!

V. 19. **A just man**-A strict observer of the law: therefore not thinking it right to keep her.

V. 21. **Jesus**-That is, a Saviour. It is the same name with Joshua (who was a type of him) which properly signifies, **The Lord, Salvation**.

His people-Israel. And all the Israel of God.

V. 23. **They shall call his name Emmanuel**-To be called, only means, according to the Hebrew manner of speaking, that the person spoken of shall really and effectually be what he is called, and actually fulfil that title. Thus,

Unto us a child is born-and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace-That is, he shall be all these, though not so much nominally, as really, and in effect. And thus was he called

Emmanuel; which was no common name of Christ, but points out his nature and office; as he is God incarnate, and dwells by his Spirit in the hearts of his people.

It is observable, the words in Isaiah are, **Thou** (namely, his mother) **shalt call**; but here, **They**-that is, all his people, **shall call**-shall acknowledge **him** to be Emmanuel, God with us. **Which being interpreted**-This is a clear proof that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Greek, and not in Hebrew. **#Isa 7:14.**

V. 25. **He knew her not, till after she had brought forth**-It cannot be inferred from hence, that he knew her afterward: no more than it can be inferred from that expression, **#2Sa 6:23,**

Michal had no child till the day of her death, that she had children afterward. Nor do the words that follow, **the first-born** son, alter the case. For there are abundance of places, wherein the term first born is used, though there were no subsequent children. **#Lu 2:7.**

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. II.

V. 1. **Bethlehem of Judea**-There was another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulon.

In the days of Herod-commonly called Herod the Great, born at Ascalon. The sceptre was now on the point of departing from Judah. Among his sons were Archelaus, mentioned #Mt 2:22; Herod Antipas, mentioned #Mt 14:1; &c., and Philip, mentioned #Lu 3:19. Herod Agrippa, mentioned #Ac 12:1; &c., was his grandson.

Wise men-The first fruits of the Gentiles. Probably they were Gentile philosophers, who, through the Divine assistance, had improved their knowledge of nature, as a means of leading to the knowledge of the one true God. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose, that God had favoured them with some extraordinary revelations of himself, as he did Melchisedec, Job, and several others, who were not of the family of Abraham; to which he never intended absolutely to confine his favours. The title given them in the original was anciently given to all philosophers, or men of learning; those particularly who were curious in examining the works of nature, and observing the motions of the heavenly bodies.

From the east-So Arabia is frequently called in Scripture. It lay to the east of Judea, and was famous for gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

We have seen his star-Undoubtedly they had before heard Balaam's prophecy. And probably when they saw this unusual star, it was revealed to them that this prophecy was fulfilled.

In the east-That is, while we were in the east.

V. 2. **To do him homage**-To pay him that honour, by bowing to the earth before him, which the eastern nations used to pay to their monarchs.

V. 4. **The chief priests**-That is, not only the high priest and his deputy, with those who formerly had borne that office: but also the chief man in each of those twenty-four courses, into which the body of priests were divided, #1Ch 24:6-19. The scribes were those whose peculiar business it was to explain the Scriptures to the people. They were the public preachers, or expounders of the law of Moses. Whence the chief of them were called doctors of the law.

V. 6. **Thou art in nowise the least among the princes of Judah**-That is, among the cities belonging to the princes or heads of thousands in Judah. When this and several other quotations from the Old Testament are compared with the original, it plainly appears, the apostles did not always think it necessary exactly to transcribe the passages they cited, but contented themselves with giving the general sense, though with some diversity of language. The words of Micah, which we render,

Though thou be little, may be rendered, *Art thou little?* And then the difference which seems to be here between the prophet and the evangelist vanishes away. #**Mic 5:2**.

V. 8. **And if ye find him, bring me word**-Probably Herod did not believe he was born; otherwise would not so suspicious a prince have tried to make sure work at once?

V. 10. **Seeing the star**-Standing over where the child was.

V. 11. **They presented to him gifts**-It was customary to offer some present to any eminent person whom they visited. And so it is, as travellers observe, in the eastern countries to this day.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh-Probably these were the best things their country afforded; and the presents ordinarily made to great persons.

This was a most seasonable, providential assistance for a long and expensive journey into Egypt, a country where they were entirely strangers, and were to stay for a considerable time.

V. 15. **That it might be fulfilled**-That is, whereby was fulfilled. The original word frequently signifies, not the design of an action, but barely the consequence or event of it.

Which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet-on another occasion:

Out of Egypt have I called my Son-which was now fulfilled as it were anew; **Christ** being in a far higher sense the Son of God than **Israel**, of whom the words were originally spoken. #**Ho 11:1**.

V. 16. **Then Herod, seeing that he was deluded by the wise men**-So did his pride teach him to regard this action, as if it were intended to expose him to the derision of his subjects.

Sending forth-a party of soldiers:

In all the confines thereof-In all the neighbouring places, of which Rama was one.

V. 17. **Then was fulfilled**-A passage of Scripture, whether prophetic, historical, or poetical, is in the language of the New Testament fulfilled, when an event happens to which it may with great propriety be accommodated.

V. 18. **Rachel weeping for her children**-The Benjamites, who inhabited Rama, sprung from her. She was buried near this place; and is here beautifully represented risen, as it were out of her grave, and bewailing her lost children.

Because they are not-that is, are dead. The preservation of Jesus from this destruction, may be considered as a figure of God's care over his children in their greatest danger. God does not often, as he easily could, cut off their persecutors at a stroke. But he provides a hiding place for his people, and by methods not less effectual, though less pompous, preserves them from being swept away, even when the enemy comes in like a flood. #**Jer 31:15**.

V. 22. **He was afraid to go thither**-into Judea; and so **turned aside into the region of Galilee**-a part of the land of Israel not under the jurisdiction of Archelaus.

V. 23. **He came and dwelt in Nazareth**-(where he had dwelt before he went to Bethlehem) a place contemptible to a proverb. **So that** hereby was fulfilled what has been **spoken** in effect **by** several of the prophets, (though by none of them in express words,)

He shall be called a Nazarene-that is, he shall be despised and rejected, shall be a mark of public contempt and reproach.

CHAP. III.

V. 1. **In those days**-that is, while Jesus dwelt there.

In the wilderness of Judea-This was a wilderness properly so called, a wild, barren, desolate place as was that also where our Lord was tempted. But, generally speaking, a wilderness in the New Testament means only a common, or less cultivated place, in opposition to pasture and arable land. #Mr 1:1; #Lu 3:1.

V. 2. **The kingdom of heaven**, and the kingdom of God, are but two phrases for the same thing. They mean, not barely a future happy state, in heaven, but a state to be enjoyed on earth: the proper disposition for the glory of heaven, rather than the possession of it.

Is at hand-As if he had said, God is about to erect that kingdom, spoken of by Daniel #Da 2:44; 7:13, 14; the kingdom of the God of heaven. It properly signifies here, the Gospel dispensation, in which subjects were to be gathered to God by his Son, and a society to be formed, which was to subsist first on earth, and afterward with God in glory. In some places of Scripture, the phrase more particularly denotes the state of it on earth: in others, it signifies only the state of glory: but it generally includes both. The Jews understood it of a temporal kingdom, the seat of which they supposed would be Jerusalem; and the expected sovereign of this kingdom they learned from Daniel to call the Son of man.

Both John the Baptist and Christ took up that phrase, **the kingdom of heaven**, as they found it, and gradually taught the Jews (though greatly unwilling to learn) to understand it right. The very demand of repentance, as previous to it, showed it was a spiritual kingdom, and that no wicked man, how politic, brave, or learned soever, could possibly be a subject of it.

V. 3. **The way of the Lord**-Of Christ.

Make his paths straight-By removing every thing which might prove a hinderance to his gracious appearance. #Isa 40:3.

V. 4. **John had his raiment of camels' hair**-Coarse and rough, suiting his character and doctrine.

A leathern girdle-Like Elijah, in whose spirit and power he came.

His food was locusts and wild honey-Locusts are ranked among clean meats, #Le 11:22. But these were not always to be had. So in default of those, he fed on wild honey.

V. 6. **Confessing their sins**-Of their own accord; freely and openly.

Such prodigious numbers could hardly be baptized by immersing their whole bodies under water: nor can we think they were provided with change of raiment for it, which was scarcely practicable

for such vast multitudes. And yet they could not be immersed naked with modesty, nor in their wearing apparel with safety. It seems, therefore, that they stood in ranks on the edge of the river, and that John, passing along before them, cast water on their heads or faces, by which means he might baptize many thousands in a day. And this way most naturally signified Christ's baptizing them **with the Holy Ghost and with fire**, which John spoke of, as prefigured by his baptizing with water, and which was eminently fulfilled, when the Holy Ghost sat upon the disciples in the appearance of tongues, or flames of fire.

V. 7. The Pharisees were a very ancient sect among the Jews. They took their name from a Hebrew word, which signifies to separate, because they separated themselves from all other men. They were outwardly strict observers of the law, fasted often, made long prayers, rigorously kept the Sabbath, and paid all tithe, even of mint, anise, and cummin. Hence they were in high esteem among the people. But inwardly, they were full of pride and hypocrisy.

The **Sadducees** were another sect among the Jews, only not so considerable as the Pharisees. They denied the existence of angels, and the immortality of the soul, and by consequence the resurrection of the dead.

Ye brood of vipers-In like manner, the crafty Herod is styled a fox, and persons of insidious, ravenous, profane, or sensual dispositions, are named respectively by him who saw their hearts, serpents, dogs, wolves, and swine; terms which are not the random language of passion, but a judicious designation of the persons meant by them. For it was fitting such men should be marked out, either for a caution to others, or a warning to themselves.

V. 8. Repentance is of two sorts; that which is termed legal, and that which is styled evangelical repentance. The former (which is the same that is spoken of here) is a thorough conviction of sin. The latter is a change of heart (and consequently of life) from all sin to all holiness.

V. 9. And say not confidently-The word in the original, vulgarly rendered, Think not, seems here, and in many places, not to diminish, but rather add to the force of the word with which it is joined.

We have Abraham to our father-It is almost incredible, how great the presumption of the Jews was on this their relation to Abraham. One of their famous sayings was, "Abraham sits near the gates of hell, and suffers no Israelite to go down into it."

I say unto you-This preface always denotes the importance of what follows.

Of these stones-Probably pointing to those which lay before them.

V. 10. But the axe also already lieth-That is, there is no room for such idle pretences. Speedy execution is determined against all that do not repent. The comparison seems to be taken from a woodman that has laid down his axe to put off his coat, and then immediately goes to work to cut down the tree. This refers to the wrath to come in **#Mt 3:7**.

Is hewn down-Instantly, without farther delay.

V. 11. **He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire**-He shall fill you with the Holy Ghost, inflaming your hearts with that fire of love, which many waters cannot quench. And this was done, even with a visible appearance as of fire, on the day of pentecost.

V. 12. **Whose fan**-That is, the word of the Gospel.

His floor-That is, his Church, which is now covered with a mixture of wheat and chaff.

He will gather the wheat into the garner-Will lay up those who are truly good in heaven.

V. 13. **#Mr 1:9; #Lu 3:21**

V. 15. **It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness**-It becometh every messenger of God to observe all his righteous ordinances. But the particular meaning of our Lord seems to be, that **it becometh us** to do (me to receive baptism, and you to administer it) in order **to fulfil**, that is, that I may fully perform every part of the righteous law of God, and the commission he hath given me.

V. 16. **And Jesus being baptized**-Let our Lord's submitting to baptism teach us a holy exactness in the observance of those institutions which owe their obligation merely to a Divine command. Surely thus it becometh all his followers to fulfil all righteousness.

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

Lo, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God-St. Luke adds, **in a bodily form**-Probably in a glorious appearance of fire, perhaps in the shape of a dove, **descending** with a hovering motion, till it rested **upon him**. This was a visible token of those secret operations of the blessed Spirit, by which he was anointed in a peculiar manner; and abundantly fitted for his public work.

V. 17. **And lo, a voice**-We have here a glorious manifestation of the ever-blessed Trinity: the Father speaking from heaven, the Son spoken to, the Holy Ghost descending upon him.

In whom I delight-What an encomium is this! How poor to this are all other kinds of praise! To be the pleasure, the delight of God, this is praise indeed: this is true glory: this is the highest, the brightest light, that virtue can appear in.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. IV.

V. 1. **Then**-After this glorious evidence of his Father's love, he was completely armed for the combat. Thus after the clearest light and the strongest consolation, let us expect the sharpest temptations.

By the Spirit-Probably through a strong inward impulse. #Mr 1:12; #Lu 4:1.

V. 2. **Having fasted**-Whereby doubtless he received more abundant spiritual strength from God.

Forty days and forty nights-As did Moses, the giver of the law, and **Elijah**, the great restorer of it.

He was afterward hungry-And so prepared for the first temptation.

V. 3. **Coming to him**-In a visible form; probably in a human shape, as one that desired to inquire farther into the evidences of his being the **Messiah**.

V. 4. **It is written**-Thus Christ answered, and thus we may answer all the suggestions of the devil.

By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God-That is, by whatever God commands to sustain him. Therefore it is not needful I should work a miracle to procure bread, without any intimation of my Father's will. #De 8:3.

V. 5. **The holy city**-So *Jerusalem* was commonly called, being the place God had peculiarly chosen for himself.

On the battlement of the temple-Probably over the king's gallery, which was of such a prodigious height, that no one could look down from the top of it without making himself giddy.

V. 6. **In their hands**-That is, with great care. #Ps 91:11, 12.

V. 7. **Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God**-By requiring farther evidence of what he hath already made sufficiently plain. #De 6:16.

V. 8. **Showeth him all the kingdoms of the world**-In a kind of visionary representation.

V. 9. **If thou wilt fall down and worship me**-Here Satan clearly shows who he was. Accordingly Christ answering this suggestion, calls him by his own name, which he had not done before.

V. 10. **Get thee hence, Satan**-Not, get thee behind me, that is, into thy proper place; as he said on a quite different occasion to Peter, speaking what was not expedient. #De 6:13.

V. 11. **Angels came and waited upon him**-Both to supply him with food, and to congratulate his victory.

V. 12. **He retired into Galilee**-This journey was not immediately after his temptation. He first went from Judea into Galilee, **#Joh 1:43; 2:1**. Then into Judea again, and celebrated the passover at Jerusalem, **#Joh 2:13**. He baptized in Judea while John was baptizing at Enon, **#Joh 3:22, 23**. All this time John was at liberty, **#Joh 3:24**. But the Pharisees being offended, **#Joh 4:1**; and John put in prison, he then took this journey into Galilee. **#Mr 1:14**.

V. 13. **Leaving Nazareth**-Namely, when they had wholly rejected his word, and even attempted to kill him, **#Lu 4:29**.

V. 15. **Galilee of the Gentiles**-That part of Galilee which lay beyond Jordan was so called, because it was in a great measure inhabited by Gentiles, that is, heathens. **#Isa 9:1, 2**.

V. 16. Here is a beautiful gradation, first, **they walked**, then they **sat in darkness**, and lastly, **in the region of the shadow of death**.

V. 17. **From that time Jesus began to preach**-He had preached before, both to Jews and Samaritans, **#Joh 4:41, 45**. But from this time begin his solemn stated preaching.

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand-Although it is the peculiar business of Christ to establish the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men, yet it is observable, he begins his preaching in the same words with John the Baptist: because the repentance which John taught still was, and ever will be, the necessary preparation for that inward kingdom. But that phrase is not only used with regard to individuals in whom it is to be established, but also with regard to the Christian Church, the whole body of believers. In the former sense it is opposed to repentance; in the latter the Mosaic dispensation.

V. 18. **#Mr 1:16; #Lu 5:1**.

V. 23. **The Gospel of the kingdom**-The Gospel, that is, the joyous message, is the proper name of our religion: as will be amply verified in all who earnestly and perseveringly embrace it.

V. 24. **Through all Syria**-The whole province, of which the Jewish country was only a small part.

And demoniacs-Men possessed with devils:

and lunatics, and paralytics-Men ill of the palsy, whose cases were of all others most deplorable and most helpless.

V. 25. **Decapolis**-A tract of land on the east side of the sea of Galilee, in which were ten cities near each other.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. V.

V. 1. **And seeing the multitudes**-At some distance, as they were coming to him from every quarter.

He went up into the mountain-Which was near: where there was room for them all.

His disciples-not only his twelve disciples, but all who desired to learn of him.

V. 2. **And he opened his mouth**-A phrase which always denotes a set and solemn discourse; **and taught them**-To bless men; to make men happy, was the great business for which our Lord came into the world. And accordingly he here pronounces eight blessings together, annexing them to so many steps in Christianity. Knowing that happiness is our common aim, and that an innate instinct continually urges us to the pursuit of it, he in the kindest manner applies to that instinct, and directs it to its proper object.

Though all men desire, yet few attain, happiness, because they seek it where it is not to be found. Our Lord therefore begins his Divine institution, which is the complete art of happiness, by laying down before all that have ears to hear, the true and only true method of acquiring it.

Observe the benevolent condescension of our Lord. He seems, as it were, to lay aside his supreme authority as our legislator, that he may the better act the part of: our friend and Saviour. Instead of using the lofty style, in positive commands, he, in a more gentle and engaging way, insinuates his will and our duty, by pronouncing those happy who comply with it.

V. 3. **Happy are the poor**-In the following discourse there is,

1. A sweet invitation to true holiness and happiness, #Mt 5:3-12. 2. A persuasive to impart it to others, #Mt 5:13-16. 3. A description of true Christian holiness, #Mt 5:17; 7:12. (in which it is easy to observe, the latter part exactly answers the former.) 4. The conclusion: giving a sure mark of the true way, warning against false prophets, exhorting to follow after holiness.

The poor in spirit-They who are unfeignedly penitent, they who are truly convinced of sin; who see and feel the state they are in by nature, being deeply sensible of their sinfulness, guiltiness, helplessness.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven-The present inward kingdom: righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, as well as the eternal kingdom, if they endure to the end. #Lu 6:20.

V. 4. **They that mourn**-Either for their own sins, or for other men's, and are steadily and habitually serious.

They shall be comforted-More solidly and deeply even in this world, and eternally in heaven.

V. 5. **Happy are the meek**-They that hold all their passions and affections evenly balanced.

They shall inherit the earth-They shall have all things really necessary for life and godliness. They shall **enjoy** whatever portion God hath given them here, and shall hereafter **possess** the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

V. 6. **They that hunger and thirst after righteousness**-After the holiness here described.

They shall be satisfied with it.

V. 7. **The merciful**-The tender-hearted: they who love all men as themselves:

They shall obtain mercy-Whatever mercy therefore we desire from God, the same let us show to our brethren. He will repay us a thousand fold, the love we bear to any for his sake.

V. 8. **The pure in heart**-The sanctified: they who love God with all their hearts.

They shall see God-In all things here; hereafter in glory.

V. 9. **The peace makers**-They that out of love to God and man do all possible good to all men.

Peace in the Scripture sense implies all blessings temporal and eternal.

They shall be called the children of God-Shall be acknowledged such by God and man. One would imagine a person of this amiable temper and behaviour would be the darling of mankind. But our Lord well knew it would not be so, as long as Satan was the prince of this world. He therefore warns them before of the treatment all were to expect, who were determined thus to tread in his steps, by immediately subjoining,

Happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Through this whole discourse we cannot but observe the most exact method which can possibly be conceived. Every paragraph, every sentence, is closely connected both with that which precedes, and that which follows it. And is not this the pattern for every Christian preacher? If any then are able to follow it without any premeditation, well: if not, let them not dare to preach without it. No rhapsody, no incoherency, whether the things spoken be true or false, comes of the Spirit of Christ.

V. 10. **For righteousness' sake**-That is, because they have, or follow after, the righteousness here described. He that is truly a **righteous** man, he that **mourns**, and he that is **pure in heart**, yea, **all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution, #2Ti 3:12**. The world will always say, Away with such fellows from the earth. **They are made to reprove our thoughts. They are grievous to us even to behold. Their lives are not like other men's; their ways are of another fashion.**

V. 11. **Reville**-When present: **say all evil**-When you are absent.

V. 12. **Your reward**-Even over and above the happiness that naturally and directly results from holiness.

V. 13. **Ye**-Not the apostles, not ministers only; but all ye who are thus holy, **are the salt of the earth**-Are to season others. #Mr 9:50; Lu 14:34.

V. 14. **Ye are the light of the world**-If ye are thus holy, you can no more be hid than the sun in the firmament: no more than **a city on a mountain**-Probably pointing to that on the brow of the opposite hill.

V. 15. Nay, the very design of God in giving you this light was, that it might shine. #Mr 4:21; #Lu 8:16; 11:33.

V. 16. **That they may see-and glorify**-That is, that seeing your good works, they may be moved to love and serve God likewise.

V. 17. **Think not**-Do not imagine, fear, hope, **that I am come**-Like your teachers, **to destroy the law or the prophets**.

I am not come to destroy-The moral law, **but to fulfil**-To establish, illustrate, and explain its highest meaning, both by my life and doctrine.

V. 18. **Till all things shall be effected**-Which it either requires or foretells. For the law has its effect, when the rewards are given, and the punishments annexed to it inflicted, as well as when its precepts are obeyed. #Lu 16:17; 21:33.

V. 19. **One of the least**-So accounted by men; **and shall teach**-Either by word or example; **shall be the least**-That is, shall have no part therein.

V. 20. **The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees**-Described in the sequel of this discourse.

V. 21. **Ye have heard**-From the scribes reciting the law;

Thou shalt do no murder-And they interpreted this, as all the other commandments, barely of the outward act.

The judgement-The Jews had in every city a court of twenty-three men, who could sentence a criminal to be strangled. But the sanhedrim only (the great council which sat at Jerusalem, consisting of seventy-two men,) could sentence to the more terrible death of stoning. That was called **the judgment, this the council**. #Ex 20:13.

V. 22. **But I say unto you**-Which of the prophets ever spake thus? Their language is, Thus saith the Lord. Who hath authority to use this language, but the one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.

Whosoever is angry with his brother-Some copies add, **without a cause**-But this is utterly foreign to the whole scope and tenor of our Lord's discourse. If he had only forbidden the being **angry without a cause**, there was no manner of need of that solemn declaration,

I say unto you; for the scribes and Pharisees themselves said as much as this. Even they taught, men ought not to be angry **without a cause**. So that this righteousness does not exceed theirs. But Christ teaches, that we ought not, for any cause, to be so angry as to call any man **Raca**, or fool. We ought not, for any cause, to be angry at the person of the sinner, but at his sins only. Happy world, were this plain and necessary distinction thoroughly understood, remembered, practised! **Raca** means, a silly man, a trifler.

Whosoever shall say, Thou fool-Shall revile, or seriously reproach any man. Our Lord specified three degrees of murder, each liable to a sorer punishment than the other: not indeed from men, but from God.

Hell fire-In the valley of Hinnom (whence the word in the original is taken) the children were used to be burnt alive to Moloch. It was afterward made a receptacle for the filth of the city, where continual fires were kept to consume it. And it is probable, if any criminals were burnt alive, it was in this accursed and horrible place. Therefore both as to its former and latter state, it was a fit emblem of hell. It must here signify a degree of future punishment, as much more dreadful than those incurred in the two former cases, as burning alive is more dreadful than either strangling or stoning.

V. 23. **Thy brother hath aught against thee**-On any of the preceding accounts: for any unkind thought or word: any that did not spring from love.

V. 24. **Leaving thy gift, go**-For neither thy gift nor thy prayer will atone for thy want of love: but this will make them both an abomination before God.

V. 25. **Agree with thine adversary**-With any against whom thou hast thus offended: **while thou art in the way**-Instantly, on the spot; before you part.

Lest the adversary deliver thee to the judge-Lest he commit his cause to God. #**Lu 12:58**.

V. 26. **Till thou hast paid the last farthing**-That is, for ever, since thou canst never do this.

What has been hitherto said refers to meekness: what follows, to purity of heart.

V. 27. **Thou shalt not commit adultery**-And this, as well as the sixth commandment, the scribes and Pharisees interpreted barely of the outward act. #**Ex 20:14**.

V. 29, 30. **If** a person as dear as a **right eye**, or as useful as a **right hand**, **cause thee thus to offend**, though but in heart.

Perhaps here may be an instance of a kind of transposition which is frequently found in the sacred writings: so that the 29th verse may refer to 27, 28; and the 30th to ver. 21, 22. **#Mt 5:29, 27, 28, 30, 21, 22**

As if he had said, Part with any thing, however dear to you, or otherwise useful, if you cannot avoid sin while you keep it. Even cut off your right hand, if you are of so passionate a temper, that you cannot otherwise be restrained from hurting your brother. Pull out your eyes, if you can no otherwise be restrained from lusting after women. **#Mt 18:8; #Mr 9:43.**

V. 31. **Let him give her a writing of divorce**-Which the scribes and Pharisees allowed men to do on any trifling occasion. **#De 24:1; #Mt 19:7; #Mr 10:2; #Lu 16:18.**

V. 32. **Causeth her to commit adultery**-If she marry again.

V. 33. Our Lord here refers to the promise made to the pure in heart of seeing God in all things, and points out a false doctrine of the scribes, which arose from their not thus seeing God.

What he forbids is, the swearing at all, 1. by any creature, 2. in our ordinary conversation: both of which the scribes and Pharisees taught to be perfectly innocent. **#Ex 20:7.**

V. 36. **For thou canst not make one hair white or black**-Whereby it appears, that this also is not thine but God's.

V. 37. **Let your conversation be yea, yea; nay, nay**-That is, in your common discourse, barely affirm or deny.

V. 38. **Ye have heard**-Our Lord proceeds to enforce such meekness and love on those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (which he pursues to the end of the chapter) as were utterly unknown to the scribes and Pharisees.

It hath been said-In the law, as a direction to judges, in ease of violent and barbarous assaults.

An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth-And this has been interpreted, as encouraging bitter and rigorous revenge. **#De 19:21.**

V. 39. **But I say unto you, that ye resist not the evil man**-Thus; the Greek word translated **resist** signifies standing in battle array, striving for victory. If a man

smite thee on the right cheek-Return not evil for evil: yea,

turn to him the other-Rather than revenge thyself.

V. 40, 41. Where the damage is not great, choose rather to suffer it, though possibly it may on that account be repeated, than to demand **an eye for an eye**, to enter into a rigorous prosecution of the offender. The meaning of the whole passage seems to be, rather than return evil for evil, when the

wrong is purely personal, submit to one bodily wrong after another, give up one part of your goods after another, submit to one instance of compulsion after another. That the words are not literally to be understood, appears from the behaviour of our Lord himself, **#Joh 18:22, 23**.

V. 42. Thus much for your behaviour toward the violent. As for those who use milder methods,

Give to him that asketh thee-Give and lend to any so far, (but no further, for God never contradicts himself) as is consistent with thy engagements to thy creditors, thy family, and the household of faith. **#Lu 6:30**.

V. 43. **Thou shalt love thy neighbour; And hate thy enemy**-God spoke the former part; the scribes added the latter. **#Le 19:18**.

V. 44. **Bless them that curse you**-Speak all the good you can to and of them, who speak all evil to and of you. Repay love in thought, word, and deed, to those who hate you, and show it both in word and deed. **#Lu 6:27, 35**.

V. 45. **That ye may be the children**-That is, that ye may continue and appear such before men and angels.

For he maketh his sun to rise-He gives them such blessings as they will receive at his hands. Spiritual blessings they will not receive.

V. 46. **The publicans**-were officers of the revenue, farmers, or receivers of the public money: men employed by the Romans to gather the taxes and customs, which they exacted of the nations they had conquered. These were generally odious for their extortion and oppression, and were reckoned by the Jews as the very scum of the earth.

V. 47. **And if ye salute your friends only**-Our Lord probably glances at those prejudices, which different sects had against each other, and intimates, that he would not have his followers imbibe that narrow spirit. Would to God this had been more attended to among the unhappy divisions and subdivisions, into which his Church has been crumbled! And that we might at least advance so far, as cordially to embrace our **brethren in Christ**, of whatever party or denomination they are!

V. 48. **Therefore ye shall be perfect; as your Father who is in heaven is perfect**-So the original runs, referring to all that holiness which is described in the foregoing verses, which our Lord in the beginning of the chapter recommends as happiness, and in the close of it as perfection.

And how wise and gracious is this, to sum up, and, as it were, seal all his commandments with a promise! Even the proper promise of the Gospel! That he will **put those laws in our minds, and write them in our hearts!** He well knew how ready our unbelief would be to cry out, this is impossible! And therefore stakes upon it all the power, truth, and faithfulness of him to whom all things are possible.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. VI.

V. 1. In the foregoing chapter our Lord particularly described the nature of inward holiness. In this he describes that purity of intention without which none of our outward actions are holy. This chapter contains four parts, 1. The right intention and manner of giving alms, #Mt 6:1-4. 2. The right intention, manner, form, and prerequisites of prayer, #Mt 6:5-15. 3. The right intention, and manner of fasting, #Mt 6:16-18. 4. The necessity of a pure intention in all things, unmixed either with the desire of riches, or worldly care, and fear of want, #Mt 6:19-34.

This verse is a general caution against vain glory, in any of our good works: All these are here summed up together, in the comprehensive word **righteousness**. This general caution our Lord applies in the sequel to the three principal branches of it, relating to our neighbour, #Mt 6:2-4: to God, #Mt 6:5, 6: and to ourselves, #Mt 6:16-18.

To be seen-Barely the being seen, while we are doing any of these things, is a circumstance purely indifferent. But the doing them with this view, to be seen and admired, this is what our Lord condemns.

V. 2. **As the hypocrites do**-Many of the scribes and Pharisees did this, under a pretence of calling the poor together.

They have their reward-All they will have; for they shall have none from God.

V. 3. **Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth**-A proverbial expression for doing a thing secretly. Do it as secretly as is consistent, 1. With the doing it at all. 2. With the doing it in the most effectual manner.

V. 5. **The synagogues**-These were properly the places where the people assembled for public prayer, and hearing the Scriptures read and expounded. They were in every city from the time of the Babylonish captivity, and had service in them thrice a day on three days in the week. In every synagogue was a council of grave and wise persons, over whom was a president, called the ruler of the synagogue. But the word here, as well as in many other texts, signifies any place of public concourse.

V. 6. **Enter into thy closet**-That is, do it with as much secrecy as thou canst.

V. 7. **Use not vain repetitions**-To repeat any words without meaning them, is certainly a vain repetition. Therefore we should be extremely careful in all our prayers to mean what we say; and to say only what we mean from the bottom of our hearts. The vain and heathenish repetitions which we are here warned against, are most dangerous, and yet very common; which is a principal cause why so many, who still profess religion, are a disgrace to it. Indeed all the words in the world are not equivalent to one holy desire. And the very best prayers are but vain repetitions, if they are not the language of the heart.

V. 8. Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of-We do not pray to inform God of our wants. Omniscient as he is, he cannot be informed of any thing which he knew not before: and he is always willing to relieve them. The chief thing wanting is, a fit disposition on our part to receive his grace and blessing. Consequently, one great office of prayer is, to produce such a disposition in us: to exercise our dependence on God; to increase our desire of the things we ask for; to make us so sensible of our wants, that we may never cease wrestling till we have prevailed for the blessing.

V. 9. Thus therefore pray ye-He who best knew what we ought to pray for, and how we ought to pray, what matter of desire, what manner of address would most please himself, would best become us, has here dictated to us a most perfect and universal form of prayer, comprehending all our real wants, expressing all our lawful desires; a complete directory and full exercise of all our devotions.

Thus-For these things; sometimes in these words, at least in this manner, short, close, full.

This prayer consists of three parts, the preface, the petitions, and the conclusion. The preface, **Our Father, who art in heaven**, lays a general foundation for prayer, comprising what we must first know of God, before we can pray in confidence of being heard. It likewise points out to us our that faith, humility, love, of God and man, with which we are to approach God in prayer.

I. Our Father-Who art good and gracious to all, our Creator, our Preserver; the Father of our Lord, and of us in him, thy children by adoption and grace: not my Father only, who now cry unto thee, but the Father of the universe, of angels and men:

who art in heaven-Beholding all things, both in heaven and earth; knowing every creature, and all the works of every creature, and every possible event from everlasting to everlasting: the almighty Lord and Ruler of all, superintending and disposing all things; **in heaven**-Eminently there, but not there alone, seeing thou fillest heaven and earth.

II. 1. Hallowed be thy name-Mayest thou, O Father, be truly known by all intelligent beings, and with affections suitable to that knowledge: mayest thou be duly honoured, loved, feared, by all in heaven and in earth, by all angels and all men.

2. Thy kingdom come-May thy kingdom of grace come quickly, and swallow up all the kingdoms of the earth: may all mankind, receiving thee, O Christ, for their king, truly believing in thy name, be filled with righteousness, and peace, and joy; with holiness and happiness, till they are removed hence into thy kingdom of glory, to reign with thee for ever and ever.

3. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven-May all the inhabitants of the earth do thy will as willingly as the holy angels: may these do it continually even as they, without any interruption of their willing service; yea, and perfectly as they: mayest thou, O Spirit of grace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make them perfect in every good work to do thy will, and work in them all that is well pleasing in thy sight.

4. **Give us**-O Father (for we claim nothing of right, but only of thy free mercy) **this day**-(for we take no thought for the morrow) **our daily bread**-All things needful for our souls and bodies: not only the meat that perisheth, but the sacramental bread, and thy grace, the food which endureth to everlasting life.

5. **And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors**-Give us, O Lord, redemption in thy blood, even the forgiveness of sins: as thou enablest us freely and fully to forgive every man, so do thou forgive all our trespasses.

6. **And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil**-Whenever we are tempted, O thou that helpest our infirmities, suffer us not to **enter into temptation**; to be overcome or suffer loss thereby; but make a way for us to escape, so that we may be more than conquerors, through thy love, over sin and all the consequences of it. Now the principal desire of a Christian's heart being the glory of God, (#Mt 6:9, 10) and all he wants for himself or his brethren being the daily bread of soul and body, (or the support of life, animal and spiritual,) pardon of sin, and deliverance from the power of it and of the devil, (#Mt 6:11, 12, 13) there is nothing beside that a Christian can wish for; therefore this prayer comprehends all his desires. Eternal life is the certain consequence, or rather completion of holiness.

III. **For thine is the kingdom**-The sovereign right of all things that are or ever were created:

The power-the executive power, whereby thou governest all things in thy everlasting kingdom:

And the glory-The praise due from every creature, for thy power, and all thy wondrous works, and the mightiness of thy kingdom, which endureth through all ages, even for ever and ever. It is observable, that though the doxology, as well as the petitions of this prayer, is threefold, and is directed to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost distinctly, yet is the whole fully applicable both to every person, and to the ever-blessed and undivided trinity. #Lu 11:2.

V. 14. #Mr 11:25.

V. 16. **When ye fast?**-Our Lord does not enjoin either fasting, alms-deeds, or prayer: all these being duties which were before fully established in the Church of God.

Disfigure-By the dust and ashes which they put upon their heads, as was usual at the times of solemn humiliation.

V. 17. **Anoint thy head**-So the Jews frequently did. Dress thyself as usual.

V. 19. **Lay not up for yourselves**-Our Lord here makes a transition from religious to common actions, and warns us of another snare, the love of money, as inconsistent with purity of intention as the love of praise.

Where rust and moth consume-Where all things are perishable and transient.

He may likewise have a farther view in these words, even to guard us against making any thing on earth our treasure. For then a thing properly becomes our treasure, when we set our affections upon it. #Lu 12:33.

V. 21. #Lu 11:34.

V. 22. **The eye is the lamp of the body**-And what the eye is to the body, the intention is to the soul. We may observe with what exact propriety our Lord places purity of intention between worldly desires and worldly cares, either of which directly tend to destroy.

If thine eye be single-Singly fixed on God and heaven, thy whole soul will be full of holiness and happiness.

If thine eye be evil-Not single, aiming at any thing else.

V. 24. **Mammon**-Riches, money; any thing loved or sought, without reference to God. #Lu 16:13.

V. 25. And if you serve God, you need be careful for nothing.

Therefore take not thought-That is, be not anxiously careful. Beware of worldly cares; for these are as inconsistent with the true service of God as worldly desires.

Is not the life more than meat?-And if God give the greater gift, will he deny the smaller? #Lu 12:22.

V. 27. **And which of you**-If you are ever so careful, can even add a moment to your own life thereby? This seems to be far the most easy and natural sense of the words.

V. 29. **Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these**-Not in garments of so pure a white. The eastern monarchs were often clothed in white robes.

V. 30. **The grass of the field**-is a general expression, including both herbs and flowers.

Into the still-This is the natural sense of the passage. For it can hardly be supposed that grass or flowers should be thrown into the oven the day after they were cut down. Neither is it the custom in the hottest countries, where they dry fastest, to heat ovens with them.

If God so clothe-The word properly implies, the putting on a complete dress, that surrounds the body on all sides; and beautifully expresses that external membrane, which (like the skin in a human body) at once adorns the tender fabric of the vegetable, and guards it from the injuries of the weather. Every microscope in which a flower is viewed gives a lively comment on this text.

V. 31. **Therefore take not thought**-How kind are these precepts! The substance of which is only this, Do thyself no harm! Let us not be so ungrateful to him, nor so injurious to ourselves, as to harass and oppress our minds with that burden of anxiety, which he has so graciously taken off.

Every verse speaks at once to the understanding, and to 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. Rather we will cheerfully repose ourselves on that heavenly Father, who knows we have need of these things; who has given us the life, which is more than meat, and the body, which is more than raiment. And thus instructed in the philosophy of our heavenly Master, we will learn a lesson of faith and cheer. fulness from every bird of the air, and every flower of the field.

V. 33. Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness-Singly aim at this, that God, reigning in your heart, may fill it with the righteousness above described. And indeed whosoever seeks this first, will soon come to seek this only.

V. 34. The morrow shall take thought for itself-That is, be careful for the morrow when it comes.

The evil thereof-Speaking after the manner of men. But all trouble is, upon the whole, a real good. It is good physic which God dispenses daily to his children, according to the need and the strength of each.

Our Lord now proceeds to warn us against the chief hinderances of holiness. And how wisely does he begin with judging? wherein all young converts are so apt to spend that zeal which is given them for better purposes.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. VII.

V. 1. **Judge not**-any man without full, clear, certain knowledge, without absolute necessity, without tender love. #Lu 6:37.

V. 2. **With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you**-Awful words! So we may, as it were, choose for ourselves, whether God shall be severe or merciful to us. God and man will favour the candid and benevolent: but they must expect judgment without mercy, who have showed no mercy.

V. 3. In particular, why do you open your eyes to any fault of your brother, while you yourself are guilty of a much greater?

The mote-The word properly signifies a splinter or shiver of wood. This and a beam, its opposite, were proverbially used by the Jews, to denote, the one, small infirmities, the other, gross, palpable faults. #Lu 6:41.

V. 4. **How sayest thou**-With what face?

V. 5. **Thou hypocrite**-It is mere hypocrisy to pretend zeal for the amendment of others while we have none for our own.

Then-When that which obstructed thy sight is removed.

V. 6. Here is another instance of that transposition, where of the two things proposed, the latter is first treated of.

Give not to dogs-*lest turning they rend you:*

Cast not to swine-*lest they trample them under foot.*

Yet even then, when *the beam is cast out of thine own eye,*

Give not-That is, talk not of the deep things of God to those whom you know to be wallowing in sin. neither declare the great things God hath done for your soul to the profane, furious, persecuting wretches. Talk not of perfection, for instance, to the former; not of your experience to the latter. But our Lord does in nowise forbid us to reprove, as occasion is, both the one and the other.

V. 7. **But ask**-Pray for them, as well as for yourselves: in this there can be no such danger.

Seek-Add your own diligent endeavours to your asking:

and knock-Persevere importunately in that diligence. #**Lu 11:9**.

V. 8. **For every one that asketh receiveth**-Provided he ask aright, and ask what is agreeable to God's will.

V. 11. **To them that ask him**-But on this condition, that ye follow the example of his goodness, by doing to all as ye would they should do to you.

For this is the law and the prophets-This is the sum of all, exactly answering #**Mt 5:17**. The whole is comprised in one word, Imitate the God of love.

Thus far proceeds the doctrinal part of the sermon. In the next verse begins the exhortation to practise it.

V. 12. #**Lu 6:31**.

V. 13. **The strait gate**-The holiness described in the foregoing chapters. And this is the **narrow way**.

Wide is the gate, and many there are that go in through it-They need not seek for this; they come to it of course.

Many go in through it, because strait is the other gate-Therefore they do not care for it; they like a wider gate. #**Lu 13:24**.

V. 15. **Beware of false prophets**-Who in their preaching describe a broad way to heaven: it is their prophesying, their teaching the broad way, rather than their walking in it themselves, that is here chiefly spoken of. All those are false prophets, who teach any other way than that our Lord hath here marked out.

In sheep's clothing-With outside religion and fair professions of love:

Wolves-Not feeding, but destroying souls.

V. 16. **By their fruits ye shall know them**-A short, plain, easy rule, whereby to know true from false prophets: and one that may be applied by people of the weakest capacity, who are not accustomed to deep reasoning. True prophets convert sinners to God, or at least confirm and strengthen those that are converted. False prophets do not. They also are false prophets, who though speaking the very truth, yet are not sent by the Spirit of God, but come in their own name, to declare it: their grand mark is, "**Not turning men from the power of Satan to God.**" #**Lu 6:43, 44**.

V. 18. **A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither a corrupt tree good fruit**-But it is certain, the goodness or badness here mentioned respects the doctrine, rather than the personal character. For a bad man preaching the good doctrine here delivered, is sometimes an instrument

of converting sinners to God. Yet I do not aver, that all are true prophets who speak the truth, and thereby convert sinners. I only affirm, that none are such who do not.

V. 19. **Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire**-How dreadful then is the condition of that teacher who hath brought no sinners to God!

V. 21. **Not every one**-That is, no one **that saith, Lord, Lord**-That makes a mere profession of me and my religion, **shall enter**-Whatever their false teachers may assure them to the contrary:

He that doth the will of my Father-as I have now declared it. Observe: every thing short of this is only saying, **Lord, Lord. #Lu 6:46.**

V. 22. **We have prophesied**-We have declared the mysteries of thy kingdom, wrote books; preached excellent sermons:

In thy name done many wonderful works-So that even the working of miracles is no proof that a man has saving faith.

V. 23. **I never knew you**-There never was a time that I approved of you: so that as many souls as they had saved, they were themselves never saved from their sins. Lord, is it my case? **#Lu 13:27.**

V. 24. **#Lu 6:47.**

V. 29. **He taught them**-The multitudes, **as one having authority**-With a dignity and majesty peculiar to himself as the great Lawgiver, and with the demonstration and power of the Spirit: **and not as the scribes**-Who only expounded the law of another; and that in a lifeless, ineffectual manner.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. VIII.

V. 2. **A leper came**-Leprosies in those countries were seldom curable by natural means, any more than palsies or lunacy. Probably this leper, though he might not mix with the people, had heard our Lord at a distance. #Mr 1:40; #Lu 5:12.

V. 4. **See thou tell no man**-Perhaps our Lord only meant here, Not till thou hast showed thyself to the priest-who was appointed to inquire into the case of leprosy. But many others he commanded, absolutely, to tell none of the miracles he had wrought upon them. And this he seems to have done, chiefly for one or more of these reasons: 1. To prevent the multitude from thronging him, in the manner related #Mr 1:45. 2. To fulfil the prophecy, #Isa 42:1, that he would not be vain or ostentatious. This reason St. Matthew assigns, #Mt 12:17, &c. 3. To avoid the being taken by force and made a king, #Joh 6:15. And, 4. That he might not enrage the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, who were the most bitter against him, any more than was unavoidable, #Mt 16:20, 21.

For a testimony-That I am the Messiah; **to them**-The priests, who otherwise might have pleaded want of evidence. #Le 14:2.

V. 5. **There came to him a centurion**-A captain of a hundred Roman soldiers. Probably he came a little way toward him, and then went back. He thought himself not worthy to come in person, and therefore spoke the words that follow by his messengers. As it is not unusual in all languages, so in the Hebrew it is peculiarly frequent, to ascribe to a person himself the thing which is done, and the words which are spoken by his order. And accordingly St. Matthew relates as said by the centurion himself, what others said by order from him. An instance of the same kind we have in the case of Zebedee's children. From St. Matthew, #Mt 20:20, we learn it was their mother that spoke those words, which, #Mr 10:35, 37, themselves are said to speak; because she was only their mouth.

Yet from #Mt 8:13, Go thy way home, it appears he at length came in person, probably on hearing that Jesus was nearer to his house than he apprehended when he sent the second message by his friends. #Lu 7:1.

V. 8. **The centurion answered**-By his second messengers.

V. 9. **For I am a man under authority**-I am only an inferior officer: and what I command, is done even in my absence: how much more what thou commandest, who art Lord of all!

V. 10. **I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel**-For the centurion was not an Israelite.

V. 11. **Many** from the farthest parts of the earth shall embrace the terms and enjoy the rewards of the Gospel covenant established with **Abraham**. But the Jews, who have the first title to them, shall be shut out from the feast; from grace here, and hereafter from glory. #Lu 13:29.

V. 12. **The outer darkness**-Our Lord here alludes to the custom the ancients had of making their feast in the night time. Probably while he was speaking this, the centurion came in person. #Mt 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30.

V. 14. **Peter's wife's mother**-St. Peter was then a young man, as were all the apostles. #Mr 1:29; #Lu 4:38.

V. 16. #Mr 1:32; #Lu 4:40.

V. 17. **Whereby was fulfilled what was spoken by the Prophet Isaiah**-He spoke it in a more exalted sense. The evangelist here only alludes to those words, as being capable of this lower meaning also. Such instances are frequent in the sacred writings, and are elegancies rather than imperfections. He fulfilled these words in the highest sense, by **bearing our sins in his own body on the tree**: in a lower sense, by sympathizing with us in our sorrows, and healing us of the diseases which were the fruit of sin. #Isa 53:4.

V. 18. **He commanded to go to the other side**-That both himself and the people might have a little rest.

V. 19. #Lu 9:57.

V. 20. **The Son of man**-The expression is borrowed from #Da 7:13, and is the appellation which Christ generally gives himself: which he seems to do out of humility, as having some relation to his mean appearance in this world.

Hath not where to lay his head-Therefore do not follow me from any view of temporal advantage.

V. 21. **Another said**-I will follow thee without any such view; but I must mind my business first. It is not certain that his father was already dead. Perhaps his son desired to stay with him, being very old, till his death.

V. 22. **But Jesus said**-When God calls, leave the business of the world to them who are dead to God.

V. 23. #Mr 4:35; #Lu 8:22.

V. 24. **The ship was covered**-So man's extremity is God's opportunity.

V. 26. **Why are ye fearful**-Then **he rebuked the winds**-First, he composed their spirits, and then the sea.

V. 28. **The country of the Gergesenes-Or of the Gadarenes**-Gergesa and Gadara were towns near each other. Hence the country between them took its name, sometimes from the one, sometimes from the other.

There met him two demoniacs-St. Mark and St. Luke mention only one, who was probably the fiercer of the two, and the person who spoke to our Lord first. But this is no way inconsistent with the account which St. Matthew gives.

The tombs-Doubtless those malevolent spirits love such tokens of death and destruction. Tombs were usually in those days in desert places, at a distance from towns, and were often made in the sides of caves, in the rocks and mountains.

No one could pass-Safely. #Mr 5:1; #Lu 8:26.

V. 29. **What have we to do with thee**-This is a Hebrew phrase, which signifies. Why do you concern yourself about us? #2Sa 16:10.

Before the time-The great day.

V. 30. **There was a herd of many swine**-Which it was not lawful for the Jews to keep. Therefore our Lord both justly and mercifully permitted them to be destroyed.

V. 31. **He said, Go**-A word of permission only, not command.

V. 34. **They besought him to depart out of their coasts**-They loved their swine so much better than their souls! How many are of the same mind!

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. IX.

V. 1. **His own city**-Capernaum, #Mt 4:13. #Mr 5:18; #Lu 8:37.

V. 2. **Seeing their faith**-Both that of the paralytic, and of them that brought him.

Son-A title of tenderness and condescension. #Mr 2:3; #Lu 5:18.

V. 3. **This man blasphemeth**-Attributing to himself a power (that of forgiving sins) which belongs to God only.

V. 5. **Which is easier**-Do not both of them argue a Divine power? Therefore if I can heal his disease, I can forgive his sins: especially as his disease is the consequence of his sins. Therefore these must be taken away, if that is.

V. 6. **On earth**-Even in my state of humiliation.

V. 8. So what was to the scribes an occasion of blaspheming, was to the people an incitement to praise God.

V. 9. **He saw a man named Matthew**-Modestly so called by himself. The other evangelists call him by his more honourable name, Levi.

Sitting-In the very height of his business, **at the receipt of custom**-The custom house, or place where the customs were received. #Mr 2:14; #Lu 5:27.

V. 10. **As Jesus sat at table in the house**-Of Matthew, who having invited many of his old companions, **made him a feast**, #Mr 2:15; and that a great one, though he does not himself mention it. The **publicans**, or collectors of the taxes which the Jews paid the Romans, were infamous for their illegal exactions:

Sinners-Open, notorious, sinners.

V. 11. **The Pharisees said to his disciples, Why eateth your Master?**-Thus they commonly ask our Lord, Why do thy disciples this? And his disciples, Why doth your Master?

V. 13. **Go ye and learn**-Ye that take upon you to teach others.

I will have mercy and not sacrifice-That is, I will have mercy rather than sacrifice. I love acts of mercy better than sacrifice itself. #Ho 6:6.

V. 14. **Then**-While he was at table. #Mr 2:18; #Lu 5:33.

V. 15. **The children of the bride chamber**-The companions of the bridegroom.

Mourn-Mourning and fasting usually go together. As if he had said, While I am with them, it is a festival time, a season of rejoicing, not mourning. But after I am gone, all my disciples likewise shall be in fastings often.

V. 16. This is one reason,-It is not a proper time for them to fast. Another is, they are not ripe for it.

New cloth-The words in the original properly signify cloth that hath not passed through the fuller's hands, and which is consequently much harsher than what has been washed and worn; and therefore yielding less than that, will tear away the edges to which it is sewed.

V. 17. **New**-Fermenting **wine** will soon burst those **bottles**, the leather of which is almost worn out. The word properly means vessels made of goats' skins, wherein they formerly put wine, (and do in some countries to this day) to convey it from place to place.

Put new wine into new bottles-Give harsh doctrines to such as have strength to receive them.

V. 18. **Just dead**-He had left her at the point of death, #**Mr 5:23**. Probably a messenger had now informed him she was dead. #**Mr 5:22**; #**Lu 8:41**.

V. 20. **Coming behind**-Out of bashfulness and humility.

V. 22. **Take courage**-Probably she was struck with fear, when he turned and looked upon her, #**Mr 5:33**; #**Lu 8:47**; lest she should have offended him, by touching his garment privately; and the more so, because she was unclean according to the law, #**Le 15:25**.

V. 23. **The minstrels**-The musicians. The original word means flute players. 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. And there were persons who made it their business to perform this, while others sung to their music. Flutes were used especially on the death of children; louder instruments on the death of grown persons.

V. 24. **Withdraw**-There is no need of you now; **for the maid is not dead**-Her life is not at an end; **but sleepeth**-This is only a temporary suspension of sense and motion, which should rather be termed sleep than death.

V. 25. **The maid arose**-Christ raised three dead persons to life; this child, the widow's son, and Lazarus: one newly departed, another on the bier, the third smelling in the grave: to show us that no degree of death is so desperate as to be past his help.

V. 32. #**Lu 11:14**.

V. 33. Even **in Israel**-Where so many wonders have been seen.

V. 36. **Because they were faint**-In soul rather than in body.

As sheep having no shepherd-And yet they had many teachers; they had scribes in every city. But they had none who cared for their souls, and none that were able, if they had been willing, to have wrought any deliverance. They had no pastors after God's own heart.

V. 37. **The harvest truly is great**-When Christ came into the world, it was properly the time of harvest; till then it was the seed time only.

But the labourers are few-Those whom God sends; who are holy, and convert sinners. Of others there are many. #**Lu 10:2**.

V. 38. **The Lord of the harvest**-Whose peculiar work and office it is, and who alone is able to do it: **that he would thrust forth**-for it is an employ not pleasing to flesh and blood; so full of reproach, labour, danger, temptation of every kind, that nature may well be averse to it. Those who never felt this, never yet knew what it is to be labourers in Christ's harvest. He sends them forth, when he calls them by his Spirit, furnishes them with grace and gifts for the work, and makes a way for them to be employed therein.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. X.

V. 1. **His twelve disciples**-Hence it appears that he had already chosen out of his disciples, those whom he afterward termed apostles. The number seems to have relation to the twelve patriarchs, and the twelve tribes of Israel. #Mr 3:14; 6:7; #Lu 6:13; 9:1.

V. 2. **The first, Simon**-The first who was called to a constant attendance on Christ; although Andrew had seen him before Simon. #Ac 1:13.

V. 3. **Lebbeus**-Commonly called Judas, the brother of James.

V. 4. **Iscaiot**-So called from Iscaioth, (the place of his birth,) a town of the tribe of Ephraim, near the city of Samaria.

V. 5. **These twelve Jesus sent forth**-Herein exercising his supreme authority, as God over all. None but God can give men authority to preach his word.

Go not-Their commission was thus confined now, because the calling of the Gentiles was deferred till after the more plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of pentecost.

Enter not-Not to preach; but they might to buy what they wanted, #Joh 4:9.

V. 8. **Cast out devils**-It is a great relief to the spirits of an infidel, sinking under a dread, that possibly the Gospel may be true, to find it observed by a learned brother, that the diseases therein ascribed to the operation of the devil have the very same symptoms with the natural diseases of lunacy, epilepsy, or convulsions; whence he readily and very willingly concludes, that the devil had no hand in them.

But it were well to stop and consider a little. Suppose God should suffer an evil spirit to usurp the same power over a man's body, as the man himself has naturally; and suppose him actually to exercise that power; could we conclude the devil had no hand therein, because his body was bent in the very same manner wherein the man himself might have bent it naturally?

And suppose God gives an evil spirit a greater power, to effect immediately the organ of the nerves in the brain, by irritating them to produce violent motions, or so relaxing them that they can produce little or no motion; still the symptoms will be those of over tense nerves, as in madness, epilepsies, convulsions; or of relaxed nerves, as in paralytic cases. But could we conclude thence that the devil had no hand in them? Will any man affirm that God cannot or will not, on any occasion whatever, give such a power to an evil spirit? Or that effects, the like of which may be produced by natural causes, cannot possibly be produced by preternatural? If this be possible, then he who affirms it was so, in any particular case, cannot be justly charged with falsehood, merely for affirming the reality of a possible thing. Yet in this manner are the evangelists treated by those

unhappy men, who above all things dread the truth of the Gospel, because, if it is true, they are of all men the most miserable.

Freely ye have received-All things; in particular the power of working miracles; **freely give**-Exert that power wherever you come. #Mr 6:7; #Lu 9:2.

V. 9. **Provide not**-The stress seems to lie on this word: they might use what they had ready; but they might not stay a moment to provide any thing more, neither take any thought about it. Nor indeed were they to take any thing with them, more than was strictly necessary. 1. Lest it should retard them. 2. Because they were to learn hereby to trust to God in all future exigencies.

V. 10. **Neither scrip**-That is, a wallet, or bag to hold provisions:

Nor yet a staff-We read, #Mr 6:8, Take nothing, save a staff only. He that had one might take it; they that had none, might not provide any.

For the workman is worthy of his maintenance-The word includes all that is mentioned in the 9th and 10th verses; #Mt 10:9,10 all that they were forbidden to provide for themselves, so far as it was needful for them. #Lu 10:7.

V. 11. **Inquire who is worthy**-That you should abide with him: who is disposed to receive the Gospel.

There abide-In that house, till ye leave the town. #Mr 6:10; #Lu 9:4.

V. 12. **Salute it**-In the usual Jewish form, "Peace (that is, all blessings) be to this house."

V. 13. **If the house be worthy**-of it, God shall give them the peace you wish them. If not, he shall give you what they refuse. The same will be the case, when we pray for them that are not worthy.

V. 14. **Shake off the dust from your feet**-The Jews thought the land of Israel so peculiarly holy, that when they came home from any heathen country, they stopped at the borders and shook or wiped off the dust of it from their feet, that the holy land might not be polluted with it. Therefore the action here enjoined was a lively intimation, that those Jews who had rejected the Gospel were holy no longer, but were on a level with heathens and idolaters.

V. 16. #Lu 10:3.

V. 17. But think not that all your innocence and all your wisdom will screen you from persecution.

They will scourge you in their synagogues-In these the Jews held their courts of judicature, about both civil and ecclesiastical affairs. #Mt 24:9.

V. 19. **Take no thought**-Neither at this time, on any sudden call, need we be careful how or what to answer. #**Lu 12:11**.

V. 21. #**Lu 21:16**.

V. 22. **Of all men**-That know not God. #**Mt 24:13**.

V. 23. **Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel**-Make what haste ye will;

till the Son of man be come-To destroy their temple and nation.

V. 24. #**Lu 6:30**; #**Joh 15:20**.

V. 25. **How much more**-This cannot refer to the quantity of reproach and persecution: (for in this the servant cannot be above his lord:) but only to the certainty of it. #**Mt 12:24**.

V. 26. **Therefore fear them not**-For ye have only the same usage with your Lord.

There is nothing covered-So that however they may slander you now, your innocence will at length appear. #**Mr 4:22**; #**Lu 8:17**; **12:2**.

V. 27. Even what I now tell you secretly is not to be kept secret long, but declared publicly. Therefore,

What ye hear in the ear, publish on the house-top-Two customs of the Jews seem to be alluded to here. Their doctors used to whisper in the ear of their disciples what they were to pronounce aloud to others. And as their houses were low and flat roofed, they sometimes preached to the people from thence. #**Lu 12:3**.

V. 28. **And be not afraid**-of any thing which ye may suffer for proclaiming it.

Be afraid of him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell-It is remarkable, that our Lord commands those who love God, still to fear him, even on this account, under this notion.

V. 29, 30. The particular providence of God is another reason for your not fearing man. For this extends to the very smallest things. And if he has such care over the most inconsiderable creatures, how much more will he take care of you, (provided you confess him before men, before powerful enemies of the truth,) and that not only in this life, but in the other also?

V. 30. #**Lu 12:7**.

V. 32. **Whosoever shall confess me**-Publicly acknowledge me for the promised Messiah. But this confession implies the receiving his whole doctrine, #**Mr 8:38**, and obeying all his commandments. #**Lu 9:26**.

V. 33, 34. **Whosoever shall deny me before men**-To which ye will be strongly tempted. For

Think not that I am come-That is, think not that universal peace will be the immediate consequence of my coming. Just the contrary. Both public and private divisions will follow, wheresoever my Gospel comes with power. Yet this is not the design, though it be the event of his coming, through the opposition of devils and men.

V. 34. **#Lu 12:51.**

V. 36. **And the foes of a man**-That loves and follows me. **#Mic 7:6.**

V. 37. **He that loveth father or mother more than me**-He that is not ready to give up all these, when they stand in competition with his duty.

V. 38. **He that taketh not his cross**-That is, whatever pain or inconvenience cannot be avoided, but by doing some evil, or omitting some good. **#Mt 16:24; #Lu 14:27.**

V. 39. **He that findeth his life shall lose it**-He that saves his life by denying me, shall lose it eternally; and he that loseth his life by confessing me, shall save it eternally. And as you shall be thus rewarded, so in proportion shall they who entertain you for my sake. **#Mt 16:25; #Joh 12:25.**

V. 40. **#Mt 18:5; #Lu 10:16; #Joh 13:20.**

V. 41. **He that entertaineth a prophet**-That is, a preacher of the Gospel:

In the name of a prophet-That is, because he is such, shall share in his reward.

V. 42. **One of these little ones**-The very least Christian. **#Mr 9:41.**

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XI.

V. 1. **In their cities**-The other cities of Israel.

V. 2. **He sent two of his disciples**-Not because he doubted himself; but to confirm their faith. #Lu 7:18.

V. 3. **He that is to come**-The Messiah.

V. 4. **Go and tell John the things that ye hear and see**-Which are a stronger proof of my being the Messiah, than any bare assertion can be.

V. 5. **The poor have the Gospel preached to them**-The greatest mercy of all. #Isa 29:18; 35:5.

V. 6. **Happy is he who shall not be offended at me**-Notwithstanding all these proofs that I am the Messiah.

V. 7. **As they departed, he said concerning John**-Of whom probably he would not have said so much when they were present.

A reed shaken by the wind?-No; nothing could ever shake John in the testimony he gave to the truth. The expression is proverbial.

V. 8. **A man clothed in soft, delicate raiment**-An effeminate courtier, accustomed to fawning and flattery? You may expect to find persons of such a character in palaces; not in a wilderness.

V. 9. **More than a prophet**-For the prophets only pointed me out afar off; but John was my immediate forerunner.

V. 10. #Mal 3:1.

V. 11. **But he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he**-Which an ancient author explains thus:-"One perfect in the law, as John was, is inferior to one who is baptized into the death of Christ. For this is the kingdom of heaven, even to be buried with Christ, and to be raised up together with him. John was greater than all who had been then born of women, but he was cut off before the kingdom of heaven was given." [He seems to mean, that righteousness, peace, and joy, which constitute the present inward kingdom of heaven.] "He was blameless as to that righteousness which is by the law; but he fell short of those who are perfected by the spirit of life which is in Christ. Whosoever, therefore, is least in the kingdom of heaven, by Christian regeneration, is greater than any who has attained only the righteousness of the law, because the law maketh nothing perfect." It may farther mean, the least true Christian believer has a more perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ, of his redemption and kingdom, than John the Baptist had, who died before the full manifestation of the Gospel.

V. 12. **And from the days of John**-That is, from the time that John had fulfilled his ministry, men rush into my kingdom with a violence like that of those who are taking a city by storm.

V. 13. **For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John**-For all that is written in the law and the prophets only foretold as distant what is now fulfilled. In John the old dispensation expired, and the new began. #Lu 16:16.

V. 14. #Mal 4:5.

V. 15. **He that hath ears to hear, let him hear**-A kind of proverbial expression; requiring the deepest attention to what is spoken.

V. 16. **This generation**-That is, the men of this age. They are like those froward children of whom their fellows complain, that they will be pleased no way.

V. 18. **John came neither eating nor drinking**-In a rigorous austere way, like **Elijah**.

And they say, He hath a devil-Is melancholy, from the influence of an evil spirit.

V. 19. **The Son of man came eating and drinking**-Conversing in a free, familiar way.

Wisdom is justified by her children-That is, my wisdom herein is acknowledged by those who are truly wise.

V. 20. **Then began he to upbraid the cities**-It is observable he had never upbraided them before. Indeed at first they received him with all gladness, Capernaum in particular.

V. 21. **Wo to thee, Chorazin**-That is, miserable art thou. For these are not curses or imprecations, as has been commonly supposed; but a solemn, compassionate declaration of the misery they were bringing on themselves. Chorazin and Bethsaida were cities of Galilee, standing by the lake Gennesareth. Tyre and Sidon were cities of Phenicia, lying on the sea shore. The inhabitants of them were heathens. #Lu 10:13.

V. 22, 24. **Moreover I say unto you**-Beside the general denunciation of wo to those stubborn unbelievers, the degree of their misery will be greater than even that of Tyre and Sidon, yea, of Sodom.

V. 23. **Thou Capernaum, who hast been exalted to heaven**-That is, highly honoured by my presence and miracles.

V. 24. **See Wesley note ... "Mt 11:22"**.

V. 25. **Jesus answering**-This word does not always imply, that something had been spoken, to which an answer is now made. It often means no more than the speaking in reference to some action

or circumstance preceding. The following words Christ speaks in reference to the case of the cities above mentioned:

I thank thee-That is, I acknowledge and joyfully adore the justice and mercy of thy dispensations:

Because thou hast hid-That is, because thou hast suffered these things to be hid from men, who are in other respects wise and prudent, while thou hast discovered them to those of the weakest understanding, to them who are only wise to Godward. #Lu 10:21.

V. 27. **All things are delivered to me**-Our Lord, here addressing himself to his disciples, shows why men, wise in other things, do not know this: namely, because none can know it by natural reason: none but those to whom he revealeth it.

V. 28. **Come to me**-Here he shows to whom **he is pleased** to reveal these things to the weary and heavy laden;

ye that labour-After rest in God:

and are heavy laden-With the guilt and power of sin:

and I will give you rest-I alone (for none else can) **will** freely **give you** (what ye cannot purchase) **rest** from the guilt of sin by justification, and from the power of sin by sanctification.

V. 29. **Take my yoke upon you**-Believe in me: receive me as your prophet, priest, and king.

For I am meek and lowly in heart-Meek toward all men, lowly toward God:

and ye shall find rest-Whoever therefore does not find rest of soul, is not meek and lowly. The fault is not in the yoke of Christ: but in thee, who hast not taken it upon thee. Nor is it possible for any one to be discontented, but through want of meekness or lowliness.

V. 30. **For my yoke is easy**-Or rather gracious, sweet, benign, delightful:

and my burden-Contrary to those of men, is ease, liberty, and honour.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XII.

V. 1. **His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and ate**-Just what sufficed for present necessity: dried corn was a common food among the Jews. #Mr 2:23; #Lu 6:1.

V. 3. **Have ye not read what David did**-And necessity was a sufficient plea for his transgressing the law in a higher instance.

V. 4. **He entered into the house of God**-Into the tabernacle. The temple was not yet built.

The show bread-So they called the bread which the priest, who served that week, put every Sabbath day on the golden table that was in the holy place, before the Lord. The loaves were twelve in number, and represented the twelve tribes of Israel: when the new were brought, the stale were taken away, but were to be eaten by the priests only. #1Sa 21:6.

V. 5. **The priests in the temple profane the Sabbath**-That is, do their ordinary work on this, as on a common day, cleansing all things, and preparing the sacrifices.

A greater than the temple-If therefore the Sabbath must give way to the temple, much more must it give way to me.

V. 7. **I will have mercy and not sacrifice**-That is, when they interfere with each other, I always prefer acts of mercy, before matters of positive institution: yea, before all ceremonial institutions whatever; because these being only means of religion, are suspended of course, if circumstances occur, wherein they clash with love, which is the end of it. #Mt 9:13.

V. 8. **For the Son of man**-Therefore they are guiltless, were it only on this account, that they act by my authority, and attend on me in my ministry, as the priests attended on God in the temple:

is Lord even of the Sabbath-This certainly implies, that the Sabbath was an institution of great and distinguished importance; it may perhaps also refer to that signal act of authority which Christ afterward exerted over it, in changing it from the seventh to the first day of the week. If we suppose here is a transposition of the 7th and 8th verses, then the 8th verse is a proof of the 6th. #Mt 12:7, 8, 6.

V. 9. #Mr 3:1; #Lu 6:6.

V. 12. **It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day**-To save a beast, much more a man.

V. 18. **He shall show judgment to the heathens**-That is, he shall publish the merciful Gospel to them also: the Hebrew word signifies either mercy or justice. #Isa 42:1, &c.

V. 19. **He shall not strive, nor clamour; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets**-That is, he shall not be contentious, noisy, or ostentatious: but gentle, quiet, and lowly. We may observe each word rises above the other, expressing a still higher degree of humility and gentleness.

V. 20. **A bruised reed**-A convinced sinner: one that is bruised with the weight of sin:

smoking flax-One that has the least good desire, the faintest spark of grace:

till he send forth judgment unto victory-That is, till he make righteousness completely victorious over all its enemies.

V. 21. **In his name**-That is, in him.

V. 22. **A demoniac, blind and dumb**-Many undoubtedly supposed these defects to be merely natural. But the Spirit of God saw otherwise, and gives the true account both of the disorder and the cure. How many disorders, seemingly natural, may even now be owing to the same cause? **#Lu 11:14.**

V. 23. **Is not this the son of David**-That is, the **Messiah**.

V. 24. **#Mr 3:22.**

V. 25. **Jesus knowing their thoughts**-It seems they had as yet only said it in their hearts.

V. 26. **How shall his kingdom be established**-Does not that subtle spirit know this is not the way to establish his kingdom?

V. 27. **By whom do your children**-That is, disciples,

cast them out-It seems, some of them really did this; although the sons of Sceva could not.

Therefore shall they be your judge-Ask them, if Satan will cast out Satan: let even them be judges in this matter. And they shall convict you of obstinacy and partiality, who impute that in me to **Beelzebub**, which in them you impute to God. Beside, how can I rob him of his subjects, till I have conquered him?

The kingdom of God is come upon you-Unawares; before you expected: so the word implies.

V. 29. **How can one enter into the strong one's house, unless he first bind the strong one**-So Christ coming into the world, which was then eminently the strong one's, Satan's house, first bound him, and then took his spoils.

V. 30. **He that is not with me is against me**-For there are no neuters in this war. Every one must be either with Christ or against him; either a loyal subject or a rebel. And there are none upon earth,

who neither promote nor obstruct his kingdom. For he that does not gather souls to God, scatters them from him.

V. 31. **The blasphemy against the Spirit**-How much stir has been made about this? How many sermons, yea, volumes, have been written concerning it? And yet there is nothing plainer in all the Bible. It is neither more nor less than the ascribing those miracles to the power of the devil, which Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost. #Mr 3:28; #Lu 12:10.

V. 32. **Whosoever speaketh against the Son of man**-In any other respects:

It shall be forgiven him-Upon his true repentance:

But whosoever speaketh thus against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come-This was a proverbial expression among the Jews, for a thing that would never be done. It here means farther, He shall not escape the punishment of it, either in this world, or in the world to come. The judgment of God shall overtake him, both here and hereafter.

V. 33. **Either make the tree good and its fruit good: or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt**-That is, you must allow, they are both good, or both bad.-For if the fruit is good, so is the tree; if the fruit is evil, so is the tree also.

For the tree is known by its fruit-As if he had said, Ye may therefore know me by my fruits. By my converting sinners to God, you may know that God hath sent me. #Mt 7:16; #Lu 6:43.

V. 34. In another kind likewise, **the tree is known by its fruit**-Namely, the heart by the conversation.

V. 36. Ye may perhaps think, God does not so much regard your words.

But I say to you-That not for blasphemous and profane words only, but

for every idle word which men shall speak-For want of seriousness or caution; for every discourse which is not conducive to the glory of God,

they shall give account in the day of judgment.

V. 37. **For by thy words** (as well as thy tempers and works) **thou shalt** then **be** either acquitted or condemned. Your words as well as actions shall be produced in evidence for or against you, to prove whether you was a true believer or not. And according to that evidence you will either be acquitted or condemned in the great day.

V. 38. **We would see a sign**-Else we will not believe this. #Mt 16:1; #Lu 11:16, 29.

V. 39. **An adulterous generation**-Whose heart wanders from God, though they profess him to be their husband. Such adulterers are all those who love the world, and all who seek the friendship of it.

Seeketh a sign-After all they have had already, which were abundantly sufficient to convince them, had not their hearts been estranged from God, and consequently averse to the truth.

The sign of Jonah-Who was herein a type of Christ.

V. 40. **Three days and three nights**-It was customary with the eastern nations to reckon any part of a natural day of twenty-four hours, for the whole day. Accordingly they used to say a thing was done after three or seven days, if it was done on the third or seventh day, from that which was last mentioned. Instances of this may be seen, **#1Ki 20:29**; and in many other places. And as the Hebrews had no word to express a natural day, they used night and day, or day and night for it. So that to say a thing happened after three days and three nights, was with them the very same, as to say, it happened after three days, or on the third day. See **#Es 4:16; 5:1; #Ge 7:4, 12; #Ex 24:18; 34:28. #Jon 2:1.**

V. 42. **She came from the uttermost parts of the earth**-That part of Arabia from which she came was the uttermost part of the earth that way, being bounded by the sea. **#1Ki 10:1.**

V. 43. But how dreadful will be the consequence of their rejecting me?

When the unclean spirit goeth out-Not willingly, but being compelled by one that is stronger than he.

He walketh-Wanders up and down;

through dry places-Barren, dreary, desolate; or places not yet watered with the Gospel:

Seeking rest, and findeth none-How can he, while he carries with him his own hell? And is it not the case of his children too? Reader, is it thy case? **#Lu 11:24.**

V. 44. **Whence he came out**-He speaks as if he had come out of his own accord: See his pride!

He findeth it empty-of God, of Christ, of his Spirit:

Swept-from love, lowliness, meekness, and all the fruits of the Spirit:

And garnished-With levity and security: so that there is nothing to keep him out, and much to invite him in.

V. 45. **Seven other spirits**-That is, a great many; a certain number being put for an uncertain:

More wicked than himself-Whence it appears, that there are degrees of wickedness among the devils themselves:

They enter in and dwell-For ever in him who is forsaken of God.

So shall it be to this wicked generation-Yea, and to apostates in all ages.

V. 46. **His brethren**-His kinsmen: they were the sons of Mary, the wife of Cleopas, or Alpheus, his mother's sister; and came now **seeking to take him**, as one beside himself, **#Mr 3:21. #Mr 3:31; #Lu 8:19.**

V. 48. **And he answering, said**-Our Lord's knowing why they came, sufficiently justifies his seeming disregard of them.

V. 49, 50. See the highest severity, and the highest goodness! Severity to his natural, goodness to his spiritual relations! In a manner disclaiming the former, who opposed the will of his heavenly Father, and owning the latter, who obeyed it.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XIII.

V. 1. **#Mr 4:1; #Lu 8:4.**

V. 2. **He went into the vessel**-Which constantly waited upon him, while he was on the sea coast.

V. 3. **In parables**-The word is here taken in its proper sense, for apt similes or comparisons. This way of speaking, extremely common in the eastern countries, drew and fixed the attention of many, and occasioned the truths delivered to sink the deeper into humble and serious hearers. At the same time, by an awful mixture of justice and mercy, it hid them from the proud and careless.

In this chapter our Lord delivers seven parables; directing the four former (as being of general concern) to all the people; the three latter to his disciples.

Behold the sower-How exquisitely proper is this parable to be an introduction to all the rest! In this our Lord answers a very obvious and a very important question. The same sower, Christ, and the same preachers sent by him, always sow the same seed: why has it not always the same effect? He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!

V. 4. **And while he sowed, some seeds fell by the highway side, and the birds came and devoured them**-It is observable, that our Lord points out the grand hinderances of our bearing fruit, in the same order as they occur. The first danger is, that the birds will devour the seed. If it escape this, there is then another danger, namely, lest it be scorched, and wither away. It is long after this that the thorns spring up and choke the good seed.

A vast majority of those who hear the word of God, receive the seed as by the **highway side**. Of those who do not lose it by the birds, yet many receive it as **on stony places**. Many of them who receive it in a better soil, yet suffer **the thorns to grow up, and choke it**: so that few even of these endure to the end, and bear fruit unto perfection: yet in all these cases, it is not the will of God that hinders, but their own voluntary perverseness.

V 8. **Good ground**-Soft, not like that by the highway side; deep, not like the stony ground; purged, not full of thorns.

V. 11. **To you, who have, it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**-The deep things which flesh and blood cannot reveal, pertaining to the inward, present kingdom of heaven.

But to them who have not, it is not given-*Therefore speak I in parables*, that ye may understand, while they do not understand.

V. 12. **Whosoever hath**-That is, improves what he hath, uses the grace given according to the design of the giver;

to him shall be given-More and more, in proportion to that improvement.

But whosoever hath not-Improves it not,

from him shall be taken even what he hath-Here is the grand rule of God's dealing with the children of men: a rule fixed as the pillars of heaven. This is the key to all his providential dispensations; as will appear to men and angels in that day. #Mt 25:29; #Mr 4:25; #Lu 8:18; 19:26.

V. 13. **Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing, they see not**-In pursuance of this general rule, I do not give more knowledge to this people, because they use not that which they have already: having all the means of seeing, hearing, and understanding, they use none of them: they do not effectually see, or hear, or understand any thing.

V. 14. **Hearing ye will hear, but in nowise understand**-That is,

Ye will surely hear. All possible means will be given you: yet they will profit you nothing; because your heart is sensual, stupid, and insensible; your spiritual senses are shut up; yea, you **have closed** your eyes against the light; as being unwilling to understand the things of God, and afraid, not desirous that he **should heal you.** #Isa 6:9; #Joh 12:40; #Ac 28:26.

V. 16. **But blessed are your eyes**-For you both see and understand. You know how to prize the light which is given you. #Lu 10:23.

V. 19. **When any one heareth the word, and considereth it not**-The first and most general cause of unfruitfulness.

The wicked one cometh-Either inwardly; filling the mind with thoughts of other things; or by his agent. Such are all they that introduce other subjects, when men should be considering what they have heard.

V. 20. The seed sown **on stony places**, therefore *sprang up* soon, *because* it did not sink deep, #Mt 13:5.

He receiveth it with joy-Perhaps with transport, with ecstasy: struck with the beauty of truth, and drawn by the preventing grace of God.

V. 21. **Yet hath he not root in himself**-No deep work of grace: no change in the ground of his heart. Nay, he has no deep conviction; and without this, good desires soon wither away.

He is offended-He finds a thousand plausible pretences for leaving so narrow and rugged a way.

V. 22. **He that received the seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word and considereth it**-In spite of Satan and his agents: yea, hath root in himself is deeply convinced, and in a great measure inwardly changed; so that he will not draw back, even

when tribulation or persecution ariseth. And yet even in him, together with the good seed, the thorns spring up, #Mt 13:7. (perhaps unperceived at first) till they gradually **choke** it, destroy all its life and power, and **it becometh unfruitful**.

Cares are **thorns** to the poor: wealth to the rich; the desire of other things to all.

The deceitfulness of riches-Deceitful indeed! for they smile, and betray: kiss, and smite into hell. They put out the eyes, harden the heart, steal away all the life of God; fill the soul with pride, anger, love of the world; make men enemies to the whole cross of Christ! And all the while are eagerly desired, and vehemently pursued, even by those who believe there is a God!

V. 23. **Some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty**-That is, in various proportions; some abundantly more than others.

V. 24. **He proposed another parable**-in which he farther explains the case of unfruitful hearers.

The kingdom of heaven (as has been observed before) sometimes signifies eternal glory: sometimes the way to it, inward religion; sometimes, as here, the Gospel dispensation: the phrase is likewise used for a person or thing relating to any one of those: so in this place it means, Christ preaching the Gospel, who

is like a man sowing good seed-The expression, *is like*, both here and in several other places, only means, that the thing spoken of may be illustrated by the following similitude.

Who sowed good seed in his field-God sowed nothing but good in his whole creation. Christ sowed only the good seed of truth in his Church.

V. 25. **But while men slept**-They ought to have watched: the Lord of the field sleepeth not.

His enemy came and sowed darnel-This is very like wheat, and commonly grows among wheat rather than among other grain: but *tares* or vetches are of the pulse kind, and bear no resemblance to wheat.

V. 26. **When the blade was sprung up, then appeared the darnel**-It was not discerned before: it seldom appears, as soon as the good seed is sown: all at first appears to be peace, and love, and joy.

V. 27. **Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it darnel?**-Not from the parent of good. Even the heathen could say,

"No evil can from thee proceed:
'Tis only suffer'd, not decreed:
As darkness is not from the sun,
Nor mount the shades, till he is gone."

V. 28. **He said, An enemy hath done this**-A plain answer to the great question concerning the origin of evil. God made men (as he did angels) intelligent creatures, and consequently free either to choose good or evil: but he implanted no evil in the human soul:

An enemy (with man's concurrence) **hath done this**.

Darnel, in the Church, is properly outside Christians, such as have the form of godliness, without the power. Open sinners, such as have neither the form nor the power, are not so properly darnel, as thistles and brambles: these ought to be rooted up without delay, and not suffered in the Christian community. Whereas should fallible men attempt to **gather up the darnel**, they would often **root up the wheat with them**.

V. 31. **He proposed to them another parable**-The former parables relate chiefly to unfruitful hearers; these that follow, to those who bear good fruit.

The kingdom of heaven-Both the Gospel dispensation, and the inward kingdom. #Mr 4:30; #Lu 13:18.

V. 32. **The least**-That is, one of the least: a way of speaking extremely common among the Jews.

It becometh a tree-In those countries it grows exceeding large and high. So will the Christian doctrine spread in the world, and the life of Christ in the soul.

V. 33. **Three measures**-This was the quantity which they usually baked at once:

till the whole was leavened-Thus will the Gospel leaven the world and grace the Christian. #Lu 13:20.

V. 34. **Without a parable spake he not unto them**-That is, not at that time; at other times he did.

V. 35. #Ps 78:2.

V. 38. **The good seed are the children of the kingdom**-That is, the children of God, the righteous.

V. 41. **They shall gather all things that offend**-Whatever had hindered or grieved the children of God; whatever things or persons had hindered the good seed which Christ had sown from taking root or bearing fruit. The Greek word is, *All scandals*.

V. 44. The three following parables are proposed, not to the multitude, but peculiarly to the apostles: the two former of them relate to those who receive the Gospel; the third, both to those who receive, and those who preach it.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hid in a field-The kingdom of God within us is a treasure indeed, but a treasure hid from the world, and from the most wise and prudent in it. He that

finds this treasure, (perhaps when he thought it far from him,) hides it deep in his heart, and gives up all other happiness for it.

V. 45. **The kingdom of heaven**-That is, one who earnestly seeks for it: in **#Mt 13:47** it means, the Gospel preached, which is **like a net** gathering of every kind: just so the Gospel, wherever it is preached, gathers at first both good and bad, who are for a season full of approbation and warm with good desires. But Christian discipline, and strong, close exhortation, begin that separation in this world, which shall be accomplished by the angels of God in the world to come.

V. 52. **Every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven**-That is, every duly prepared preacher of the Gospel has a treasure of Divine knowledge, out of which he is able to bring forth all sorts of instructions. The word **treasure** signifies any collection of things whatsoever, and the places where such collections are kept.

V. 53. **He departed thence**-He crossed the lake from Capernaum: **and came** once more **into his own country-Nazareth**: but with no better success than he had had there before.

V. 54. **Whence hath HE**-Many texts are not understood, for want of knowing the proper emphasis; and others are utterly misunderstood, by placing the emphasis wrong. To prevent this in some measure, the emphatical words are here printed in capital letters. **#Mr 6:1; #Lu 4:16, 22.**

V. 55. **The carpenter's son**-The Greek, word means, one that works either in wood, iron, or stone.

His brethren-Our kinsmen. They were the sons of Mary, sister to the virgin, and wife of Cleophas or Alpheus.

James-Styled by St. Paul also, **the Lord's brother**, **#Ga 1:19.**

Simon-Surnamed the Canaanite.

V. 57. **They were offended at him**-They looked on him as a mean, ignoble man, not worthy to be regarded. **#Joh 4:44; #Lu 7:23.**

V. 58. **He wrought not many mighty works, because of their unbelief**-And the reason why many mighty works are not wrought now, is not, that the faith is not every where planted; but, that unbelief every where prevails.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XIV.

V. 1. **At that time**-When our Lord had spent about a year in his public ministry.

Tetrarch-King of a fourth part of his father's dominions. #Mr 6:14.

V. 2. **He is risen from the dead**-Herod was a Sadducee: and the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead. But Sadduceeism staggers when conscience awakes.

V. 3. **His brother Philip's wife**-Who was still alive. #Mr 6:17.

V. 4. **It is not lawful for thee to have her**-It was not lawful indeed for either of them to have her. For her father Aristobulus was their own brother. John's words were rough, like his raiment. He would not break the force of truth by using soft words, even to a king.

V. 5. **He would have put him to death**-In his fit of passion; but he was then restrained by fear of the multitude; and afterward by the reverence he bore him.

V. 6. **The daughter of Herodias**-Afterward infamous for a life suitable to this beginning.

V. 8. **Being before instructed by her mother**-Both as to the matter and manner of her petition:

She said, Give me here-Fearing if he had time to consider, he would not do it: **John the Baptist's head in a charger**-A large dish or bowl.

V. 9. **And the king was sorry**-Knowing that John was a good man.

Yet for the oath's sake-So he murdered an innocent man from mere tenderness of conscience.

V. 10. **And he sent and beheaded John in the prison, and his head was given to the damsel**-How mysterious is the providence, which left the life of so holy a man in such infamous hands! which permitted it to be sacrificed to the malice of an abandoned harlot, the petulancy of a vain girl, and the rashness of a foolish, perhaps drunken prince, who made a prophet's head the reward of a dance! But we are sure the Almighty will repay his servants in another world for what ever they suffer in this.

V. 13. **Jesus withdrew into a desert place**-1. To avoid Herod: 2. Because of the multitude pressing upon him, #Mr 6:32: and 3. To talk with his disciples, newly returned from their progress, #Lu 9:10:

apart-From all but his disciples. #Joh 6:1.

V. 15. **The time is now past**-The usual meal time. #Mr 6:35; #Lu 9:12.

V. 22. **He constrained his disciples**-Who were unwilling to leave him. #Mr 6:45; #Joh 6:15.

V. 24. **In the evening**-Learned men say the Jews reckoned two evenings; the first beginning at three in the afternoon, the second, at sunset. If so, the latter is meant here.

V. 25. **The fourth watch**-The Jews (as well as the Romans) usually divided the night into four watches, of three hours each. The first watch began at six, the second at nine, the third at twelve, the fourth at three in the morning.

If it be thou-It is the same as, Since it is thou. The particle *if* frequently bears this meaning, both in ours and in all languages. So it means, #Joh 13:14, 17. St. Peter was in no doubt, or he would not have quitted the ship.

V. 30. **He was afraid**-Though he had been used to the sea, and was a skilful swimmer. But so it frequently is. When grace begins to act, the natural courage and strength are withdrawn.

V. 33. **Thou art the Son of God**-They mean, the Messiah.

V. 35. #Mr 6:45.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XV.

V. 1. **#Mr 7:1.**

V. 2. **The elders**-The chief doctors or, teachers among the Jews.

V. 3. **They wash not their hands when they eat bread**-Food in general is termed bread in Hebrew; so that to **eat bread** is the same as to make a meal.

V. 4. **Honour thy father and mother**-Which implies all such relief as they stand in need of. **#Ex 20:12; 21:17.**

V. 5. **It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest have been profited by me**-That is, I have given, or at least, purpose to give to the treasury of the temple, what you might otherwise have had from me.

V. 7. **Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying**-That is, the description which Isaiah gave of your fathers, is exactly applicable to you. The words therefore which were a description of them, are a prophecy with regard to you.

V. 8. **Their heart is far from me**-And without this all outward worship is mere mockery of God. **#Isa 29:13.**

V. 9. **Teaching the commandments of men**-As equal with, nay, superior to, those of God. What can be a more heinous sin?

V. 13. **Every plant**-That is, every doctrine.

V. 14. **Let them alone**-If they are indeed **blind leaders of the blind; let them alone:** concern not yourselves about them: a plain direction how to behave with regard to all such. **#Lu 6:39.**

V. 17. **Are ye also yet without understanding**-How fair and candid are the sacred historians? Never concealing or excusing their own blemishes.

V. 19. **First evil thoughts**-then **murders**-and the rest.

Railings-The Greek word includes all reviling, backbiting, and evil speaking.

V. 21. **#Mr 7:24.**

V. 22. **A woman of Canaan**-Canaan was also called Syrophenicia, as lying between Syria properly so called, and Phenicia, by the sea side.

Cried to him-From afar,

Thou Son of David-So she had some knowledge of the promised Messiah.

V. 23. **He answered her not a word**-He sometimes tries our faith in like manner.

V. 24. **I am not sent**-Not primarily; not yet.

V. 25. **Then came she**-Into the house where he now was.

V. 28. **Thy faith**-Thy reliance on the power and goodness of God.

V. 29. **The sea of Galilee**-The Jews gave the name of seas to all large lakes. This was a hundred furlongs long, and forty broad. It was called also, **the sea of Tiberias**. It lay on the borders of Galilee, and the city of Tiberias stood on its western shore. It was likewise styled **the lake of Gennesareth**: perhaps a corruption of Cinnereth, the name by which it was anciently called, #Nu 34:11. #Mr 7:31.

V. 32. **They continue with me now three days**-It was now the third day since they came. #Mr 8:1.

V. 36. **He gave thanks, or blessed the food**-That is, he praised God for it, and prayed for a blessing upon it.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XVI.

V. 1. **A sign from heaven**-Such they imagined Satan could not counterfeit. #Mr 8:11; #Mt 12:38.

V. 2. #Lu 12:54.

V. 3. **The signs of the times**-The signs which evidently show, that this is the time of the Messiah.

V. 4. **A wicked and adulterous generation**-Ye would seek no farther sign, did not your wickedness, your love of the world, which is spiritual adultery, blind your understanding.

V. 5. #Mr 8:14.

V. 6. **Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees**-That is, of their false doctrine: this is elegantly so called; for it spreads in the soul, or the Church, as leaven does in meal. #Lu 12:1.

V. 7. **They reasoned among themselves**-What must we do then for bread, since we have taken no bread with us?

V. 8. **Why reason ye**-Why are you troubled about this? Am I not able, if need so require, to supply you by a word?

V. 11. **How do ye not understand**-Beside, do you not understand, that I did not mean **bread**, by the **leaven** of the Pharisees and Sadducees?

V. 13. **And Jesus coming**-There was a large interval of time between what has been related, and what follows. The passages that follow were but a short time before our Lord suffered. #Mr 8:27; #Lu 9:18.

V. 14. **Jeremiah, or one of the prophets**-There was at that time a current tradition among the Jews, that either Jeremiah, or some other of the ancient prophets would rise again before the Messiah came.

V. 16. **Peter**-Who was generally the most forward to speak.

V. 17. **Flesh and blood**-That is, thy own reason, or any natural power whatsoever.

V. 18. **On this rock**-Alluding to his name, which signifies a rock, namely, the faith which thou hast now professed;

I will build my Church-But perhaps when our Lord uttered these words, he pointed to himself, in like manner as when he said, **Destroy this temple**, #Joh 2:19; meaning the temple of his body. And it is certain, that as he is spoken of in Scripture, as the only foundation of the Church, so this

is that which the apostles and evangelists laid in their preaching. It is in respect of laying this, that the names of the twelve apostles (not of St. Peter only) were equally inscribed on the **twelve foundations** of the city of God, **#Re 21:14**.

The gates of hell-As gates and walls were the strength of cities, and as courts of judicature were held in their gates, this phrase properly signifies the power and policy of Satan and his instruments.

Shall not prevail against it-Not against the Church universal, so as to destroy it. And they never did. There hath been a small remnant in all ages.

V. 19. **I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven**-Indeed not to him alone, (for they were equally given to all the apostles at the same time, **#Joh 20:21-23**;) but to him were first given the keys both of doctrine and discipline. He first, after our Lord's resurrection, exercised the apostleship, **#Ac 1:15**. And he first by preaching opened the kingdom of heaven, both to the Jews, **#Ac 2:14** &c., and to the Gentiles, **#Ac 10:34** &c.

Under the term of binding and loosing are contained all those acts of discipline which Peter and his brethren performed as apostles: and undoubtedly what they thus performed on earth, God confirmed in heaven. **#Mt 18:18**.

V. 20. **Then charged he his disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ**-Jesus himself had not said it expressly even to his apostles, but left them to infer it from his doctrine and miracles. Neither was it proper the apostles should say this openly, before that grand proof of it, his resurrection. If they had, they who believed them would the more earnestly have sought to take and make him a king: and they who did not believe them would the more vehemently have rejected and opposed such a Messiah.

V. 21. **From that time Jesus began to tell his disciples, that he must suffer many things**-Perhaps this expression, began, always implied his entering on a set and solemn discourse. Hitherto he had mainly taught them only one point, That he was the Christ. From this time he taught them another, That Christ must through sufferings and death enter into his glory.

From the elders-The most honourable and experienced men;

the chief priests-Accounted the most religious;

and the scribes-The most learned body of men in the nation. Would not one have expected, that these should have been the very first to receive him? But **not many wise, not many noble** were called.

Favour thyself-The advice of the world, the flesh, and the devil, to every one of our Lord's followers. **#Mr 8:31; #Lu 9:22**.

V. 23. **Get thee behind me**-Out of my sight. It is not improbable, Peter might step before him, to stop him.

Satan-Our Lord is not recorded to have given so sharp a reproof to any other of his apostles on any occasion. He saw it was needful for the pride of Peter's heart, puffed up with the commendation lately given him. Perhaps the term **Satan** may not barely mean, Thou art my **enemy**, while thou fanciest thyself most my friend; but also, Thou art acting the very part of Satan, both by endeavouring to hinder the redemption of mankind, and by giving me the most deadly advice that can ever spring from the pit of hell.

Thou savourest not-Dost not relish or desire. We may learn from hence,

1. That whosoever says to us in such a case, **Favour thyself**, is acting the part of the devil:
2. That the proper answer to such an adviser is, Get thee behind me:
3. That otherwise he will be **an offence** to us, an occasion of our stumbling, if not falling:
4. That this advice always proceeds from the not relishing the things of God, but the things of men.

Yea, so far is this advice, *favour thyself*, from being fit for a Christian either to give or take, that *if any man will come after Christ*, his very first step is to *deny, or renounce himself*: in the room of his own will, to substitute the will of God, as his one principle of action.

V. 24. **If any man be willing to come after me**-None is forced; but if any will be a Christian, it must be on these terms,

Let him deny himself, and take up his cross-A rule that can never be too much observed: let him in all things deny his own will, however pleasing, and do the will of God, however painful.

Should we not consider all crosses, all things grievous to flesh and blood, as what they really are, as opportunities of embracing God's will at the expense of our own? And consequently as so many steps by which we may advance toward perfection? We should make a swift progress in the spiritual life, if we were faithful in this practice. Crosses are so frequent, that whoever makes advantage of them, will soon be a great gainer. Great crosses are occasions of great improvement: and the little ones, which come daily, and even hourly, make up in number what they want in weight. We may in these daily and hourly crosses make effectual oblations of our will to God; which oblations, so frequently repeated, will soon amount to a great sum. Let us remember then (what can never be sufficiently inculcated) that God is the author of all events: that none is so small or inconsiderable, as to escape his notice and direction. Every event therefore declares to us the will of God, to which thus declared we should heartily submit. We should renounce our own to embrace it; we should approve and choose what his choice warrants as best for us. Herein should we exercise ourselves continually; this should be our practice all the day long. We should in humility accept the little crosses that are dispensed to us, as those that best suit our weakness. Let us bear these little things, at least for God's sake, and prefer his will to our own in matters of so small importance. And his goodness will accept these mean oblations; for he despiseth not the day of small things. #Mt 10:38.

V. 25. **Whosoever will save his life**-At the expense of his conscience: whosoever, in the very highest instance, that of life itself, will not **renounce himself**, shall be lost eternally. But can any man hope he should be able **thus** to renounce himself, if he cannot do it in the smallest instances?

And whosoever will lose his life shall find it-What he loses on earth he shall find in heaven.
#Mt 10:39; #Mr 8:35; #Lu 9:24; 17:33; #Joh 12:25.

V. 27. **For the Son of man shall come**-For there is no way to escape the righteous judgment of God.

V. 28. And as an emblem of this, there are some here who shall live to see tho Messiah coming to set up his mediatorial kingdom, with great power and glory, by the increase of his Church, and the destruction of the temple, city, and polity of the Jews.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XVII.

V. 1. **A high mountain**-Probably Mount Tabor. #Mr 9:2; #Lu 9:28.

V. 2. **And was transfigured**-Or transformed. The indwelling Deity darted out its rays through the veil of the flesh; and that with such transcendent splendour, that he no longer bore the *form of a servant*. His face shone with Divine majesty, like the sun in its strength; and all his body was so irradiated by it, that his clothes could not conceal its glory, but became white and glittering as the very light, with which he covered himself as with a garment.

V. 3. **There appeared Moses and Elijah**-Here for the full confirmation of their faith in Jesus, Moses, the giver of the law, Elijah, the most zealous of all the prophets, and God speaking from heaven, all bore witness to him.

V. 4. **Let us make three tents**-The words of rapturous surprise. He says *three*, not six: because the apostles desired to be with their Master.

V. 5. **Hear ye him**-As superior even to Moses and the prophets. See #De 18:17.

V. 7. **Be not afraid**-And doubtless the same moment he gave them courage and strength.

V. 9. **Tell the vision to no man**-Not to the rest of the disciples, lest they should be grieved and discouraged because they were not admitted to the sight: nor to any other persons, lest it should enrage some the more, and his approaching sufferings shall make others disbelieve it;

till the Son of man be risen again-Till the resurrection should make it credible, and confirm their testimony about it.

V. 10. **Why then say the scribes, that Elijah must come first**-Before the Messiah? If no man is to know of his coming? Should we not rather tell every man, that he is come, and that we have seen him, witnessing to thee as the Messiah?

V. 11. **Regulate all things**-In order to the coming of Christ.

V. 12. **Elijah is come already**-And yet when *the Jews asked John, Art thou Elijah?* *He said, I am not,* #Joh 1:21. His meaning was, I am not Elijah the Tishbite, come again into the world. But he was the person of whom Malachi prophesied under that name.

V. 14. #Mr 9:14; #Lu 11:37.

V. 15. **He is lunatic**-This word might with great propriety he used, though the case was mostly preternatural; as the evil spirit would undoubtedly take advantage of the influence which the changes of the moon have on the brain and nerves.

V. 17. **O unbelieving and perverse generation**-Our Lord speaks principally this to his disciples.

How long shall I be with you?-Before you steadfastly believe?

V. 20. **Because of your unbelief**-Because in this particular they had not faith.

If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed-That is, the least measure of it. But it is certain, the faith which is here spoken of does not always imply saving faith. Many have had it who thereby *cast out devils*, and yet will at last have their portion with them. It is only a supernatural persuasion given a man, that God will work thus by him at that hour. Now, *though I have all this faith so as to remove mountains*, yet *if I have not the faith which worketh by love, I am nothing*.

To *remove mountains* was a proverbial phrase among the Jews, and is still retained in their writings, to express a thing which is very difficult, and to appearance impossible. #Mt 21:21; #Lu 17:6.

V. 21. **This kind of devils goeth not out but by prayer and fasting**-What a testimony is here of the efficacy of fasting, when added to fervent prayer! Some kinds of devils the apostles had cast out before this, without fasting.

V. 22. #Mr 9:30; #Lu 9:44.

V. 24. **When they were come to Capernaum**-Where our Lord now dwelt. This was the reason why they stayed till he came thither, to ask him for the tribute.

Doth not your Master pay tribute?-This was a tribute or payment of a peculiar kind, being half a shekel, (that is, about fifteen pence,) which every master of a family used to pay yearly to the service of the temple, to buy salt, and little things not otherwise provided for. It seems to have been a voluntary thing, which custom rather than any law had established.

V. 25. **Jesus prevented him**-Just when St. Peter was going to ask him for it.

Of their own sons, or of strangers?-That is, such as are not of their own family.

V. 26. **Then are the sons free**-The sense is, This is paid for the use of the house of God. But I am the Son of God. Therefore I am free from any obligation of paying this to my own Father.

V. 27. **Yet that, we may not offend them**-Even those unjust, unreasonable men, who claim what they have no manner of right to: do not contest it with them, but rather yield to their demand, than violate peace or love. O what would not one of a loving spirit do for peace! Any thing which is not expressly forbidden in the word of God.

A piece of money-The original word is a *stater*, which was in value two shillings and sixpence: just the sum that was wanted.

Give for me and thee-Peter had a family of his own: the other apostles were the family of Jesus.

How illustrious a degree of knowledge and power did our Lord here discover! Knowledge, penetrating into this animal, though beneath the waters; and power, in directing this very fish to Peter's hook, though he himself was at a distance! How must this have encouraged both him and his brethren in a firm dependence on Divine Providence.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XVIII.

V. 1. **Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?**-Which of us shall be thy prime minister? They still dreamed of a temporal kingdom.

V. 2. **And Jesus calling to him a little child**-This is supposed to have been the great Ignatius, whom Trajan, the wise, the good Emperor Trajan, condemned to be cast to the wild beasts at Rome! #Mr 9:36; #Lu 9:47.

V. 3. **Except ye be converted**-The first step toward entering into the kingdom of grace, is to **become as little children**: lowly in heart, knowing yourselves utterly ignorant and helpless, and hanging wholly on your Father who is in heaven, for a supply of all your wants. We may farther assert, (though it is doubtful whether this text implies so much,) except ye be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; except ye be entirely, inwardly changed, renewed in the image of God, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of glory. Thus must every man be converted in this life, or he can never enter into life eternal.

Ye shall in no wise enter-So far from being great in it. #Mt 19:14.

V. 5, 6. And all who are in this sense little children are unspeakably dear to me. Therefore help them all you can, as if it were myself in person, and see that ye offend them not; that is, that ye turn them not out of the right way, neither hinder them in it. #Mt 10:40; #Lu 10:16; #Joh 13:20.

V. 6. #Mr 9:42; #Lu 17:1.

V. 7. **Wo to the world because of offences**-That is, unspeakable misery will be in the world through them;

for it must needs be that offences come-Such is the nature of things, and such the weakness, folly, and wickedness of mankind, that it cannot be but they will come;

but wo to that man-That is, miserable is that man,

by whom the offence cometh. Offences are, all things whereby any one is turned out of, or hindered in the way of God.

V. 8, 9. **If thy hand, foot, eye, cause thee to offend**-If the most dear enjoyment, the most beloved and useful person, turn thee out of, or hinder thee in the way Is not this a hard saying? Yes; if thou take counsel with flesh and blood. #Mt 5:29; #Mr 9:43.

V. 10. **See that ye despise not one of these little ones**-As if they were beneath your notice. Be careful to *receive* and not to *offend*, the very weakest believer in Christ: for as inconsiderable as

some of these may appear to thee, the very angels of God have a peculiar charge over them: even those of the highest order, who continually appear at the throne of the Most High.

To behold the face of God seems to signify the waiting near his throne; and to be an allusion to the office of chief ministers in earthly courts, who daily converse with their princes.

V. 11. Another, and yet a stronger reason for your not despising them is, that I myself came into the world to save them. #**Lu 19:10**.

V. 12. #**Lu 15:4**.

V. 14. **So it is not the will of your Father**-Neither doth my Father despise the least of them. Observe the gradation. The angels, the Son, the Father.

V. 15. But how can we avoid giving offence to some? or being offended at others! Especially suppose they are quite in the wrong? Suppose they commit a known sin? Our Lord here teaches us how: he lays down a sure method of avoiding all offences. Whosoever closely observes this threefold rule, will seldom offend others, and never be offended himself. If any do any thing amiss, of which thou art an eye or ear witness, thus saith the Lord,

If thy brother-Any who is a member of the same religious community:

Sin against thee,

1. **Go and reprove him alone**-If it may be in person; if that cannot so well be done, by thy messenger; or in writing. Observe, our Lord gives no liberty to omit this; or to exchange it for either of the following steps. If this do not succeed,

2. **Take with thee one or two more**-Men whom he esteems or loves, who may then confirm and enforce what thou sayest; and afterward, if need require, bear witness of what was spoken. If even this does not succeed, then, and not before,

3. **Tell it to the elders of the Church**-Lay the whole matter open before those who watch over yours and his soul. If all this avail not, have no farther intercourse with him, only such as thou hast with heathens.

Can any thing be plainer? Christ does here as expressly command all Christians who see a brother do evil, to take this way, not another, and to take these steps, in this order, as he does to honour their father and mother.

But if so, in what land do the Christians live?

If we proceed from the private carriage of man to man, to proceedings of a more public nature, in what Christian nation are Church censures conformed to this rule? Is this the form in which ecclesiastical judgments appear, in the popish, or even the Protestant world? Are these the methods

used even by those who boast the most loudly of the authority of Christ to confirm their sentences? Let us earnestly pray, that this dishonour to the Christian name may be wiped away, and that common humanity may not, with such solemn mockery, be destroyed in the name of the Lord!

Let him be to thee as the heathen-To whom thou still owest earnest good will, and all the offices of humanity. #Lu 17:3.

V. 18. **Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth**-By excommunication, pronounced in the spirit and power of Christ.

Whatsoever ye shall loose-By absolution from that sentence. In the primitive Church, absolution meant no more than a discharge from Church censure.

Again I say-And not only your intercession for the penitent, but all your united prayers, shall be heard. How great then is the power of joint prayer!

If two of you-Suppose a man and his wife. #Mt 16:19.

V. 20. **Where two or three are gathered together in my name**-That is, to worship me.

I am in the midst of them-By my Spirit, to quicken their prayers, guide their counsels, and answer their petitions.

V. 22. **Till seventy times seven**-That is, as often as there is occasion. A certain number is put for an uncertain.

V. 23. **Therefore**-In this respect.

V. 24. **One was brought who owed him ten thousand talents**-According to the usual computation, if these were talents of gold, this would amount to seventy-two millions sterling. If they were talents of silver, it must have been four millions, four hundred thousand pounds. Hereby our Lord intimates the vast number and weight of our offences against God, and our utter incapacity of making him any satisfaction.

V. 25. **As he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold**-Such was the power which creditors anciently had over their insolvent debtors in several countries.

V. 30. **Went** with him before a magistrate, **and cast him into prison**, protesting he should lie there, **till he should pay the whole debt**.

V. 34. **His lord delivered him to the tormentors**-Imprisonment is a much severer punishment in the eastern countries than in ours. State criminals, especially when condemned to it, are not only confined to a very mean and scanty allowance, but are frequently loaded with clogs or heavy yokes, so that they can neither lie nor sit at ease: and by frequent scourgings and sometimes rackings are brought to an untimely end.

Till he should pay all that was due to him-That is, without all hope of release, for this he could never do.

How observable is this whole account; as well as the great inference our Lord draws from it:

1. The debtor was freely and fully forgiven; 2. He wilfully and grievously offended; 3. His pardon was retracted, the whole debt required, and the offender delivered to the tormentors for ever.

And shall we still say, but when we are once freely and fully forgiven, our pardon can never be retracted?

Verily, verily, I say unto you, **So likewise will my heavenly Father do to you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.**

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XIX.

V. 1. **He departed**-and from that time **walked no more in Galilee.** #Mr 10:1.

V. 2. **Multitudes followed him, and he healed them there**-That is, wheresoever they followed him.

V. 3. **The Pharisees came tempting him**-Trying to make him contradict Moses.

For every cause-That is, for any thing which he dislikes in her. This the scribes allowed.

V. 4. **He said, Have ye not read**-So instead of contradicting him, our Lord confutes them by the very words of Moses.

He who made them, made them male and female from the beginning-At least from the beginning of the Mosaic creation. And where do we read of any other? Does it not follow, that God's making Eve was part of his original design, and not a consequence of Adam's beginning to fall? By making them one man and one woman, he condemned polygamy: by making them one flesh, he condemned divorce.

V. 5. **And said**-By the mouth of Adam, who uttered the words. #Ge 2:24.

V. 7. **Why did Moses command**-Christ replies, **Moses permitted** (not commanded) **it, because of the hardness of your hearts**-Because neither your fathers nor you could bear the more excellent way. #De 24:1; #Mt 5:31; #Mr 10:2; #Lu 16:18.

V. 9. **And I say to you**-I revoke that indulgence from this day, so that from henceforth, **Whosoever, &c.**

V. 11. **But he said to them**-This is not universally true; it does not hold, with regard to all men, but with regard to those only *to whom is given* this excellent gift of God. Now this *is given* to three sorts of persons to some by natural constitution, without their choice: to others by violence, against their choice; and to others by grace with their choice: who steadily withstand their natural inclinations, that they may *wait upon God without distraction*.

V. 12. **There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake**-Happy they! who have abstained from marriage (though without condemning or despising it) that they might walk more closely with God!

He that is able to receive it, let him receive it-This gracious command (for such it is unquestionably, since to say, such a man may live single, is saying nothing. Who ever doubted this?) is not designed for all men: but only for those few who are **able to receive it**. O let these receive it joyfully!

V. 13. **That he should lay his hands on them**-This was a rite which was very early used, in praying for a blessing on young persons. See #Ge 48:14, 20.

The disciples rebuked them-That is, them that brought them: probably thinking such an employ beneath the dignity of their Master. #Mr 10:13; #Lu 18:15.

V. 14. **Of such is the kingdom of heaven**-Little children, either in a natural or spiritual sense, have a right to enter into my kingdom. #Mt 18:3.

V. 16. **And behold one came**-Many of the poor had followed him from the beginning. One rich man *came* at last. #Mr 10:17; #Lu 18:18.

V. 17. **Why callest thou me good**-Whom thou supposest to be only a man.

There is none good-Supremely, originally, essentially, but God.

If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments-From a principle of loving faith. Believe, and thence love and obey. And this undoubtedly is the way to eternal life. Our Lord therefore does not answer ironically, which had been utterly beneath his character, but gives a plain, direct, serious answer to a serious question.

V. 19. #Ex 20:12. &c.

V. 20. **The young man saith, All these have I kept from my childhood**-So he imagined; and perhaps he had, as to the letter; but not as to the spirit, which our Lord immediately shows.

V. 21. **If thou desirest to be perfect**-That is, to be a real Christian:

Sell what thou hast-He who reads the heart saw his bosom sin was love of the world; and knew he could not be saved from this, but by literally renouncing it. To him therefore he gave this particular direction, which he never designed for a general rule. For him that was necessary to salvation: to us it is not. **To sell all** was an absolute duty to him; to many of us it would be an absolute sin.

The young man went away-Not being willing to have salvation at so high a price.

V. 24. **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle**, (a proverbial expression,) **than for a rich man to** go through the strait gate: that is, humanly speaking, it is an absolute impossibility. Rich man! tremble! feel this impossibility; else thou art lost for ever!

V. 25. **His disciples were amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?**-If rich men, with all their advantages, cannot? Who? A poor man; a peasant; a beggar: ten thousand of them, sooner than one that is rich.

V. 26. **Jesus looking upon them**-To compose their hurried spirits. O what a speaking look was there!

Said to them-With the utmost sweetness:

With men this is impossible-It is observable, he does not retract what he had said: no, nor soften it in the least degree, but rather strengthens it, by representing the salvation of a rich man as the utmost effort of Omnipotence.

V. 28. **In the renovation**-In the final renovation of all things:

Ye shall sit-In the beginning of the judgment they shall stand, #2Co 5:10. Then being absolved, they **shall sit** with the Judge, #1Co 6:2:

On twelve thrones-So our Lord promised, without expressing any condition: yet as absolute as the words are, it is certain there is a condition implied, as in many scriptures, where none is expressed. In consequence of this, those twelve did not sit **on those twelve thrones**: for the throne of Judas another took, so that he never sat thereon.

V. 29. **And every one**-In every age and country; not you my apostles only;

That hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or wife, or children-Either by giving any of them up, when they could not be retained with a clear conscience or by willingly refraining from acquiring them:

Shall receive a hundred-fold-In value, though not in kind, even in the present world.

V. 30. **But many first**-Many of those who were first called, **shall be last**-Shall have the lowest reward: those who came after them being preferred before them: and yet possibly both the first and the last may be saved, though with different degrees of glory. #Mt 20:16; #Mr 10:31; #Lu 13:30.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XX.

V. 1. That some of those who were first called may yet be last, our Lord confirms by the following parable: of which the primary scope is, to show, That many of the Jews would be rejected, and many of the Gentiles accepted; the secondary, That of the Gentiles, many who were first converted would be last and lowest in the kingdom of glory; and many of those who were last converted would be first, and highest therein.

The kingdom of heaven is like-That is, the manner of God's proceeding in his kingdom resembles that of **a householder**.

In the morning-At six, called by the Romans and Jews, the first hour. From thence reckoning on to the evening, they called nine, the third hour; twelve, the sixth; three in the afternoon, the ninth; and five, the eleventh.

To hire labourers into his vineyard-All who profess to be Christians are in this sense labourers, and are supposed during their life to be working in God's vineyard.

V. 2. The Roman penny was about seven pence halfpenny. [About thirteen and three quarter cents, American.] This was then the usual price of a day's labour.

V. 6. **About the eleventh hour-**That is, very late; long after the rest were called.

V. 8. **In the evening-**Of life; or of the world.

V. 9. **Who were hired about the eleventh hour-**Either the Gentiles, who were called long after the Jews into the vineyard of the Church of Christ; or those in every age who did not hear, or at least understand the Gospel call, till their day of life was drawing to a period. Some circumstances of the parable seem best to suit the former, some the latter of these senses.

V. 10. **The first supposed they should have received more-**Probably **the first** here may mean the Jews, who supposed they should always be preferred before the Gentiles.

V. 12. **Thou hast made them equal to us-**So St. Peter expressly, **#Ac 15:9**.

God-hath put no difference between us (Jews) **and them**, (Gentiles,) purifying their hearts by faith. And those who were equally holy here, whenever they were called, will be equally happy hereafter.

V. 14. **It is my will to give to this last** called among the heathens **even as to the first** called among the Jews: yea, and to the late converted publicans and sinners, even as to those who, were called long before.

V. 15. **Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?**-Yea, doubtless, to give either to Jew or Gentile a reward infinitely greater than he deserves. But can it be inferred from hence, that it is lawful, or possible, for the merciful Father of spirits to

"Consign an unborn soul to hell?
Or damn him from his mother's womb?"

Is thine eye evil because I am good-Art thou envious, because I am gracious? Here is an evident reference to that malignant aspect, which is generally the attendant of a selfish and envious temper.

V. 16. **So the last shall be first, and the first last**-Not only with regard to the Jews and Gentiles, but in a thousand other instances.

For many are called-All who hear the Gospel;

but few chosen-Only those who obey it. #Mt 19:30; 22:14.

V. 17. #Mr 10:32; #Lu 18:31.

V. 20. **Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children**-Considering what he had been just speaking, was ever any thing more unreasonable? Perhaps Zebedee himself was dead, or was not a follower of Christ. #Mr 10:35.

V. 21. **In thy kingdom**-Still they expected a temporal kingdom.

V. 22. **Ye know not** what is implied in being advanced in my kingdom, and necessarily preredquired thereto. All who share in my kingdom must first share in my sufferings. Are you able and willing to do this? Both these expressions, **The cup, the baptism**, are to be understood of his sufferings and death. The like expressions are common among the Jews.

V. 23. **But to sit on my right hand**-Christ applies to the glories of heaven, what his disciples were so stupid as to understand of the glories of earth. But he does not deny that this is his to give. It is his to give in the strictest propriety, both as God, and as the Son of man. He only asserts, that he gives it to none but those for whom it is originally prepared; namely, those who endure to the end in the **faith that worketh by love**.

V. 25. **Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them**-And hence you imagine, the chief in my kingdom will do as they: but it will be quite otherwise.

V. 26. **Your minister**-That is, your servant. #Mt 23:11.

V. 29. #Mr 10:46; #Lu 18:35.

V. 30. **Behold two blind men cried out**-St. Mark and St. Luke mention only one of them, blind Bartimeus. He was far the more eminent of the two, and, as it seems, spoke for both.

V. 31. **The multitude charged them to hold their peace**-And so they will all who begin to cry after the Son of David. But let those who feel their need of him cry the more; otherwise they will come short of a cure.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XXI.

V. 1. **#Mr 11:1; #Lu 19:29; #Joh 12:12.**

V. 5. **The daughter of Sion**-That is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem: the first words of the passage are cited from **#Isa 62:11**; the rest from **#Zec 9:9**. The ancient Jewish doctors were wont to apply these prophecies to the Messiah.

On an ass-The Prince of Peace did not take a horse, a warlike animal. But he will ride on that by and by, **#Re 19:11**. In the patriarchal ages, illustrious persons thought it no disgrace to make use of this animal: but it by no means appears, that this opinion prevailed, or this custom continued, till the reign of Tiberias. Was it a mean attitude wherein our Lord then appeared? Mean even to contempt! I grant it: I glory in it: it is for the comfort of my soul for the honour of his humility, and for the utter confusion of all worldly pomp and grandeur.

V. 7. **They set him thereon**-That is, on the clothes.

V. 8. **A great multitude spread their garments in the way**-A custom which was usual at the creation of a king, **#2Ki 9:13**.

V. 9. **The multitudes cried, saying**-Probably from a Divine impulse; for certainly most of them understood not the words they uttered.

Hosanna-(Lord save us) was a solemn word in frequent use among the Jews. The meaning is, "We sing hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he, the Messiah, of the Lord. Save. Thou that art in the highest heavens." Our Lord restrained all public tokens of honour from the people till now, lest the envy of his enemies should interrupt his preaching before the time. But this reason now ceasing, he suffered their acclamations, that they might be a public testimony against their wickedness, who in four or five days after cried out, Crucify him, crucify him. The expressions recorded by the other evangelists are somewhat different from these: but all of them were undoubtedly used by some or others of the multitude.

V. 11. **This is Jesus from Nazareth**-What a stumbling block was this! if he was of Nazareth, he could not be the Messiah. But they who earnestly desired to know the truth would not stumble thereat: for upon inquiry (which such would not fail to make) they would find, he was not of Nazareth, but Bethlehem.

V. 12. **He cast out all that sold and bought**-Doves and oxen for sacrifice. He had cast them out three years before, **#Joh 2:14**; bidding them **not make that house a house of merchandise**. Upon the repetition of the offence, he used sharper words.

In the temple-That is, in the outer court of it, where the Gentiles used to worship.

The money changers-The exchangers of foreign money into current coin, which those who came from distant parts might want to offer for the service of the temple. #Mr 11:11, 15; #Lu 19:45.

V. 13. **A den of thieves**-A proverbial expression, for a harbour of wicked men. #Isa 56:7; #Jer 7:11.

V. 16. #Ps 8:2.

V. 17. #Mr 11:11, 12.

V. 20. **The disciples seeing it**-As they went by, the next day.

V. 21. **Jesus answering, said, If ye have faith**-Whence we may learn, that one great end of our Lord in this miracle was to confirm and increase their faith: another was, to warn them against unfruitfulness. #Mt 17:20.

V. 23. **When he was come into the temple, the chief priests came**-Who thought he violated their right:

and the elders of the people-Probably, members of the sanhedrim, to whom that title most properly belonged: which is the more probable, as they were the persons under whose cognizance the late action of Christ, in purging the temple, would naturally fall. These, with the chief priests, seem purposely to have appeared in a considerable company, to give the more weight to what they said, and if need were, to bear a united testimony against him.

As he was teaching-Which also they supposed he had no authority to do, being neither priest, nor Levite, nor scribe. Some of the priests (though not as priests) and all the scribes were authorized teachers.

By what authority dost thou these things-Publicly teach the people! And drive out those who had our commission to traffic in the outer court? #Lu 20:1; #Mr 11:27.

V. 24. **I will ask you one thing**-Who have asked me many: **The baptism**, that is, the whole ministry of **John, was it from heaven or from men?**-By what authority did he act and teach? Did man or God give him that authority? Was it not God? But if so, the consequence was clear. For John testified that Jesus was the Christ.

V. 25. **Why did ye not believe him**-Testifying this.

V. 27. **Neither tell I you**-Not again, in express terms: he had often told them before, and they would not believe him.

V. 30. **He answered, I go, sir: but went not**-Just so did the scribes and Pharisees: they professed the greatest readiness and zeal in the service of God: but it was bare profession, contradicted by all their actions.

V. 32. **John came in a way of righteousness**-Walking in it, as well as teaching it.

The publicans and harlots-The most notorious sinners were reformed, though at first they said, **I will not.**

And ye seeing the amazing change which was wrought in them, though at first ye said, **I go, sir, repented not afterward**-Were no more convinced than before. O how is this scripture fulfilled at this day!

V. 33. **A certain householder planted a vineyard**-God planted the Church in Canaan; **and hedged it round about**-First with the law, then with his peculiar providence: **and digged a wine press**-Perhaps it may mean Jerusalem:

and built a tower-The temple:

and went into a far country-That is, left the keepers of his vineyard, in some measure, to behave as they should see good. #**Mr 12:1**; #**Lu 20:9**.

V. 34. **He sent his servants**-His extraordinary messengers, the prophets:

to the husbandmen-The ordinary preachers or ministers of the Jews.

V. 41. **They say**-Perhaps some of the by-standers, not the chief priests or Pharisees; who, as St. Luke relates, said, God forbid, #**Lu 20:16**.

V. 42. **The builders**-The scribes and priests, whose office it was to build up the Church.

Is become the head of the corner-Or the chief corner stone: he is become the foundation of the Church, on which the whole building rests, and is the principal corner stone, for uniting the Gentiles to it, as the chief corner stone of a house supports and links its two sides together. #**Ps 118:22**.

V. 43. **Therefore**-Because ye reject this corner stone.

The kingdom of God-That is, the Gospel.

V. 44. **Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken**-Stumblers at Christ shall even then receive much hurt. He is said to fall on this stone, who hears the Gospel and does not believe.

But on whomsoever it shall fall-In vengeance, it will utterly destroy him. It will fall on every unbeliever, when Christ cometh in the clouds of heaven. #**Lu 20:18**.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XXII.

V. 1. **Jesus answering, spake**-That is, spake with reference to what had just past.

V. 2. **A king, who made a marriage feast for his son**-So did God, when he brought his first-begotten into the world.

V. 3. **Them that were invited**-Namely, the Jews.

V. 4. **Fatlings**-Fatted beasts and fowls.

V. 5. **One to his farm, another to his merchandise**-One must mind what he has; another, gain what he wants. How many perish by misusing lawful things!

V. 7. **The king sending forth his troops**-The Roman armies employed of God for that purpose.

Destroyed those murderers-Primarily the Jews.

V. 8. **Go into the highways**-The word properly signifies, the by-ways, or turnings of the road.

V. 10. **They gathered all**-By preaching every where.

V. 11. **The guest**-The members of the visible Church.

V. 12. **A wedding garment**-The righteousness of Christ, first imputed, then implanted. It may easily be observed, this has no relation to the Lord's Supper, but to God's proceeding at the last day.

V. 14. **Many are called; few chosen**-Many hear; few believe. Yea, many are members of the visible, but few of the invisible Church. #Mt 20:16.

V. 15. #Mr 12:13; #Lu 20:20.

V. 16. **The Herodians** were a set of men peculiarly attached to Herod, and consequently zealous for the interest of the Roman government, which was the main support of the dignity and royalty of his family.

Thou regardest not the person of men-Thou favourest no man for his riches or greatness.

V. 17. **Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar?**-If he had said, Yes, the Pharisees would have accused him to the people, as a betrayer of the liberties of his country. If he had said, No, the Herodians would have accused him to the Roman governor.

V. 18. **Ye hypocrites**-Pretending a scruple of conscience.

V. 20. **The tribute money**-A Roman coin, stamped with the head of Cesar, which was usually paid in tribute.

V. 21. **They say to him, Cesar's**-Plainly acknowledging, by their having received his coin, that they were under his government. And indeed this is a standing rule. The current coin of every nation shows who is the supreme governor of it.

Render therefore, ye Pharisees, to Cesar the things which ye yourselves acknowledge to be Cesar's: and, ye Herodians, while ye are zealous for Cesar, see that ye render to God the things that are God's.

V. 23. **#Mr 12:18.**

V. 24. **#De 25:5.**

V. 25. **Now there were with us seven brethren**-This story seems to have been a kind of common-place objection, which no doubt they brought upon all occasions.

V. 29. **Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures**-Which plainly assert a resurrection.

Nor the power of God-Which is well able to effect it. How many errors flow from the same source?

V. 30. **They are as the angels**-Incorruptible and immortal. So is the *power* of God shown in them! So little need had they of marriage!

V. 31. **Have ye not read**-The Sadducees had a peculiar value for the books of Moses. Out of these therefore our Lord argues with them.

V. 32. **I am the God of Abraham**-The argument runs thus: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: (for that expression, *Thy God*, implies both benefit from God to man, and duty from man to God) but he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not dead, but living. Therefore, the soul does not die with the body. So indeed the Sadducees supposed, and it was on this ground that they denied the resurrection. **#Ex 3:6.**

V. 33. **At his doctrine**-At the clearness and solidity of his answers.

V. 34. **#Mr 12:28; #Lu 10:25.**

V. 35. **A scribe asking him a question, trying him**-Not, as it seems, with any ill design: but barely to make a farther trial of that wisdom, which he had shown in silencing the Sadducees.

V. 37. **#De 6:5.**

V. 39. **#Le 19:18.**

V. 42. **#Lu 20:41.**

V. 43. **How doth David then by the Spirit**-By inspiration, **call him Lord?** If he be merely the son (or descendant) of David? If he be, as you suppose, a mere man, the son of a man?

V. 44. **The Lord said to my Lord**-This his dominion, to which David himself was subject, shows both the heavenly majesty of the king, and the nature of his kingdom.

Sit thou on my right hand-That is, remain in the highest authority and power. **#Ps 110:1.**

V. 46. **Neither durst any question him any more**-Not by way of ensnaring or tempting him.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XXIII.

V. 1. **Then**-Leaving all converse with his adversaries, whom he now left to the hardness of their hearts.

V. 2. **The scribes sit in the chair of Moses**-That is, read and expound the law of Moses, and are their appointed teachers.

V. 3. **All things therefore**-Which they read out of the law, and enforce therefrom.

V. 4. **#Lu 11:46.**

V. 5. **Their phylacteries**-The Jews, understanding those words literally,

It shall be as a token upon thy hand, and as frontlets between thine eyes, #Ex 13:16.

And thou shalt bind these words for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, #De 6:8; used to wear little scrolls of paper or parchment, bound on their wrist and foreheads, on which several texts of Scripture were writ. These they supposed, as a kind of charm, would preserve them from danger. And hence they seem to have been called phylacteries, or preservatives.

The fringes of their garments-Which God had enjoined them to wear, to remind them of doing all the commandments, **#Nu 15:38.** These, as well as their phylacteries, the Pharisees affected to wear broader and larger than other men. **#Mr 12:38.**

V. 8, 9, 10. The Jewish **rabbis** were also called **father** and **master**, by their several disciples, whom they required,

1. To believe implicitly what they affirmed, without asking any farther reason; 2. To obey implicitly what they enjoined, without seeking farther authority.

Our Lord, therefore, by forbidding us either to give or receive the title of rabbi, master, or father, forbids us either to receive any such reverence, or to pay any such to any but God.

V. 11. **#Mt 20:26.**

V. 12. **Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted**-It is observable that no one sentence of our Lord's is so often repeated as this: it occurs, with scarce any variation, at least ten times in the evangelists. **#Lu 14:11; 18:14.**

V. 13. **Wo to you**-Our Lord pronounced eight blessings upon the mount: he pronounces eight woes here; not as imprecations, but solemn, compassionate declarations of the misery, which these stubborn sinners were bringing upon themselves.

Ye go not in-For ye are not poor in spirit; and ye hinder those that would be so.

V. 14. **#Mr 12:40; #Lu 20:47.**

V. 16. **Wo to you, ye blind guides**-Before he had styled them *hypocrites*, from their personal character: now he gives them another title, respecting their influence upon others. Both these appellations are severely put together in the 23d and (**#Mt 23:23, 25, 33**) 25th verses; and this severity rises to the height in the 33d verse.

The gold of the temple-The treasure kept there.

He is bound-To keep his oath.

V. 20. **He that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon**-Not only by the gift, but by the holy fire, and the sacrifice; and above all, by that God to whom they belong; inasmuch as every oath by a creature is an implicit appeal to God.

V. 23. **Judgment**-That is, justice:

Faith-The word here means fidelity.

V. 24. **Ye blind guides, who** teach others to do as you do yourselves, to **strain out a gnat**-From the liquor they are going to drink!

and swallow a camel-It is strange, that glaring false print, *strain at a gnat*, which quite alters the sense, should run through all the editions of our English Bibles.

V. 25. **Full of rapine and intemperance**-The censure is double (taking intemperance in the vulgar sense.) These miserable men procured unjustly what they used intemperately. No wonder tables so furnished prove a snare, as many find by sad experience. Thus luxury punishes fraud while it feeds disease with the fruits of injustice. But intemperance in the full sense takes in not only all kinds of outward intemperance, particularly in eating and drinking, but all intemperate or immoderate desires, whether of honour, gain, or sensual pleasure.

V. 26. **Ye build the tombs of the prophets**-And that is all, for ye neither observe their sayings, nor imitate their actions.

V. 30. **We would not have been partakers**-So ye make fair professions, as did your fathers.

V. 31. **Wherefore ye testify against yourselves**-By your smooth words as well as devilish actions: *that ye are the genuine sons of them who killed the prophets* of their own times, while they professed the utmost veneration for those of past ages.

From the 3d to the 30th verse **#Mt 23:3-30** is exposed every thing that commonly passes in the world for religion, whereby the pretenders to it keep both themselves and others from entering into the kingdom of God; from attaining, or even seeking after those tempers, in which alone true Christianity consists. As,

1. Punctuality in attending on public and private prayer, **#Mt 23:4-14**. 2. Zeal to make proselytes to our opinion or communion, though they have less of the spirit of religion than before, **#Mt 23:15**. 3. A superstitious reverence for consecrated places or things, without any for Him to whom they are consecrated, **#Mt 23:16-22**. 4. A scrupulous exactness in little observances, though with the neglect of justice, mercy, and faith, **#Mt 23:23, 24**. 5. A nice cautiousness to cleanse the outward behaviour, but without any regard to inward purity, **#Mt 23:25, 26**. 6. A specious face of virtue and piety, covering the deepest hypocrisy and villany, **#Mt 23:27, 28**. 7. A professed veneration for all good men, except those among whom they live.

V. 32. **Fill ye up**-A word of permission, not of command: as if he had said, I contend with you no longer: I leave you to yourselves: you have conquered: now ye may follow the devices of your own hearts.

The measure of your fathers-Wickedness: ye may now be as wicked as they.

V. 33. **Ye serpents**-Our Lord having now lost all hope of reclaiming these, speaks so as to affright others from the like sins.

V. 34. **Wherefore**-That it may appear you are the true children of those murderers, and have a right to have their iniquities visited on you:

Behold, I send-Is not this speaking as one having authority?

Prophets-Men with supernatural credentials:

Wise men-Such as have both natural abilities and experience;

and scribes-Men of learning: but all will not avail. **#Lu 11:49**.

V. 35. **That upon you may come**-The consequence of which will be, that upon you will come the vengeance of all **the righteous blood shed on the earth-Zechariah the son of Barachiah**-Termed Jehoiada, **#2Ch 24:20**, where the story is related:

Ye slew-Ye make that murder also of your fathers your own, by imitating it:

Between the temple-That is, the inner temple, **and the altar**-Which stood in the outer court. Our Lord seems to refer to this instance, rather than any other, because he was the last of the prophets on record that were slain by the Jews for reproving their wickedness: and because God's requiring this blood as well as that of Abel, is particularly taken notice of in Scripture.

V. 37. #**Lu 13:34**.

V. 38. **Behold your house**-The temple, which is now your house, not God's:

Is left unto you-Our Lord spake this as he was going out of it for the last time:

Desolate-Forsaken of God and his Christ, and sentenced to utter destruction.

V. 39. **Ye**-Jews in general; men of Jerusalem in particular: **shall not see me from this time**-Which includes the short space till his death, **till**, after a long interval of desolation and misery, **ye say**,

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord-Ye receive me with joyful and thankful hearts. This also shall be accomplished in its season.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XXIV.

V. 1. **#Mr 13:1; #Lu 21:5.**

V. 2. **There shall not be left one stone upon another**-This was most punctually fulfilled; for after the temple was burnt, Titus, the Roman general, ordered the very foundations of it to be dug up; after which the ground on which it stood was ploughed up by Turnus Rufus.

V. 3. **As he sat on the mount of Olives**-Whence they had a full view of the temple.

When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?-The disciples inquire confusedly,

1. Concerning the time of the destruction of the temple; 2. Concerning the signs of Christ's coming, and of the end of the world, as if they imagined these two were the same thing.

Our Lord answers distinctly concerning,

1. The destruction of the temple and city, with the signs preceding, **#Mt 24:4,15**, &c. 2. His own coming, and the end of the world, with the signs thereof, **#Mt 24:29-31**. 3. The time of the destruction of the temple, **#Mt 24:32**, &c. 4. The time of the end of the world, **#Mt 24:36**.

V. 4. **Take heed that no man deceive you**-The caution is more particularly designed for the succeeding Christians, whom the apostles then represented. The first sign of my coming is, the rise of false prophets. But it is highly probable, many of these things refer to more important events, which are yet to come.

V. 5. **Many shall come in my name**-First, false Christs, next, false prophets, **#Mt 24:11**. At length, both together, **#Mt 24:24**. And indeed never did so many impostors appear in the world as a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem; undoubtedly because that was the time wherein the Jews in general expected the Messiah.

V. 6. **Wars**-Near:

Rumours of wars-At a distance.

All these things must come to pass-As a foundation for lasting tranquillity.

But the end-Concerning which ye inquire, **is not yet**-So far from it, that this is but **the beginning sorrows**.

V. 9. **Then shall they deliver you up to affliction**-As if ye were the cause of all these evils.

And ye shall be hated of all nations-Even of those who tolerate all other sects and parties; but in no nation will the children of the devil tolerate the children of God. **#Mt 10:17.**

V. 10. **Then shall many be offended**-So as utterly to make shipwreck of faith and a pure conscience. But hold ye fast faith, **#Mt 24:11.** in spite of false prophets: love, even when iniquity and offences abound, **#Mt 24:12.** And hope, unto the end, **#Mt 24:13.** He that does so, shall be snatched out of the burning.

The love of many will wax cold-The generality of those who love God will (like the Church at Ephesus, **#Re 2:4,**) leave their first love.

V. 13. **#Mt 10:22; #Mr 13:13; #Lu 21:17.**

V. 14. **This Gospel shall be preached in all the world**-Not universally: this is not done yet: but in general through the several parts of the world, and not only in Judea. And this was done by St. Paul and the other apostles, before Jerusalem was destroyed.

And then shall the end come-Of the city and temple. Josephus's History of the Jewish War is the best commentary on this chapter. It is a wonderful instance of God's providence, that he, an eye witness, and one who lived and died a Jew, should, especially in so extraordinary a manner, be preserved, to transmit to us a collection of important facts, which so exactly illustrate this glorious prophecy, in almost every circumstance. **#Mr 13:10.**

V. 15. **When ye see the abomination of desolation**-Daniel's term is, *The abomination that maketh desolate*, **#Da 11:31**; that is, the standards of the desolating legions, on which they bear the abominable images of their idols:

Standing in the holy place-Not only the temple and the mountain on which it stood, but the whole city of Jerusalem, and several furlongs of land round about it, were accounted holy; particularly the mount on which our Lord now sat, and on which the Romans afterward planted their ensigns.

He that readeth let him understand-Whoever reads that prophecy of Daniel, let him deeply consider it. **#Mr 13:14; #Lu 21:20; #Da 9:27.**

V. 16. **Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains**-So the Christians did, and were preserved. It is remarkable that after the Romans under Cestus Gallus made their first advances toward Jerusalem, they suddenly withdrew again, in a most unexpected and indeed impolitic manner. This the Christians took as a signal to retire, which they did, some to Pella, and others to Mount Libanus.

V. 17. **Let not him that is on the house top come down to take any thing out of his house**-It may be remembered that their stairs used to be on the outside of their houses.

V. 19. **Wo to them that are with child, and to them that give suck**-Because they cannot so readily make their escape.

V. 20. **Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter**-They did so; and their flight was in the spring.

Neither on the Sabbath-Being on many accounts inconvenient; beside that many would have scrupled to travel far on that day. For the Jews thought it unlawful to walk above two thousand paces (two miles) on the Sabbath day.

V. 21. **Then shall be great tribulation**-Have not many things spoken in the chapter, as well as in **#Mr 13:14** &c., **#Lu 21:21** &c. a farther and much more extensive meaning than has been yet fulfilled?

V. 22. **And unless those days were shortened**-By the taking of Jerusalem sooner than could be expected:

No flesh would be saved-The whole nation would be destroyed.

But for the elect's sake-That is, for the sake of the Christians.

V. 23. **#Mr 13:21; #Lu 17:23.**

V. 24. **They would deceive, if possible, the very elect**-But it is not possible that God should suffer the body of Christians to be thus deceived.

V. 27. **For as the lightning goeth forth**-For the next coming of Christ will be as quick as lightning; so that there will not be time for any such previous warning.

V. 28. **For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together**-Our Lord gives this, as a farther reason, why they should not hearken to any pretended deliverer. As if he had said, Expect not any deliverer of the Jewish nation; for it is devoted to destruction. It is already before God a dead carcass, which the Roman eagles will soon devour. **#Lu 17:37.**

V. 29. **Immediately after the tribulation of those days**-Here our Lord begins to speak of his last coming. But he speaks not so much in the language of man as of God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, one moment. Many of the primitive Christians not observing this, thought he would come immediately, in the common sense of the word: a mistake which St. Paul labours to remove, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

The powers of the heavens-Probably the influences of the heavenly bodies. **#Mr 13:24; #Lu 21:25.**

V. 30. **Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven**-It seems a little before he himself descends. The sun, moon, and stars being extinguished, (probably not those of our system only,) the sign of the Son of man (perhaps the cross) will appear in the glory of the Lord.

V. 31. **They shall gather together his elect**-That is, all that have endured to the end in the faith which worketh by love.

V. 32. **Learn a parable**-Our Lord having spoke of the signs preceding the two grand events, concerning which the apostles had inquired, begins here to speak of the time of them. And to the question proposed, **#Mt 24:3**, concerning the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, he answers **#Mt 24:34**. Concerning the time of the end of the world, he answers **#Mt 24:36**. **#Mr 13:28**; **#Lu 21:29**.

V. 34. **This generation** of men now living **shall not pass till all these things be done**-The expression implies, that great part of that generation would be passed away, but not the whole. Just so it was. For the city and temple were destroyed thirty-nine or forty years after.

V. 36. **But of that day**-The day of judgment;

Knoweth no man-Not while our Lord was on earth. Yet it might be afterward revealed to St. John consistently with this.

V. 37. **#Lu 17:26**.

V. 40. **One is taken**-Into God's immediate protection: **and one is left**-To share the common calamities. Our Lord speaks as having the whole transaction present before his eyes.

V. 41. **Two women shall be grinding**-Which was then a common employment of women.

V. 42. **Ye know not what hour your Lord cometh**-Either to require your soul of you, or to avenge himself of this nation. **#Mr 13:33**; **#Lu 12:35**; **21:34**.

V. 45. **Who then is the faithful and wise servant**-Which of you aspires after this character?

Wise-Every moment retaining the clearest conviction, that all he now has is only intrusted to him as a steward:

Faithful-Thinking, speaking, and acting continually, in a manner suitable to that conviction.

V. 48. **But if that evil servant**-Now evil, having **put away faith and a good conscience**.

V. 51. **And allot him his portion with the hypocrites**-The worst of sinners, as upright and sincere as he was once.

If ministers are the persons here primarily intended, there is a peculiar propriety in the expression. For no hypocrisy can be baser, than to call ourselves ministers of Christ, while we are the slaves of

avarice, ambition, or sensuality. Wherever such are found, may God reform them by his grace, or disarm them of that power and influence, which they continually abuse to his dishonour, and to their own aggravated damnation!

This chapter contains the last public discourse which our Lord uttered before he was offered up. He had before frequently declared what would be the portion of all the workers of iniquity. But what will become of those who do no harm? Honest, inoffensive, **good sort** of people? We have here a clear and full answer to this important question.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XXV.

This chapter contains the last public discourse which our Lord uttered before he was offered up. He had before frequently declared what would be the portion of all the workers of iniquity. But what will become of those who do no harm? Honest, inoffensive, *good sort* of people? We have here a clear and full answer to this important question.

V. 1. **Then shall the kingdom of heaven**-That is, the candidates for it, **be like ten virgins**-The bridemaids on the wedding night were wont to go to the house where the bride was, with burning lamps or torches in their hands, to wait for the bride groom's coming. When he drew near, they went to meet him with their lamps, and to conduct him to the bride.

V. 3. **The foolish took no oil with them**-No more than kept them burning just for the present. None to supply their future want, to recruit their lamp's decay. *The lamp* is faith. *A lamp and oil with it*, is faith working by love.

V. 4. **The wise took oil in their vessels**-Love in their hearts. And they daily sought a fresh supply of spiritual strength, till their faith was made perfect.

V. 5. **While the bridegroom delayed**-That is, before they were called to attend him, **they all slumbered and slept**-Were easy and quiet, the wise enjoying a true, the foolish a false peace.

V. 6. **At midnight**-In an hour quite unthought of.

V. 7. **They trimmed their lamps**-They examined themselves and prepared to meet their God.

V. 8. **Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out**-Our faith is dead. What a time to discover this! Whether it mean the time of death, or of judgment. *Unto which of the saints wilt thou then turn?* Who can help thee at such a season?

V. 9. **But the wise answered, Lest there be not enough for us and you!**-Beginning the sentence with a beautiful abruptness; such as showed their surprise at the state of those poor wretches, who had so long received them, as well as their own souls.

Lest there be not enough-It is sure there is not; for no man has more than holiness enough for himself.

Go ye rather to them that sell-Without money and without price: that is, to God, to Christ.

And buy-If ye can. O no! The time is past and returns no more!

V. 13. **Watch therefore**-He that watches has not only a burning lamp, but likewise oil in his vessel. And even when he sleepeth, his heart waketh. He is *quiet*; but not secure.

V. 14. Our Lord proceeds by a parable still plainer (if that can be) to declare the final reward of a **harmless man**. May God give all such in this their day, ears to hear and hearts to understand it!

The kingdom of heaven-That is, the King of heaven, Christ. #Mr 13:34; #Lu 19:12.

V. 15. **To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one**-And who knows whether (all circumstances considered) there be a greater disproportion than this, in the talents of those who have received the most, and those who have received the fewest?

According to his own ability-The words may be translated more literally, *according to his own mighty power*.

And immediately took his journey-To heaven.

V. 18. **He that had received one**-Made his having fewer talents than others a pretence for not improving any.

Went and hid his master's money-Reader, art thou doing the same? Art thou hiding the talent God hath lent thee?

V. 24. **I knew thou art a hard man**-No. Thou knowest him not. He never knew God, who thinks him a hard master.

Reaping where thou hast not sown-That is, requiring more of us than thou hast given us power to perform. So does every obstinate sinner, in one kind or other, lay the blame of his own sins on God.

V. 25. **And I was afraid**-Lest if I had improved my talent, I should have had the more to answer for. So from this fear, one will not learn to read, another will not hear sermons!

V. 26. **Thou knewest**-That I require impossibilities! This is not an allowing, but a strong denial of the charge.

V. 27. **Thou oughtest therefore**-On that very account, on thy own supposition, to have improved my talent, as far as was possible.

V. 29. **To every one that hath shall be given**-So close does God keep to this stated rule, from the beginning to the end of the world. #Mt 13:12.

V. 30. **Cast ye the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness**-For what? what had he done? It is true he had not done good. But neither is he charged with doing any harm. Why, for this reason, for *barely doing no harm*, he is consigned to outer darkness. He is pronounced a *wicked*, because he was a *slothful*, an *unprofitable servant*. So *mere harmlessness*, on which many build their hope of salvation, was the cause of his damnation!

There shall be the weeping-Of the careless thoughtless sinner;

and the gnashing of teeth-Of the proud and stubborn.

The same great truth, that there is no such thing as negative goodness, is in this chapter shown three times:

1. In the parable of the virgins; 2. In the still plainer parable of the servants, who had received the talents; and 3. In a direct unparabolical declaration of the manner wherein our Lord will proceed at the last day. The several parts of each of these exactly answers each other, only each rises above the preceding.

V. 31. **When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him**-With what majesty and grandeur does our Lord here speak of himself Giving us one of the noblest instances of the true sublime. Indeed not many descriptions in the sacred writings themselves seem to equal this. Methinks we can hardly read it without imagining ourselves before the awful tribunal it describes.

V. 34. **Inherit the kingdom**-Purchased by my blood, for all who have believed in me with the faith which wrought by love.

Prepared for you-On purpose for you. May it not be probably inferred from hence, that man was not created merely to fill up the places of the fallen angels?

V. 35. **I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink**-All these works of outward mercy suppose faith and love, and must needs be accompanied with works of spiritual mercy. But works of this kind the Judge could not mention in the same manner. He could not say, I was in error, and ye recalled me to the truth; I was in sin, and ye brought me to repentance.

In prison-Prisoners need to be visited above all others, as they are commonly solitary and forsaken by the rest of the world.

V. 37. **Then shall the righteous answer**-It cannot be, that either the righteous or the wicked should answer in these very words. What we learn herefrom is, that neither of them have the same estimation of their own works as the Judge hath.

V. 40. **Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me**-What encouragement is here to assist the household of faith? But let us likewise remember to *do good to all men*.

V. 41. **Depart into the everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels**-Not originally for you: you are intruders into everlasting fire.

V. 44. **Then will they answer**-So the endeavour to justify themselves, will remain with the wicked even to that day!

V. 46. **And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting**-Either therefore the punishment is strictly eternal, or the reward is not: the very same expression being applied to the former as to the latter. The Judge will speak first to the righteous, in the audience of the wicked. The wicked shall then go away into everlasting fire, in the view of the righteous. Thus the damned shall see nothing of the everlasting life; but the just will see the punishment of the ungodly. It is not only particularly observable here,

1. That the punishment lasts as long as the reward; but, 2. That this punishment is so far from ceasing at the end of the world, that it does not begin till then.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XXVI.

V. 1. **When Jesus had finished all these discourses**-When he had spoken all he had to speak. Till then he would not enter upon his passion: then he would delay it no longer. #Mr 14:1; #Lu 22:1.

V. 2. **After two days is the passover**-The manner wherein this was celebrated gives much light to several circumstances that follow. The master of the family began the feast with a cup of wine, which having solemnly blessed, he divided among the guests, #Lu 22:17. Then the supper began with the unleavened bread and bitter herbs; which when they had all tasted, one of the young persons present, according to #Ex 12:26, asked the reason of the solemnity. This introduced **the showing forth**, or declaration of it: in allusion to which we read of showing forth the Lord's death, #1Co 11:26. Then the master rose up and took another cup, before the lamb was tasted. After supper, he took a thin loaf or cake, which he broke and divided to all at the table, and likewise the cup, usually called the cup of thanksgiving, of which he drank first, and then all the guests. It was this bread and this cup which our Lord consecrated to be a standing memorial of his death.

V. 3. **The chief priests and the scribes and the elders of the people**-(Heads of families.) These together constituted the sanhedrim, or great council, which had the supreme authority, both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs.

V. 5. **But they said, Not at the feast**-This was the result of human wisdom. But when Judas came they changed their purpose. So the counsel of God took place, and the true paschal Lamb was offered up on the great day of the paschal solemnity.

V. 6. #Mr 14:3.

V. 8. **His disciples seeing it, had indignation, saying**-It seems several of them were angry, and spoke, though none so warmly as Judas Iscariot.

V. 11. **Ye have the poor always with you**-Such is the wise and gracious providence of God, that we may have always opportunities of relieving their wants, and so laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven.

V. 12. **She hath done it for my burial**-As it were for the embalming of my body. Indeed this was not her design: but our Lord puts this construction upon it, to confirm thereby what he had before said to his disciples, concerning his approaching death.

V. 13. **This Gospel**-That is, this part of the Gospel history.

V. 14. #Mr 14:10; #Lu 22:3.

V. 15. **They bargained with him for thirty pieces of silver**-(About three pounds fifteen shillings sterling; or sixteen dollars sixty-seven cents,) the price of a slave, #Ex 21:32.

V. 17. **On the first day of unleavened bread**-Being Thursday, the fourteenth day of the first month, **#Ex 12:6, 15. #Mr 14:12; #Lu 22:7**

V. 18. **The Master saith, My time is at hand**-That is, the time of my suffering.

V. 20. **#Mr 14:17; #Lu 22:14.**

V. 23. **He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish**-Which it seems Judas was doing at that very time. This **dish** was a vessel full of vinegar, wherein they dipped their bitter herbs.

V. 24. **The Son of man goeth** through sufferings to glory, **as it is written of him**-Yet this is no excuse for him that betrayeth him: miserable will that man be:

it had been good for that man if he had not been born-May not the same be said of every man that finally perishes? But who can reconcile this, if it were true of Judas alone, with the doctrine of universal salvation?

V. 25. **Thou hast said**-That is, it is as thou hast said.

V. 26. **Jesus took the bread**-the bread or cake, which the master of the family used to divide among them, after they had eaten the passover. The custom our Lord now transferred to a nobler use. **This bread is**, that is, signifies or represents **my body**, according to the style of the sacred writers. Thus **#Ge 40:12**, The three branches are three days. Thus **#Ga 4:24**, St. Paul speaking of Sarah and Hagar, says, These are the two covenants. Thus in the grand type of our Lord, **#Ex 12:11**, God says of the paschal lamb, This is the Lord's passover. Now Christ substituting the holy communion for the passover, follows the style of the Old Testament, and uses the same expressions the Jews were wont to use in celebrating the passover.

V. 27. **And he took the cup**-Called by the Jews the cup of thanksgiving; which the master of the family used likewise to give to each after supper.

V. 28. **This** is the sign of **my blood**, whereby the new testament or covenant is confirmed.

Which is shed for many-As many as spring from Adam.

V. 29. **I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom**-That is, I shall taste no more wine, till I drink wine of quite another kind in the glorious kingdom of my Father. And of this you shall also partake with me.

V. 30. **And when they had sung the hymn**-Which was constantly sung at the close of the passover. It consisteth of six psalms, from the 113th to the 118th. **#Ps 113:1 &c.**

The mount of Olives-Was over against the temple, about two miles from Jerusalem. **#Mr 14:26; #Lu 22:39; #Joh 18:1.**

V. 31. **All ye will be offended at me**-Something will happen to me, which will occasion your falling into sin by forsaking me. #Zec 13:7.

V. 32. **But notwithstanding this, after I am risen I will go before you** (as a shepherd before his sheep) **into Galilee**. Though you forsake me, I will not for this forsake you.

V. 34. **Before cock crowing thou wilt deny me thrice**-That is, before three in the morning, the usual time of cock crowing; although one cock was heard to crow once, after Peter's first denial of his Lord.

V. 35. **In like manner also said all the disciples**-But such was the tenderness of our Lord, that he would not aggravate their sin by making any reply.

V. 36. **Then cometh Jesus to a place called Gethsemane**-That is, the valley of fatness. The garden probably had its name from its soil and situation, laying in some little valley between two of those many hills, the range of which constitutes the mount of Olives. #Mr 14:32; #Lu 22:40.

V. 37. **And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee**-To be witnesses of all; **he began to be sorrowful and in deep anguish**-Probably from feeling the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in his soul, while God laid on him the iniquities of us all. Who can tell what painful and dreadful sensations were then impressed on him by the immediate hand of God? The former word in the original properly signifies, to be penetrated with the most exquisite sorrow; the latter to be quite depressed, and almost overwhelmed with the load.

V. 39. **And going a little farther**-About a stone's cast, #Lu 22:41-So that the apostles could both see and hear him still.

If it be possible, let this cup pass from me-And it did pass from him quickly. When he cried unto God with strong cries and tears, he was heard in that which he feared. God did take away the terror and severity of that inward conflict.

V. 41. **The spirit**-Your spirit: ye yourselves.

The flesh-Your nature. How gentle a rebuke was this, and how kind an apology! especially at a time when our Lord's own mind was so weighed down with sorrow.

V. 45. **Sleep on now, if you can, and take your rest**-For any farther service you can be of to me.

V. 47. #Mr 14:43; #Lu 22:47; #Joh 18:2.

V. 50. The heroic behaviour of the blessed Jesus, in the whole period of his sufferings, will be observed by every attentive eye, and felt by every pious heart: although the sacred historians, according to their usual but wonderful simplicity, make no encomiums upon it. With what composure does he go forth to meet the traitor! With what calmness receive that malignant kiss!

With what dignity does he deliver himself into the hands of his enemies! Yet plainly showing his superiority over them, and even then leading as it were captivity captive!

V. 51. **And one of them striking the servant of the high priest**-Probably the person that seized Jesus first;

Cut off his ear-Aiming, it seems, to cleave his head, but that by a secret providence interposing, he declined the blow. #Mr 14:47; #Lu 22:49; #Joh 18:10.

V. 52. **All they that take the sword**-Without God's giving it them: without sufficient authority.

V. 53. **He will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels**-The least of whom, it is probable, could overturn the earth and destroy all the inhabitants of it.

V. 55. #Mr 14:48; #Lu 22:52

V. 57. **They led him away to Caiaphas**-From the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, to whom they had carried him first. #Mr 14:53; #Lu 22:54; #Joh 18:12.

V. 58. **But Peter followed him afar off**-Variously agitated by conflicting passions; love constrained him to **follow** his Master; fear made him follow **afar off**.

And going in, sat with the servants-Unfit companions as the event showed.

V. 60. **Yet found they none**-On whose evidence they could condemn him to die.

At last came two false witnesses-Such they were, although part of what they said was true; because our Lord did not speak some of those words at all; nor any of them in this sense.

V. 64. **Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man**-He speaks in the third person, modestly, and yet plainly;

Sitting on the right hand of power-That is, the right hand of God:

And coming upon the clouds of heaven-As he is represented by Daniel, #Da 7:13, 14. Our Lord looked very unlike that person now! But nothing could be more awful, more majestic and becoming, than such an admonition in such circumstances!

V. 65. **Then the high priest rent his clothes**-Though the high priest was forbidden to rend his clothes (that is, his upper garment) in some cases where others were allowed to do it, #Le 21:10; yet in case of blasphemy or any public calamity, it was thought allowable. Caiaphas hereby expressed, in the most artful manner, his horror at hearing such grievous blasphemy.

V. 67. **Then**-After he had declared he was the Son of God, the sanhedrim doubtless ordered him to be carried out, while they were consulting what to do. And then it was that the soldiers who kept him began these insults upon him.

V. 72. **He denied with an oath**-To which possibly he was not unaccustomed, before our Lord called him.

V. 73. **Surely thou art also one of them, for thy speech discovereth thee**-Malchus might have brought a stronger proof than this. But such is the overruling providence of God, that the world, in the height of their zeal, commonly catch hold of the very weakest of all arguments against the children of God.

V. 74. **Then began he to curse and to swear**-Having now quite lost the reins, the government of himself.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XXVII.

V. 1. **In the morning**-As the sanhedrim used to meet in one of the courts of the temple, which was never opened in the night, they were forced to stay till the morning before they could proceed regularly, in the resolution they had taken to put him to death. #Mr 15:1; #Lu 22:66; 23:1; #Joh 18:28.

V. 2. **Having bound him**-They had bound him when he was first apprehended. But they did it now afresh, to secure him from any danger of an escape, as he passed through the streets of Jerusalem.

V. 3. **Then Judas seeing that he was condemned**-Which probably he thought Christ would have prevented by a miracle.

V. 4. **They said, what is that to us?**-How easily could they digest innocent blood! And yet they had a conscience!

It is not lawful (say they) **to put it into the treasury**-But very lawful to slay the innocent!

V. 5. **In that part of the temple** where the sanhedrim met.

V. 7. **They bought with them the potter's field**-Well known, it seems, by that name. This was a small price for a field so near Jerusalem. But the earth had probably been digged for potters' vessels, so that it was now neither fit for tillage nor pasture, and consequently of small value.

Foreigners-Heathens especially, of whom there were then great numbers in Jerusalem.

V. 9. **Then was fulfilled**-What was figuratively represented of old, was now really accomplished.

What was spoken by the prophet-The word Jeremy, which was added to the text in latter copies, and thence received into many translations, is evidently a mistake: for he who spoke what St. Matthew here cites (or rather paraphrases) was not Jeremy, but Zechariah. #Zec 11:12.

V. 10. **As the Lord commanded me**-To write, to record.

V. 11. **Art thou the king of the Jews?**-Jesus before Caiaphas avows himself to be the Christ, before Pilate to be a king; clearly showing thereby, that his answering no more, was not owing to any fear.

V. 15. **At every feast**-Every year, at the feast of the passover. #Mr 15:6; #Lu 23:17; #Joh 18:39.

V. 18. **He knew that for envy they had delivered him**-As well as from malice and revenge; they envied him, because the people magnified him.

V. 22. **They all say, Let him be crucified**-The punishment which Barabbas had deserved: and this probably made them think of it. But in their malice they forgot with how dangerous a precedent they furnished the Roman governor. And indeed within the compass of a few years it turned dreadfully upon themselves.

V. 24. **Then Pilate took water and washed his hands**-This was a custom frequently used among the heathens as well as among the Jews, in token of innocence.

V. 25. **His blood be on us and on our children**-As this imprecation was dread. fully answered in the ruin so quickly brought on the Jewish nation, and the calamities which have ever since pursued that wretched people, so it was peculiarly fulfilled by Titus the Roman general, on the Jews whom he took during the siege of Jerusalem. So many, after having been scourged in a terrible manner, were crucified all round the city, that in a while there was not room near the wall for the crosses to stand by each other. Probably this befell some of those who now joined in this cry, as it certainly did many of their children: the very finger of God thus pointing out their crime in crucifying his Son.

V. 26. **He delivered him to be crucified**-The person crucified was nailed to the cross as it lay on the ground, through each hand extended to the utmost stretch, and through both the feet together. Then the cross was raised up, and the foot of it thrust with a violent shock into a hole in the ground prepared for it. This shock disjoined the body, whose whole weight hung upon the nails, till the persons expired through mere dint of pain. This kind of death was used only by the Romans, and by them inflicted only on slaves and the vilest criminals.

V. 27. **The whole troop-or cohort.** This was a body of foot commanded by the governor, which was appointed to prevent disorders and tumults, especially on solemn occasions. **#Mr 15:16; #Joh 19:2.**

V. 28. **They put on him a scarlet robe**-Such as kings and generals wore; probably an old tattered one.

V. 32. **Him they compelled to bear his cross**-He bore it himself, till he sunk under it, **#Joh 19:17.**

V. 33. **A place called Golgotha, that is, the place of a skull**-Golgotha in Syriac signifies a skull or head: it was probably called so from this time; being an eminence upon Mount Calvary, not far from the king's gardens. **#Mr 15:22; #Lu 23:33; #Joh 19:17**

V. 34. **They gave him vinegar mingled with gall**-Out of derision: which, however nauseous, he received and tasted of. St. Mark mentions also a different mixture which was given him, *Wine mingled with myrrh*: such as it was customary to give to dying criminals, to make them less sensible of their sufferings: but this our Lord refused to taste, determining to bear the full force of his pains.

V. 35. **They parted his garments**-This was the custom of the Romans. The soldiers performed the office of executioners, and divided among them the spoils of the criminals.

My vesture-That is, my inner garment. **#Ps 22:18.**

V. 38. **#Mr 15:27; #Lu 23:32.**

V. 44. **#Mr 15:32; #Lu 23:33.**

V. 45. **From the sixth hour, there was darkness over all the earth unto the ninth hour**-Insomuch, that even a heathen philosopher seeing it, and knowing it could not be a natural eclipse, because it was at the time of the full moon, and continued three hours together, cried out, "Either the God of nature suffers, or the frame of the world is dissolved."

By this darkness God testified his abhorrence of the wickedness which was then committing. It likewise intimated Christ's sore conflicts with the Divine justice, and with all the powers of darkness.

V. 46. **About the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice**-Our Lord's great agony probably continued these three whole hours, at the conclusion of which he thus cried out, while he suffered from God himself what was unutterable.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?-Our Lord hereby at once expresses his trust in God, and a most distressing sense of his letting loose the powers of darkness upon him, withdrawing the comfortable discoveries of his presence, and filling his soul with a terrible sense of the wrath due to the sins which he was bearing. **#Ps 22:1.**

V. 48. **One taking a sponge, filled it with vinegar**-Vinegar and water was the usual drink of the Roman soldiers. It does not appear, that this was given him in derision, but rather with a friendly design, that he might not die before Elijah came. **#Joh 19:28.**

V. 50. **After he had cried with a loud voice**-To show that his life was still whole in him.

He dismissed his spirit-So the original expression may be literally translated: an expression admirably suited to our Lord's words, **#Joh 10:18:**

No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. He died by a voluntary act of his own, and in a way peculiar to himself. He alone of all men that ever were, could have continued alive even in the greatest tortures, as long as he pleased, or have retired from the body whenever he had thought fit. And how does it illustrate that love which he manifested in his death? Insomuch as he did not use his power to quit his body, as soon as it was fastened to the cross, leaving only an insensible corpse, to the cruelty of his murderers: but continued his abode in it, with a steady resolution, as long as it was proper. He then retired from it, with a majesty and dignity never known or to be known in any other death: *dying*, if one may so express it, *like the Prince of life.*

V. 51. Immediately upon his death, while the sun was still darkened, **the veil of the temple**, which separated the holy of holies from the court of the priests, though made of the richest and strongest tapestry, was rent in two from the top to the bottom: so that while the priest was ministering at the golden altar (it being the time of the sacrifice) the sacred oracle, by an invisible

power was laid open to full view: God thereby signifying the speedy removal of the veil of the Jewish ceremonies the casting down the partition wall, so that the Jews and Gentiles were now admitted to equal privileges, and the opening a way through the veil of his flesh for all believers into the most holy place.

And the earth was shaken-There was a general earthquake through the whole globe, though chiefly near Jerusalem: God testifying thereby his wrath against the Jewish nation, for the horrid impiety they were committing.

V. 52. Some of the tombs were shattered and laid open by the earthquake, and while they continued unclosed (and they must have stood open all the Sabbath, seeing the law would not allow any attempt to close them) **many bodies of holy men were raised**, (perhaps Simeon, Zacharias, John the Baptist, and others who had believed in Christ, and were known to many in Jerusalem,)

And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, went into the holy city (Jerusalem) and appeared to many-Who had probably known them before: God hereby signifying, that Christ had conquered death, and would raise all his saints in due season.

V. 54. **The centurion**-The officer who commanded the guard; **and they that were with him feared, saying, Truly this was the Son of God**-Referring to the words of the chief priests and scribes, *#Mt 27:43: He said, I am the Son of God.*

V. 56. **James**-The less: he was so called, to distinguish him from the other James, the brother of John; probably because he was less in stature.

V. 57. **When the evening was come**-That is, after three o'clock; the time from three to six they termed the evening. *#Mr 15:42; #Lu 23:50; #Joh 19:38.*

V. 62. **On the morrow, the day that followed the day of the preparation**-The day of preparation was the day before the Sabbath, whereon they were to prepare for the celebration of it. The next day then was the Sabbath according to the Jews. But the evangelist seems to express it by this circumlocution, to show the Jewish Sabbath was then abolished.

V. 63. **That impostor said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again**-We do not find that he had ever said this to **them**, unless when **he spoke of the temple of his body**, *#Joh 2:19, 21.* And if they here refer to what he then said, how perverse and iniquitous was their construction on these words, when he was on his trial before the council? *#Mt 26:61.* Then they seemed not to understand them!

V. 65. **Ye have a guard**-Of your own, in the tower of Antonia, which was stationed there for the service of the temple.

V. 66. **They went and secured the sepulchre, sealing the stone, and setting a guard**-They set Pilate's signet, or the public seal of the sanhedrim upon a fastening which they had put on the stone. And all this uncommon caution was overruled by the providence of God, to give the strongest proofs

of Christ's ensuing resurrection; since there could be no room for the least suspicion of deceit, when it should be found, that his body was raised out of a new tomb, where there was no other corpse, and this tomb hewn out of a rock, the mouth of which was secured by a great stone, under a seal, and a guard of soldiers.

ST. MATTHEW

CHAP. XXVIII.

V. 1. **#Mr 16:1; #Lu 24:1; #Joh 20:1**

V. 2. **An angel of the Lord had rolled away the stone and sat upon it**-St. Luke and St. John speak of two angels that appeared: but it seems as if only one of them had appeared sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, and then going into it, was seen with another angel, sitting, one where the head, the other where the feet of the body had lain.

V. 6. **Come, see the place where the Lord lay**-Probably in speaking he rose up, and going before the women into the sepulchre, said, Come, see the place. This clearly reconciles what St. John relates, **#Joh 20:12**, this being one of the two angels there mentioned.

V. 7. **There shall ye see him**-In his solemn appearance to them all together. But their gracious Lord would not be absent so long: he appeared to them several times before then.

Lo, I have told you-A solemn confirmation of what he had said.

V. 9. **Hail**-The word in its primary sense means, "Rejoice:" in its secondary and more usual meaning, "Happiness attend you."

V. 10. **Go tell my brethren**-I still own them as such, though they so lately disowned and forsook me.

V. 13. **Say, his disciples came by night, and stole him while we slept**-Is it possible, that any man of sense should digest this poor, shallow inconsistency? If ye were awake, why did you let the disciples steal him? If asleep, how do you know they did?

V. 16. **To the mountain where Jesus had appointed them**-This was probably Mount Tabor, where, (it is commonly supposed,) he had been before transfigured. It seems to have been here also, that he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once.

V. 18. **All power is given to me**-Even as man. As God, he had all power from eternity.

V. 19. **Disciple all nations**-Make them my disciples. This includes the whole design of Christ's commission. Baptizing and teaching are the two great branches of that general design. And these were to be determined by the circumstances of things; which made it necessary in baptizing adult Jews or heathens, to teach them before they were baptized; in discipling their children, to baptize them before they were taught; as the Jewish children in all ages were first circumcised, and after taught to do all God had commanded them. **#Mr 16:15.**

NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

THIS CONTAINS,

- I. The beginning of the Gospel,
 - a. John prepares the way Chap. i, 1-8
 - b. Baptizes Jesus, who is proclaimed the Son of God 9-11
 - c. Tempted of Satan, served by angels 12,13
- II. The Gospel itself,
 - A. In Galilee: where we may observe three periods,
 - a. After John was cast into prison,
 - In general,
 - 1. The place and matter of his preaching, 14,15
 - 2. The calling of several of the apostles 16-20
 - In particular,
 - 1. Actions not censured by his adversaries
 - 1. He teaches with authority 21, 22
 - 2. Cures the demoniac 23-28
 - 3. Heals many sick 29-34
 - 4. Prays 35
 - 5. Teaches every where 36-39
 - 6. Cleanses the leper 40-45
 - 2. Actions censured by them,
 - Here occur,
 - 1. The paralytic forgiven and healed ii, 1-12
 - 2. The call of Levi, and eating with publicans and sinners 13-17
 - 3. The question concerning fasting answered 18-22
 - 4. The ears of corn plucked 23-28
 - 5. The withered hand restored: Snares laid iii, 1-6
 - 3. Our Lord's retirement,
 - 1. At the sea 7-12
 - 2. In the mountain, where the apostles are called 13-19
 - 3. In the house, where after refuting the blasphemy of the Pharisees,
 - he shows who are his mother and his brethren 20-35
 - 4. In the ship; various parables iv, 1-34
 - 5. On the sea, and beyond it 35-41
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 - 6. On this side the sea: Again: Jairus, and the woman with
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 - 7. At Nazareth: His countrymen offended vi, 1-6
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b. In his way to the city,	
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ST. MARK

CHAP. I.

V. 1. **The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**-The evangelist speaks with strict propriety: for the beginning of the Gospel is in the account of John the Baptist, contained in the first paragraph; the Gospel itself in the rest of the book. #Mt 3:1; #Lu 3:1

V. 2. #Mal 3:1

V. 3. #Isa 40:3.

V. 4. **Preaching the baptism of repentance**-That is, preaching repentance, and baptizing as a sign and means of it.

V. 7. **The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose**-That is, to do him the very meanest service.

V. 9. #Mt 3:13; #Lu 3:21.

V. 12. **And immediately the Spirit thrusteth him out into the wilderness**-So in all the children of God, extraordinary manifestations of his favour are wont to be followed by extraordinary temptations. #Mt 4:1; #Lu 4:1.

V. 13. **And he was there forty days, tempted by Satan**-Invisibly. After this followed the temptation by him in a visible shape, related by St. Matthew.

And he was with the wild beasts-Though they had no power to hurt him. St. Mark not only gives us a compendium of St. Matthew's Gospel, but likewise several valuable particulars, which the other evangelists have omitted.

V. 14. #Mt 4:12.

V. 15. **The time is fulfilled**-The time of my kingdom, foretold by Daniel, expected by you, *is fully come*.

V. 16. #Mt 4:18; #Lu 5:1.

V. 18. **Straightway leaving their nets, they followed him**-From this time they forsook their employ, and constantly attended him. Happy they who follow Christ at the first call!

V. 21. #Lu 4:31.

V. 26. **A loud noise**-For he was forbidden to speak. Christ would neither suffer those evil spirits to speak in opposition, nor yet in favour of him. He needed not their testimony, nor would encourage it, lest any should infer that he acted in concert with them.

V. 29. **#Mt 8:14; #Lu 4:38.**

V. 32. **When the sun was set**-And, consequently, the Sabbath was ended, which they reckoned from sunset to sunset.

V. 33. **And the whole city was gathered together at the door**-O what a fair prospect was here! Who could then have imagined that all these blossoms would die away without fruit?

V. 34. **He suffered not the devils to say that they knew him**-That is, according to Dr. Mead's hypothesis, (that the Scriptural demoniacs were only diseased persons,) **He suffered not the diseases to say that they knew him!**

V. 35. **Rising a great while before day**-So did he labour for us, both day and night. **#Lu 4:42.**

V. 40. **#Mt 8:2; #Lu 5:12.**

V. 44. **See thou say nothing to any man**-But our blessed Lord gives no such charge to *us*. If he has made us clean from our leprosy of sin, we are not commanded to conceal it. On the contrary, it is our duty to publish it abroad, both for the honour of our Benefactor, and that others who are sick of sin may be encouraged to ask and hope for the same benefit.

But go, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing what Moses commanded for a testimony to them-The priests seeing him, pronouncing him clean, **#Le 13:17, 23, 28, 37**, and accordingly allowing him to offer as Moses commanded, **#Le 14:2, 7**, was such a proof against them, that they durst never say the leper was not cleansed; which out of envy or malice against our Saviour they might have been ready to say, upon his presenting himself to be viewed, according to the law, if by the cleansed person's talking much about his cure, the account of it had reached their ears before he came in person. This is one great reason why our Lord commanded this man to **say nothing**.

V. 45. **So that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city**-It was also to prevent this inconvenience that our Lord had enjoined him silence.

ST. MARK

CHAP. II.

V. 1. **And again**-After having been in desert places for some time, he returned privately to the city.

In the house-In Peter's house.

V. 2. **And immediately many were gathered together**-Hitherto continued the general impression on their hearts. Hitherto, even at Capernaum, all who heard received the word with joy.

V. 3. **#Mt 9:2; #Lu 5:18.**

V. 4. **They uncovered the roof**-Or, took up the covering, the lattice or trap door, which was on all their houses, (being flat roofed.) And finding it not wide enough, broke the passage wider, to let down the couch.

V. 6. **But certain of the scribes**-See whence the first offence cometh! As yet not one of the plain unlettered people were offended. They all rejoiced in the light, till these men of learning came, to put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Wo to all such blind guides! Good had it been for these if they had never been born. O God, let me never offend one of thy simple ones! Sooner let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!

V. 12. **They were all amazed**-Even the scribes themselves for a time.

V. 13. **All the multitude came to him**-Namely, **by the sea side**. And he as readily taught them there as if they had been in a synagogue.

V. 14. **#Mt 9:9; #Lu 5:27.**

V. 15. **Many publicans and notorious sinners sat with Jesus**-Some of them doubtless invited by Matthew, moved with compassion for his old companions in sin. But the next words,

For there were many, and they followed him, seem to imply, that the greater part, encouraged by his gracious words and the tenderness of his behaviour, and impatient to hear more, stayed for no invitation, but pressed in after him, and kept as close to him as they could.

V. 16. **And the scribes and Pharisees said**-So now the wise men being joined by the saints of the world, went a little farther in raising prejudices against our Lord. In his answer he uses as yet no harshness, but only calm, dispassionate reasoning.

V. 17. **I came not to call the righteous**-Therefore if these were righteous I should not call them. But now, they are the very persons I came to save.

V. 18. **#Mt 9:14; #Lu 5:33.**

V. 23. **#Mt 12:1; #Lu 6:1.**

V. 26. **In the days of Abiathar the high priest**-Abimelech, the father of Abiathar, was high priest then; Abiathar himself not till some time after. This phrase therefore only means, In the time of Abiathar, who was afterward the high priest. **#1Sa 21:6.**

V. 27. **The Sabbath was made for man**-And therefore must give way to man's necessity.

V. 28. **Moreover the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath**-Being the supreme Lawgiver, he hath power to dispense with his own laws; and with this in particular.

ST. MARK

CHAP. III.

V. 1. **He entered again into the synagogue**-At Capernaum on the same day. #Mt 12:9; #Lu 6:6.

V. 2. **And they**-The scribes and Pharisees, **watched him, that they might accuse him**-Pride, anger, and shame, after being so often put to silence, began now to ripen into malice.

V. 4. **Is it lawful to save life or to kill?**-Which he knew they were seeking occasion to do.

But they held their peace-Being confounded, though not convinced.

V. 5. **Looking round upon them with anger, being grieved**-Angry at the sin, grieved at the sinner; the true standard of Christian anger. But who can separate anger at sin from anger at the sinner? None but a true believer in Christ.

V. 6. **The Pharisees going out**-Probably leaving the scribes to watch him still:

took counsel with the Herodians-as bitter as they usually were against each other.

V. 8. **From Idumea**-The natives of which had now professed the Jewish religion above a hundred and fifty years.

They about Tyre and Sidon-The Israelites who lived in those coasts.

V. 10. **Plagues or scourges** (so the Greek word properly means) seem to be those very painful or afflictive disorders which were frequently sent, or at least permitted of God, as a scourge or punishment of sin.

V. 12. **He charged them not to make him known**-It was not the time: nor were they fit preachers.

V. 13. **He calleth whom he would**-With regard to the eternal states of men, God always acts as just and merciful. But with regard to numberless other things, he seems to us to act as a mere sovereign. #Lu 6:12

V. 14. #Mt 10:2; #Lu 6:13; #Ac 1:13.

V. 16. **He surnamed them sons of thunder**-Both with respect to the warmth and impetuosity of their spirit, their fervent manner of preaching, and the power of their word.

V. 20. **To eat bread**-That is, to take any subsistence.

V. 21. **His relations**-His mother and his brethren, **#Mr 3:31**. But it was some time before they could come near him.

V. 22. **The scribes and Pharisees, #Mt 12:22; who had come down from Jerusalem**-Purposely on the devil's errand. And not without success. For the common people now began to drink in the poison, from these learned, good, honourable men!

He hath Beelzebub-at command, is in league with him:

And by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils-How easily may a man of learning elude the strongest proof of a work of God! How readily can he account for every incident without ever taking God into the question. **#Mt 12:24; #Lu 11:15**.

V. 28. **#Mt 12:31; #Lu 12:10**.

V. 30. **Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit**-Is it not astonishing, that men who have ever read these words, should doubt, what is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? Can any words declare more plainly, that it is "the ascribing those miracles to the power of the devil which Christ wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost?"

V. 31. **Then come his brethren and his mother**-Having at length made their way through the crowd, so as to come to the door. His brethren are here named first, as being first and most earnest in the design of taking him: for neither did these of his brethren believe on him. They

sent to him, calling him-They sent one into the house, who called him aloud, by name. **#Mt 12:46; #Lu 8:19**.

V. 34. **Looking round on them who sat about him**-With the utmost sweetness;

He said, Behold my mother and my brethren-In this preference of his true disciples even to the Virgin Mary, considered merely as his mother after the flesh, he not only shows his high and tender affection for them, but seems designedly to guard against those excessive and idolatrous honours, which he foresaw would in after ages be paid to her.

ST. MARK

CHAP. IV.

V. 1. **#Mt 13:1; #Lu 8:4.**

V. 2. **He taught them many things by parables**-After the usual manner of the eastern nations, to make his instructions more agreeable to them, and to impress them the more upon attentive hearers. A parable signifies not only a simile or comparison, and sometimes a proverb, but any kind of instructive speech, wherein spiritual things are explained and illustrated by natural, **#Pr 1:6.**

To understand a proverb and the interpretation-The proverb is the literal sense, the interpretation is the spiritual resting in the literal sense killeth, but the spiritual giveth life.

V. 3. **Hearken**-This word he probably spoke with a loud voice, to stop the noise and hurry of the people.

V. 10. **When he was alone**-That is, retired apart from the multitude.

V. 11. **To them that are without**-So the Jews termed the heathens: so our Lord terms all obstinate unbelievers: for they shall not enter into his kingdom: they shall abide in outer darkness.

V. 12. **So that seeing they see and do not perceive**-They would not see before now they could not, God having given them up to the blindness which they had chosen.

V. 13. **Know ye not this parable?**-Which is as it were the foundation of all those that I shall speak hereafter; and is so easy to be understood?

V. 19. **The desire of other things choke the word**-A deep and important truth! The desire of any thing, otherwise than as it leads to happiness in God, directly tends to barrenness of soul.

Entering in-Where they were not before. Let him therefore who has received and retained the word, see that no other desire then enter in, such as perhaps till then he never knew.

It becometh unfruitful-After the fruit had grown almost to perfection.

V. 21. **And he said, Is a candle**-As if he had said, I explain these things to you, I give you this light, not to conceal, but to impart it to others. And if I conceal any thing from you now, it is only that it may be more effectually manifested hereafter. **#Mt 5:15; #Lu 8:16; 11:33.**

V. 22. **#Mt 10:26; #Lu 8:17.**

V. 24. **Take heed what ye hear**-That is, attend to what you hear, that it may have its due influence upon you.

With what measure you mete-That is, according to the improvement you make of what you have heard, still farther assistance shall be given.

And to you that hear-That is, with improvement.

V. 25. **He that hath**-That improves whatever he has received, to the good of others, as well as of his own soul. #Mt 13:12; #Lu 8:18.

V. 26. **So is the kingdom of God**-The inward kingdom is like seed **which a man casts into the ground**-This a preacher of the Gospel casts into the heart.

And he **sleeps and rises night and day**-That is, he has it continually in his thoughts.

Meantime **it springs and grows up he knows not how**-Even he that sowed it cannot explain how it grows. For as the earth by a curious kind of mechanism, which the greatest philosophers cannot comprehend, does as it were spontaneously bring forth first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear: so the soul, in an inexplicable manner, brings forth, first weak graces, then stronger, then full holiness: and all this of itself, as a machine, whose spring of motion is within itself. Yet observe the amazing exactness of the comparison. The earth brings forth no corn (as the soul no holiness) without both the care and toil of man, and the benign influence of heaven.

V. 29. **He putteth in the sickle**-God cutteth down and gathereth the corn into his garner.

V. 30. #Mt 13:31; #Lu 13:18.

V. 33. **He spake the word as they were able to hear it**-Adapting it to the capacity of his hearers; and speaking as plain as he could without offending them. A rule never to be forgotten by those who instruct others.

V. 35. #Mt 8:23; #Lu 8:22.

V. 36. **They take him as he was in the vessel**-They carried him immediately in the same vessel from which he had been preaching to the people.

V. 38. **On the pillow**-So we translate it, for want of a proper English expression, for that particular part of the vessel near the rudder, on which he lay.

V. 39. **Peace**-Cease thy tossing:

Be still-Cease thy roaring; literally, *Be thou gagged*.

ST. MARK

CHAP. V.

V. 1. **#Mt 8:28; #Lu 8:26.**

V. 2. **There met him a man with an unclean spirit**-St. Matthew mentions two. Probably this, so particularly spoken of here, was the most remarkably fierce and ungovernable.

V. 9. **My name is Legion! for we are many**-But all these seem to have been under one commander, who accordingly speaks all along, both for them and himself.

V. 15. **And they were afraid**-It is not improbable they might otherwise have offered some rudeness, if not violence.

V. 18. **#Mt 9:1; #Lu 8:37.**

V. 19. **Tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee**-This was peculiarly needful there, where Christ did not go in person.

V. 20. **He published in Decapolis**-Not only at home, but in all that country where Jesus himself did not come.

V. 21. **#Lu 8:40.**

V. 22. **One of the rulers of the synagogue**-To regulate the affairs of every synagogue, there was a council of grave men. Over these was a president, who was termed *the ruler of the synagogue*. Sometimes there was no more than one ruler in a synagogue. **#Mt 9:18; #Lu 8:41.**

V. 25. **#Mt 9:20; #Lu 8:43.**

V. 37. **John, the brother of James**-When St. Mark wrote, not long after our Lord's ascension, the memory of St. James, lately beheaded, was so fresh, that his name was more known than that of John himself.

V. 40. **Them that were with him**-Peter, James, and John.

V. 43. **He charged them that no man should know it**-That he might avoid every appearance of vain glory, might prevent too great a concourse of people, and might not farther enrage the scribes and Pharisees against him; the time for his death, and for the full manifestation of his glory, being not yet come.

He commanded something should be given her to eat-So that when either natural or spiritual life is restored, even by immediate miracle, all proper means are to be used in order to preserve it.

ST. MARK

CHAP. VI.

V. 1. **#Mt 13:54; #Lu 4:16.**

V. 3. **Is not this the carpenter?**-There can be no doubt, but in his youth he wrought with his supposed father Joseph.

V. 5. **He could do no miracle there**-Not consistently with his wisdom and goodness. It being inconsistent with his wisdom to work them there, where it could not promote his great end; and with his goodness, seeing he well knew his countrymen would reject whatever evidence could be given them. And therefore to have given them more evidence, would only have increased their damnation.

V. 6. **He marvelled**-As man. As he was God, nothing was strange to him.

V. 7. **#Mt 10:1; #Lu 9:1.**

V. 8. **He commanded them to take nothing for their journey**-That they might be always uncumbered, free, ready for motion.

Save a staff only-He that had one might take it; but he that had not was not to provide one, **#Mt 10:9. #Lu 9:3.**

V. 9. **Be shod with sandals**-As you usually are. Sandals were pieces of strong leather or wood, tied under the sole of the foot by thongs, something resembling modern clogs. *The shoes* which they are in St. Matthew forbidden to take, were a kind of short boots, reaching a little above the mid-leg, which were then commonly used in journeys. Our Lord intended by this mission to initiate them into their apostolic work. And it was doubtless an encouragement to them all their life after, to recollect the care which God took of them, when they had left all they had, and went out quite unfurnished for such an expedition. In this view our Lord himself leads them to consider it, **#Lu 22:35: When I sent you forth without purse or scrip, lacked ye any thing?**

V. 10. **#Mt 10:11; #Lu 9:4.**

V. 12. **#Lu 9:6.**

V. 13. **They anointed with oil many that were sick**-Which St. James gives as a general direction, **#Jas 5:14, 15**, adding those peremptory words,

And the Lord shall heal him-He shall be restored to health: not by the natural efficacy of the oil, but by the supernatural blessing of God. And it seems this was the great standing means of healing, desperate diseases in the Christian Church, long before *extreme unction* was used or heard of, which bears scarce any resemblance to it; the former being used only as a means of health; the latter only when life is despaired of.

V. 14. **#Mt 14:1; #Lu 9:7.**

V. 15. **A prophet, as one of the prophets**-Not inferior to one of the ancient prophets.

V. 16. **But Herod hearing thereof**-Of their various judgments concerning him, still **said, It is John.**

V. 20. **And preserved him**-Against all the malice and contrivances of Herodias.

And when he heard him-Probably sending for him, at times, during his imprisonment, which continued a year and a half.

He heard him gladly-Delusive joy! While Herodias lay in his bosom.

V. 21. **A convenient day**-Convenient for her purpose.

His lords, captains, and principal men of Galilee-The great men of the court, the army, and the province.

V. 23. **To the half of my kingdom**-A proverbial expression.

V. 26. **Yet for his oath's sake, and for the sake of his guests**-Herod's honour was like the conscience of the chief priests, **#Mt 27:6.** To shed innocent blood wounded neither one nor the other.

V. 30. **#Lu 9:10.**

V. 31. **#Mt 14:13; #Joh 6:1.**

V. 32. **They departed**-Across a creek or corner of the lake.

V. 34. **Coming out**-of the vessel.

V. 40. **They sat down in ranks**-The word properly signifies a parterre or bed in a garden; by a metaphor, a company of men ranged in order,

by hundreds and by fifties-That is, fifty in rank, and a hundred in file. So a hundred multiplied by fifty, make just five thousand.

V. 43. **Full of the fragments**-of the bread.

V. 45. **He constrained his disciples**-Who did not care to go without him. **#Mt 14:22.**

V. 46. **#Mt 14:23; #Joh 6:15.**

V. 48. **And he saw them**-For the darkness could veil nothing from him.

And would have passed by them-That is, walked, as if he was passing by.

V. 52. **Their heart was hardened**-And yet they were not reprobates. It means only, they were slow and dull of apprehension.

V. 53. **#Mt 14:34; #Joh 6:21.**

ST. MARK

CHAP. VII.

V. 1. **Coming from Jerusalem**-Probably on purpose to find occasion against him. #Mt 15:1.

V. 4. **Washing of cups and pots and brazen vessels and couches**-The Greek word (baptisms) means indifferently either washing or sprinkling. The cups, pots, and vessels were washed; the couches sprinkled.

V. 5. **The tradition of the elders**-The rule delivered down from your forefathers.

V. 6. #Isa 29:13.

V. 10. #Ex 20:12; 21:17.

V. 15. **There is nothing entering into a man from without which can defile him**-Though it is very true, a man may bring guilt, which is moral defilement, upon himself by eating what hurts his health, or by excess either in meat or drink yet even here the pollution arises from the wickedness of the heart, and is just proportionable to it. And this is all that our Lord asserts.

V. 19. **Purging all meats**-Probably the seat was usually placed over running water.

V. 22. **Wickedness**-The word means ill natured, cruelty, inhumanity, and all malevolent affections.

Foolishness-Directly contrary to sobriety of thought and discourse: all kind of wild imaginations and extravagant passions.

V. 24. #Mt 15:21.

V. 26. **The woman was a Greek** (that is, a Gentile, not a Jew) a Syrophenician or Canaanite. Canaan was also called Syrophenicia, as lying between Syria, properly so called, and Phenicia.

V. 31. #Mt 15:29.

V. 33. **He put his fingers into his ears**-Perhaps intending to teach us, that we are not to prescribe to him (as they who brought this man attempted to do) but to expect his blessing by whatsoever means he pleases: even though there should be no proportion or resemblance between the means used, and the benefit to be conveyed thereby.

V. 34. **Ephphatha**-This was a word of **SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY**, not an address to God for power to heal: such an address was needless; for Christ had a perpetual fund of power residing in himself, to work all miracles whenever he pleased, even to the raising the dead, #Joh 5:21,26.

V. 36. **Them**-The blind man and those that brought him.

ST. MARK

CHAP. VIII.

V. 1. **#Mt 15:32.**

V. 8. **So they did eat**-This miracle was intended to demonstrate, that Christ was the true bread which cometh down from heaven; for he who was almighty to create bread without means to support natural life, could not want power to create bread without means to support spiritual life. And this heavenly bread we stand so much in need of every moment, that we ought to be always praying, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

V. 11. **Tempting him**-That is, trying to ensnare him. **#Mt 16:1.**

V. 12. **#Mt 16:4.**

V. 15. **Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod**, or of the Sadducees; two opposite extremes.

V. 17, 18. Our Lord here affirms of all the apostles, (for the question is equivalent to an affirmation,) That their *hearts were hardened; that having eyes they saw not, having ears they heard not; that they did not consider, neither understand*: the very same expressions that occur in the thirteenth of Matthew. And yet it is certain they were not judicially hardened. Therefore all these strong expressions do not necessarily import any thing more than the present want of spiritual understanding.

V. 23. **He led him out of the town**-It was in just displeasure against the inhabitants of Bethsaida for their obstinate infidelity, that our Lord would work no more miracles among them, nor even suffer the person he had cured, either to go into the town, or to tell it to any therein.

V. 24. **I see men as trees walking**-He distinguished men from trees only by their motion.

V. 27. **#Mt 16:13; #Lu 9:18.**

V. 30. He enjoined them silence for the present,

1. That he might not encourage the people to set him up for a temporal king; 2. That he might not provoke the scribes and Pharisees to destroy him before the time and, 3. That he might not forestall the bright evidence which was to be given of his Divine character after his resurrection.

V. 31. **#Mt 16:21; #Lu 9:22.**

V. 32. **He spake that saying openly**-Or in express terms. Till now he had only intimated it to them.

And Peter taking hold of him-Perhaps by the arms or clothes.

V. 33. **Looking on his disciples**-That they might the more observe what he said to Peter.

V. 34. **And when he called the people**-To hear a truth of the last importance, and one that equally concerned them all.

Let him deny himself-His own will, in all things small and great, however pleasing, and that continually:

And take up his cross-Embrace the will of God, however painful, daily, hourly, continually. Thus only can he follow me in holiness to glory.

V. 35. **#Mt 16:25; #Lu 9:24; 17:33; #Joh 12:25.**

V. 38. **Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words**-That is, avowing whatever I have said (particularly of self denial and the daily cross) both by word and action. **#Mt 10:32; #Lu 9:26; 12:8.**

ST. MARK

CHAP. IX.

V. 1. **Till they see the kingdom of God coming with power**-So it began to do at the day of pentecost, when three thousand were converted to God at once.

V. 2. **By themselves**-That is, separate from the multitude:

Apart-From the other apostles:

and was transfigured-The Greek word seems to refer to the form of God, and the form of a servant, {mentioned by St. Paul, **#Php 2:6, 7,**} and may intimate, that the Divine rays, which the indwelling God let out on this occasion, made the glorious change from one of these forms into the other. **#Mt 17:1; #Lu 9:28.**

V. 3. **White as snow, such as no fuller can whiten**-Such as could not be equalled either by nature or art.

V. 4. **Elijah**-Whom they expected: Moses, whom they did not.

V. 7. **There came a** (bright, luminous) **cloud, overshadowing them**-This seems to have been such a cloud of glory as accompanied Israel in the wilderness, which, as the Jewish writers observe, departed at the death of Moses. But it now appeared again, in honour of our Lord, as the great Prophet of the Church, who was prefigured by Moses.

Hear ye him-Even preferably to Moses and Elijah.

V. 12. **Elijah verily coming first restoreth all things: and how it is written**-That is, **And** he told them **how it is written**-As if he had said, Elijah's coming is not inconsistent with my suffering. He is come: yet I shall suffer. The first part of the verse answers their question concerning Elijah; the second refutes their error concerning the Messiah's continuing for ever.

V. 14. **#Mt 17:14; #Lu 9:37.**

V. 15. **All the multitude seeing him were greatly amazed**-At his coming so suddenly, so seasonably, so unexpectedly: perhaps also at some unusual rays of majesty and glory, which yet remained on his countenance.

V. 17. **And one of the multitude answering**-The scribes gave no answer to our Lord's question. They did not care to repeat what they had said to his disciples.

A dumb spirit-A spirit that takes his speech from him.

V. 20. **When he saw him**-When the child saw Christ; when his deliverance was at hand.

Immediately the spirit tore him-Made his last grand effort to destroy him. Is it not generally so, before Satan is cast out of a soul, of which he has long had possession?

V. 22. **If thou canst do any thing**-In so desperate a case:

Have compassion on us-Me as well as him.

V. 23. **If thou canst believe**-As if he had said, The thing does not turn on my power, but on thy faith. *I* can do all things: canst *thou* believe?

V. 24. **Help thou mine unbelief**-Although my faith be so small, that it might rather be termed unbelief, yet help me.

V. 25. **Thou deaf and dumb spirit**-So termed, because he made the child so. When Jesus spake, the devil heard, though the child could not.

I command thee-I myself now; not my disciples.

V. 26. **Having rent him sore**-So does even the body sometimes suffer, when God comes to deliver the soul from Satan.

V. 30. **They passed through Galilee**-Though not through the cities, but by them, in the most private ways.

He was not willing that any should know it: for he taught his disciples-He wanted to be alone with them some time, in order to instruct them fully concerning his sufferings.

The Son of man is delivered-It is as sure as if it were done already. #Mt 17:22; #Lu 9:44.

V. 32. **They understood not the word**-They did not understand how to reconcile the death of our Saviour (nor consequently his resurrection, which supposed his death) with their notions of his temporal kingdom.

V. 33. #Lu 9:46.

V. 34. **Who should be greatest**-Prime minister in his kingdom.

V. 35. **Let him be the least of all**-Let him abase himself the most.

V. 36. #Mt 18:2; #Lu 9:47.

V. 37. **One such little child**-Either in years or in heart.

V. 38. **And John answered him**-As if he had said, But ought we to receive those who *follow not us*?

Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name-Probably this was one of John the Baptist's disciples, who believed in Jesus, though he did not yet associate with our Lord's disciples.

And we forbad him, because he followeth not us-How often is the same temper found in *us*? How readily do we also *lust to envy*? But how does that spirit become a disciple, much more a minister of the benevolent Jesus! St. Paul had learnt a better temper, when he *rejoiced that Christ was preached*, even by those who were his personal enemies. But to confine religion to them that follow us, is a narrowness of spirit which we should avoid and abhor. #Lu 9:49.

V. 39. **Jesus said**-Christ here gives us a lovely example of candour and moderation. He was willing to put the best construction on doubtful cases, and to treat as friends those who were not avowed enemies. Perhaps in this instance it was a means of conquering the remainder of prejudice, and perfecting what was wanting in the faith and obedience of these persons.

Forbid him not-Neither directly nor indirectly discourage or hinder any man who brings sinners from the power of Satan to God, **because he followeth not us**, in opinions, modes of worship, or any thing else which does not affect the essence of religion.

V. 40. **For he that is not against you, is for you**-Our Lord had formerly said, he that is not with me, is against me: thereby admonishing his hearers, that the war between him and Satan admitted of no neutrality, and that those who were indifferent to him now, would finally be treated as enemies. But here in another view, he uses a very different proverb; directing his followers to judge of men's characters in the most candid manner; and charitably to hope that those who did not oppose his cause wished well to it. Upon the whole, we are to be rigorous in judging ourselves, and candid in judging each other.

V. 41. **For whosoever shall give you a cup**-Having answered St. John, our Lord here resumes the discourse which was broken off at the 37th verse. #Mr 9:37 #Mt 10:42.

V. 42. On the contrary, **whosoever shall offend** the very least Christian. #Mt 18:6; #Lu 17:1.

V. 43. **And if a person cause thee to offend**-(The discourse passes from the case of offending, to that of being offended) if one who is as useful or dear to thee as a hand or eye, hinder or slacken thee in the ways of God, renounce all intercourse with him. This primarily relates to persons, secondarily to things. #Mt 5:29; 18:8.

V. 44. **Where their worm**-That gnaweth the soul, (pride, self will, desire, malice, envy, shame, sorrow, despair,) **dieth not**-No more than the soul itself: **and the fire** (either material, or infinitely worse!) that tormenteth the body, **is not quenched** for ever. #Isa 66:24.

V. 49. **Every one**-Who does not cut off the offending member, and consequently is cast into hell, **shall be**, as it were, **salted with fire**, preserved, not consumed thereby **whereas every** acceptable **sacrifice shall be salted with** another kind of **salt**, even that of Divine grace, which purifies the soul, (though frequently with pain) and preserves it from corruption.

V. 50. Such **salt is good** indeed; highly beneficial to the world, in respect of which I have termed you the *salt of the earth*.

But if the salt which should season others, **have lost its own saltiness, wherewith will ye season it?**-Beware of this; see that ye retain your savour; and as a proof of it, **have peace one with another**.

More largely this obscure text might be paraphrased thus:—

As every burnt offering was salted with salt, in order to its being cast into the fire of the altar, so every one who will not part with his hand or eye, shall fall a sacrifice to Divine justice, and be cast into hell fire, which will not consume, but preserve him from a cessation of being. And on the other hand, every one, who, denying himself and taking up his cross, offers up himself as a living sacrifice to God, shall be seasoned with grace, which like salt will make him savoury, and preserve him from destruction for ever.

As *salt is good* for preserving meats, and making them savoury, so it is good that ye be seasoned with grace, for the purifying your hearts and lives, and for spreading the savour of my knowledge, both in your own souls, and wherever ye go. But as salt if it loses its saltiness is fit for nothing, so ye, if ye lose your faith and love, are fit for nothing but to be utterly destroyed. See therefore that grace abide in you, and that ye no more contend, *Who shall be greatest*. #Mt 5:13; #Lu 14:34.

ST. MARK

CHAP. X.

V. 1. **He cometh thence**-From Galilee. #Mt 19:1.

V. 2. #Mt 5:31; 19:7; #Lu 16:18.

V. 4. #De 24:1.

V. 6. **From the beginning of the creation**-Therefore Moses in the first of Genesis gives us an account of things from *the beginning of the creation*. Does it not clearly follow, that there was no creation previous to that which Moses describes?

God made them male and female-Therefore Adam did not at first contain both sexes in himself: but God made Adam, when first created, male only; and Eve female only. And this man and woman he joined together, in a state of innocence, as husband and wife.

V. 7. #Ge 2:24.

V. 11, 12. All polygamy is here totally condemned.

V. 13. #Mt 19:13.

V. 14. **Jesus seeing it was much displeased**-At their blaming those who were not blame worthy: and endeavouring to hinder the children from receiving a blessing.

Of such is the kingdom of God-The members of the kingdom which I am come to set up in the world are such as these, as well as grown persons, of a child-like temper.

V. 15. **Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child**-As totally disclaiming all worthiness and fitness, as if he were but a week old.

V. 17. #Mt 19:16; #Lu 18:18.

V. 20. **He answering, said to him, Master**-He stands reprov'd now, and drops the epithet *good*.

V. 21. **Jesus looking upon him**-And looking into his heart,

loved him-Doubtless for the dawns of good which he saw in him:

and said to him-Out of tender love,

One thing thou lackest-The love of God, without which all religion is a dead carcass. In order to this, throw away what is to thee the grand hinderance of it. Give up thy great idol, riches.

Go, sell whatsoever thou hast.

V. 24. **Jesus saith to them, Children**-See how he softens the harsh truth, by the manner of delivering it! And yet without retracting or abating one tittle:

How hard is it for them that trust in riches-Either for defence, or happiness, or deliverance from the thousand dangers that life is continually exposed to. That these cannot enter into God's glorious kingdom, is clear and undeniable: but

it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a man to have riches, and not trust in them. Therefore, **it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom.**

V. 28. **Lo, we have left all**-Though the young man would not.

V. 30. **He shall receive a hundred fold, houses, &c.**-Not in the same kind: for it will generally be **with persecutions**: but in value: a hundred fold more happiness than any or all of these did or could afford. But let it be observed, none is entitled to this happiness, but he that will accept it **with persecutions**.

V. 32. **They were in the way to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed**-At his courage and intrepidity, considering the treatment which he had himself told them he should meet with there:

and as they followed, they were afraid-Both for him and themselves: nevertheless he judged it best to prepare them, by telling them more particularly what was to ensue. #Mt 20:17; #Lu 18:31.

V. 35. **Saying**-By their mother. It was she, not they that uttered the words. #Mt 20:20.

V. 38. **Ye know not what ye ask**-Ye know not that ye ask for sufferings, which must needs pave the way to glory.

The cup-Of inward;

the baptism-Of outward sufferings. Our Lord was *filled* with sufferings within, and *covered* with them without.

V. 40. **Save to them for whom it is prepared**-Them *who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality*. For these only eternal life *is prepared*. To these, only he will **give it** in that day; and to every man his own reward, according to his own labour.

V. 45. **A ransom for many**-Even for as many souls as needed such a ransom, #2Co 5:15.

V. 46. #Mt 20:29; #Lu 18:35.

V. 50. **Casting away his garment**-Through joy and eagerness.

ST. MARK

CHAP. XI.

V. 1. **To Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives**-The limits of Bethany reached to the mount of Olives, and joined to those of Bethphage. Bethphage was part of the suburbs of Jerusalem, and reached from the mount of Olives to the walls of the city. Our Lord was now come to the place where the boundaries of Bethany and Bethphage met. #Mt 21:1; #Lu 19:29; #Joh 12:12.

V. 11. #Mt 21:10, 17.

V. 12. #Mt 21:18.

V. 13. **For it was not a season of figs**-It was not (as we say) a good year for figs; at least not for that early sort, which alone was ripe so soon in the spring.

If we render the words, **It was not the season of figs**, that is, the time of gathering them in, it may mean, **The season was not yet**: and so (inclosing the words in a parenthesis, **And coming to it, he found nothing but leaves**) it may refer to the former part of the sentence, and may be considered as the reason of Christ's going to see whether there were any figs on this tree. Some who also read that clause in a parenthesis, translate the following words, **for where he was**, it was **the season of figs**. And it is certain, this meaning of the words suits best with the great design of the parable, which was to reprove the Jewish Church for its unfruitfulness at that very season, when fruit might best be expected from them.

V. 15. #Mt 21:12; #Lu 19:45.

V. 16. **He suffered not that any should carry a vessel through the temple**-So strong notions had our Lord, of even relative holiness! And of the regard due to those places (as well as times) that are peculiarly dedicated to God.

V. 17. #Isa 56:7; #Jer 7:11.

V. 18. **They feared him**-That is, they were afraid to take him by violence, lest it should raise a tumult;

because all the people was astonished at his teaching-Both at the excellence of his discourse, and at the majesty and authority with which he taught.

V. 20. #Mt 21:20.

V. 22. **Have faith in God**-And who could find fault, if the Creator and Proprietor of all things were to destroy, by a single word of his mouth, a thousand of his inanimate creatures, were it only to imprint this important lesson more deeply on one immortal spirit?

V. 25. **When ye stand praying**-Standing was their usual posture when they prayed.

Forgive-And on this condition, ye shall have whatever you ask, without wrath or doubting. **#Mt 6:14.**

V. 27. **#Mt 21:23; #Lu 20:1.**

ST. MARK

CHAP. XII.

V. 1. **#Mt 21:43; #Lu 20:9.**

V. 10. **#Ps 118:22.**

V. 12. **They feared the multitude**-How wonderful is the providence of God, using all things for the good of his children! Generally the multitude is restrained from tearing them in pieces only by the fear of their rulers. And here the rulers themselves are restrained, through fear of the multitude!

V. 13. **#Mt 22:15; #Lu 20:20.**

V. 17. **They marvelled at him**-At the wisdom of his answer.

V. 18. **#Mt 21:23; #Lu 20:27.**

V. 19. **#De 25:5.**

V. 25. **When they rise from the dead, neither men marry nor women are given in marriage.**

V. 26. **#Ex 3:6.**

V. 27. **He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living**-That is, (if the argument be proposed at length,) since the character of his being the God of any persons, plainly intimates a relation to them, not as dead, but as living; and since he cannot be said to be at present their God at all, if they are utterly dead; nor to be the God of human persons, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, consisting of souls and bodies, if their bodies were to abide in everlasting death; there must needs be a future state of blessedness, and a resurrection of the body to share with the soul in it.

V. 28. **Which is the first commandment?**-The principal, and most necessary to be observed. **#Mt 22:34; #Lu 10:25.**

V. 29. **The Lord our God is one Lord**-This is the foundation of the first commandment, yea, of all the commandments. The Lord our God, the Lord, the God of all men, is one God, essentially, though three persons. From this unity of God it follows, that we owe all our love to him alone. **#De 6:4.**

V. 30. **With all thy strength**-That is, the whole strength and capacity of thy understanding, will, and affections.

V. 31. **The second is like unto it**-Of a like comprehensive nature: comprising our whole duty to man. **There is no other moral, much less ceremonial commandment, greater than these. #Le 19:18.**

V. 33. **To love him with all the heart**-To love and serve him, with all the united powers of the soul in their utmost vigour;

and to love his neighbour as himself-To maintain the same equitable and charitable temper and behaviour toward all men, as we, in like circumstances, would wish for from them toward ourselves, is a more necessary and important duty, than the offering the most noble and costly sacrifices.

V. 34. **Jesus said to him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God**-Reader, art not thou? then go on: be a real Christian: else it had been better for thee to have been afar off.

V. 35. **#Mt 22:41; #Lu 20:41.**

V. 36. **#Ps 110:1.**

V. 38. **Beware of the scribes**-There was an absolute necessity for these repeated cautions. For, considering their inveterate prejudices against Christ, it could never be supposed the common people would receive the Gospel till these incorrigible blasphemers of it were brought to just disgrace.

Yet he delayed speaking in this manner till a little before his passion, as knowing what effect it would quickly produce. Nor is this any precedent for us: we are not invested with the same authority. **#Mt 23:5; #Lu 20:46.**

V. 41. **He beheld how people cast money into the treasury**-This treasury received the voluntary contributions of the worshippers who came up to the feast; which were given to buy wood for the altar, and other necessities not provided for in any other way. **#Lu 21:1.**

V. 43. **I say to you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all**-See what judgement is cast on the most specious, outward actions by the Judge of all! And how acceptable to him is the smallest, which springs from self-denying love!

ST. MARK

CHAP. XIII.

V. 1. #Mt 24:1; #Lu 21:5.

V. 4. Two questions are here asked; the one concerning the destruction of Jerusalem: the other concerning the end of the world.

V. 9. #Lu 21:12.

V. 10. #Mt 24:14.

V. 11. **The Holy Ghost** will help you. But do not depend upon any other help. For all the nearest ties will be broken.

V. 14. **Where it ought not**-That place being set apart for sacred use. #Mt 24:15; #Lu 21:20; #Da 9:27.

V. 19. **In those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation**-May it not be doubted, whether this be yet fully accomplished? Is not much of this affliction still to come?

V. 20. **The elect**-The Christians:

whom he hath chosen-That is, hath taken out of, or separated from, the world, *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*

He hath shortened-That is, will surely shorten.

V. 21. #Mt 24:23.

V. 24. **But in those days**-Which immediately precede the end of the world:

after that tribulation-Above described.

V. 28. #Mt 24:32; #Lu 21:28.

V. 29. **He is nigh**-The Son of man.

V. 30. **All these things**-Relating to the temple and the city.

V. 32. **Of that day**-The day of judgment is often in the Scriptures emphatically called **that day**.

Neither the Son-Not as man: as man he was no more omniscient than omnipresent. But as God he knows all the circumstances of it.

V. 33. **#Mt 24:42; #Lu 21:34.**

V. 34. The Son of man is **as a man taking a far journey**-Being about to leave this world and go to the Father, he appoints the services that are to be performed by all his servants, in their several stations. This seems chiefly to respect ministers at the day of judgment: but it may be applied to all men, and to the time of death. **#Mt 25:14; #Lu 19:12.**

ST. MARK

CHAP. XIV.

V. 1. **#Mt 26:1; #Lu 22:1.**

V. 3. **#Mt 26:6.**

V. 4. **Some had indignation**-Being incited thereto by Judas:

and said-Probably to the women.

V. 10. **Judas went to the chief priests**-Immediately after this reproof, having anger now added to his covetousness. **#Mt 26:14; #Lu 22:3.**

V. 12. **#Mt 26:17; #Lu 22:7.**

V. 13. **Go into the city, and there shall meet you a man**-It was highly seasonable for our Lord to give them this additional proof both of his knowing all things, and of his influence over the minds of men.

V. 15. **Furnished**-The word properly means, *spread* with carpets.

V. 17. **#Mt 26:20; #Lu 22:14.**

V. 24. **This is my blood of the New Testament**-That is, this I appoint to be a perpetual sign and memorial of my blood, as shed for establishing the new covenant, that all who shall believe in me may receive all its gracious promises.

V. 25. **I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, till I drink it new in the kingdom of God**-That is, I shall drink no more before I die: the next wine I drink will not be earthly, but heavenly.

V. 26. **#Mt 26:30; #Lu 22:39; #Joh 18:1.**

V. 27. **This night**-The Jews in reckoning their days began with the evening, according to the Mosaic computation, which called the evening and the morning the first day, **#Ge 1:5**. And so that which after sunset is here called this night is, **#Mr 14:30**, called to-day. The expression there is peculiarly significant.

Verily I say to thee, that thou thyself, confident as thou art, **to-day**, even within four and twenty hours; yea, **this night**, or ever the sun be risen, nay, **before the cock crow twice**, before three in the morning, **wilt deny me thrice**. Our Lord doubtless spoke so determinately, as knowing a cock would crow once before the usual time of cock crowing. By **#Mr 13:35**, it appears, that the third

watch of the night, ending at three in the morning, was commonly styled the *cock crowing*. #Zec 13:7.

V. 32. #Mt 26:36.

V. 33. **Sore amazed**-The original word imports the most shocking amazement, mingled with grief: and that word in the next verse which we render *sorrowful* intimates, that he was *surrounded with sorrow* on every side, breaking in upon him with such violence, as was ready to separate his soul from his body.

V. 36. **Abba, Father**-St. Mark seems to add the word *Father*, by way of explication.

V. 37. **Saith to Peter**-The zealous, the confident Peter.

V. 43. #Mt 26:47; #Lu 22:47; #Joh 18:2.

V. 44. **Whomsoever I shall kiss**-Probably our Lord, in great condescension, had used (according to the Jewish custom) to permit his disciples to do this, after they had been some time absent.

V. 47. #Mt 26:51; #Lu 22:49; #Joh 18:10.

V. 51. **A young man**-It does not appear, that he was one of Christ's disciples. Probably hearing an unusual noise, he started up out of his bed, not far from the garden, and ran out with only the sheet about him, to see what was the matter.

And the young men laid hold on him-Who was only suspected to be Christ's disciple: but could not touch them who really were so.

V. 53. #Mt 26:57; #Lu 22:54; #Joh 18:12.

V. 55. **All the council sought for witness and found none**-What an amazing proof of the overruling providence of God, considering both their authority, and the rewards they could offer, that no two consistent witnesses could be procured, to charge him with any gross crime. #Mt 26:59.

V. 56. **Their evidences were not sufficient**-The Greek words literally rendered are, *Were not equal*: not equal to the charge of a capital crime: it is the same word in the 59th verse. #Mr 14:59

V. 58. **We heard him say**-It is observable, that the words which they thus misrepresented, were spoken by Christ at least three years before, #Joh 2:19. Their going back so far to find matter for the charge, was a glorious, though silent attestation of the unexceptionable manner wherein he had behaved, through the whole course of his public ministry.

V. 61. #Mt 26:63; #Lu 22:67.

V. 66. #Mt 26:69; #Lu 22:56; #Joh 18:25.

V. 72. **And he covered his head**-Which was a usual custom with mourners, and was fitly expressive both of grief and shame.

ST. MARK

CHAP. XV.

V. 1. **#Mt 27:1, 2; #Lu 22:66; 23:1; #Joh 18:28.**

V. 3. **#Mt 27:12.**

V. 7. **Insurrection**-A crime which the Roman governors, and Pilate in particular, were more especially concerned and careful to punish.

V. 9. **Will ye that I release to you the king of the Jews**-Which does this wretched man discover most? Want of justice, or courage, or common sense? The poor coward sacrifices justice to popular clamour, and enrages those whom he seeks to appease, by so unseasonably repeating that title, **The king of the Jews**, which he could not but know was so highly offensive to them.

V. 16. **Praetorium**-The inner hall, where the praetor, a Roman magistrate, used to give judgment. But St. John calls the whole palace by this name. **#Mt 27:27; #Joh 19:2.**

V. 17. **Purple**-As royal robes were usually purple and scarlet, St. Mark and John term this a purple robe, St. Matthew a scarlet one. The Tyrian purple is said not to have been very different from scarlet.

V. 20. **#Mt 27:31; #Joh 19:16.**

V. 21. **The father of Alexander and Rufus**-These were afterward two eminent Christians, and must have been well known when St. Mark wrote.

V. 22. **#Mt 27:33; #Lu 23:33; #Joh 19:17.**

V. 24, 25. St. Mark seems to intimate, that they first nailed him to the cross, then parted his garments, and afterward reared up the cross.

V. 28. **#Isa 53:12.**

V. 29. **#Mt 27:39.**

V. 33. **#Mt 27:45; #Lu 23:44.**

V. 34. **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me**-Thereby claiming God as his God; and yet lamenting his Father's withdrawing the tokens of his love, and treating him as an enemy, while he bare our sins.

V. 37. **#Mt 27:50; #Lu 23:46; #Joh 19:30.**

V. 41. **Who served him**-Provided him with necessities.

V. 42. **Because it was the day before the Sabbath**-And the bodies might not hang on the Sabbath day: therefore they were in haste to have them taken down.

V. 43. **Honourable**-A man of character and reputation:

A counsellor-A member of the sanhedrim.

Who waited for the kingdom of God-Who expected to see it set up on earth. #Mt 27:57; #Lu 23:50; #Joh 19:38.

V. 46. **He rolled a stone**-By his servants. It was too large for him to roll himself.

ST. MARK

CHAP. XVI.

V. 1. **#Mt 28:1; #Lu 24:1; #Joh 20:1.**

V. 2. **At the rising of the sun**-They set out *while it was yet dark*, and came within sight of the sepulchre, for the first time, just as it grew light enough to discern that the stone was rolled away, **#Mt 28:1; #Lu 24:1; #Joh 20:1.** But by the time Mary had called Peter and John, and they had viewed the sepulchre, the sun was rising.

V. 3. **Who shall roll us away the stone**-This seems to have been the only difficulty they apprehended. So they knew nothing of Pilate's having sealed the stone, and placed a guard of soldiers there.

V. 7. **And Peter**-Though he so oft denied his Lord. What amazing goodness was this!

V. 9. **#Joh 20:11.**

V. 10. **#Lu 24:9; #Joh 20:18.**

V. 12. **#Lu 24:13.**

V. 13. **Neither believed they them**-They were moved a little by the testimony of these, added to that of St. Peter, **#Lu 24:34;** but they did not yet fully believe it.

V. 14. **#Lu 24:36; #Joh 20:19.**

V. 15. **Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature**-Our Lord speaks without any limitation or restriction. If therefore every creature in every age hath not heard it, either those who should have preached, or those who should have heard it, or both, *made void the counsel of God* herein. **#Mt 28:19.**

V. 16. **And is baptized**-In token thereof. Every one that believed was baptized.

But he that believeth not-Whether baptized or unbaptized, shall perish everlastingly.

V. 17. **And these signs shall follow them that believe**-An eminent author sub-joins, "That believe with that very faith mentioned in the preceding verse." (Though it is certain that a man may work miracles, and not have saving faith, **#Mt 7:22, 23.**) "It was not one faith by which St. Paul was saved, another by which he wrought miracles. Even at this day in every believer faith has a latent miraculous power; (every effect of prayer being really miraculous;) although in many, both because of their own littleness of faith, and because the world is unworthy, that power is not exerted. Miracles, in the beginning, were helps to faith; now also they are the object of it. At Leonberg, in the

memory of our fathers, a cripple that could hardly move with crutches, while the dean was preaching on this very text, was in a moment made whole."

Shall follow-The word and faith must go before.

In my name-By my authority committed to them. Raising the dead is not mentioned. So our Lord performed even more than he promised.

V. 18. **If they drink any deadly thing**-But not by their own choice. God never calls us to try any such experiments.

V. 19. **The Lord**-How seasonable is he called by this title!

After he had spoken to them-For forty days. **#Lu 24:50.**

V. 20. **They preached every where**-At the time St. Mark wrote, the apostles had already gone into all the known world, **#Ro 10:18**; and each of them was there known where he preached: the name of Christ only was known throughout the world.

NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

CHAP. I.

V. 1, 2. This short, weighty, artless, candid dedication, belongs to the Acts, as well as the Gospel of St. Luke.

Many have undertaken-He does not mean St. Matthew or Mark; and St. John did not write so early. For these were **eye witnesses** themselves and **ministers of the word**.

V. 3. **To write in order**-St. Luke describes in order of time; first, *The Acts of Christ*; his conception, birth, childhood, baptism, miracles, preaching, passion, resurrection, ascension: then, *The Acts of the Apostles*. But in many smaller circumstances he does not observe the order of time.

Most excellent Theophilus-This was the appellation usually given to Roman governors. Theophilus (as the ancients inform us) was a person of eminent quality at Alexandria. In **#Ac 1:1**, St. Luke does not give him that title. He was then probably a private man.

After the preface St. Luke gives us the history of Christ, from his coming into the world to his ascension into heaven.

HEREIN WE MAY OBSERVE,

I. The beginning: and therein.

1. The conception of John Chap. i, 5-25
2. The conception of Christ 26-56
3. The birth and circumcision of John; the hymn of Zacharias;
the youth of John 57-80
4. Christ's birth ii, 1-20
Christ's circumcision and name 21
Presentation in the temple 22-38
Country and growth 39, 40

II. The middle, when he was twelve years old and upward 41-52

III. The course of the history.

- A. The introduction, wherein are described John the Baptist; Christ's baptism,
and temptation iii, iv, 1-13
- B. The acceptable year in Galilee,
 - a. Proposed at Nazareth 14-30
 - b. Actually exhibited,

I. At Capernaum and near it; here we may observe,

1. Actions not censured, while Jesus

1. Teaches with authority	31, 32
2. Casts out a devil	33-37
3. Heals many sick	38-41
4. Teaches every where	42-44
5. Calls Peter; then James and John	Chap. v, 1-11
6. Cleanses the leper	12-16
2. Actions censured, more and more severally, here occur,	
1. The healing the paralytic	17-26
2. The calling of Levi; eating with publicans and sinners	27-32
3. The question concerning fasting	33-39
4. The plucking the ears of corn	vi, 1-5
5. The withered hand restored; snares laid	6-11
3. Actions having various effects on various persons,	
1. Upon the apostles	12-16
2. Upon other hearers	17-40
3. Upon the centurion	vii, 1-10
4. Upon the disciples of John,	
The occasion: the young man raised	11-17
The message and answer	18-23
The reproof of them that believed not John	24-35
5. Upon Simon and the penitent sinner	36-50
6. Upon the woman who ministered to him	viii, 1-3
7. Upon the people	4-18
Upon his mother and brethren	19-21
II. On the sea, and	22-26
Beyond it	27-39
III. On this side again.	
1. Jairus and the flux of blood	40-55
2. The apostles sent	ix, 1-6
3. Herod's doubting	7-9
4. The relation of the apostles	10
5. The earnestness of the people; our Lord's benignity; five thousand fed	11-17
C. The preparation for his passion,	
a. A recapitulation of the doctrine concerning his person: his passion foretold	18-27
b. His transfiguration; the lunatic healed; his passion again foretold; humility enjoined	28-50
c. His last journey to Jerusalem, which we may divide into eighteen intervals,	
1. The inhospitable Samaritans borne with	51-57
2. In the way, improper followers repelled, Proper ones pressed forward	58-62
3. Afterward the seventy sent; and received again And the scribe taught to love his neighbour, by the example of the good Samaritan	x, 1-24 25-37
4. In Bethany, Mary preferred before Martha	38-42

5.	In a certain place the disciples taught to pray	xi, 1-13
	A devil cast out, and the action defended	14-26
	The acclamation of the woman corrected	27, 28
	Those who desire a sign reproved	29-36
6.	In a certain house, the scribes and Pharisees censured	37-54
7.	Our Lord's discourse to his disciples	xii, 1-12
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	To his disciples again	22-40
	To Peter	41-53
	To the people	54-59
8.	The necessity of repentance shown	xiii, 1-9
	A woman healed on the Sabbath	10-21
9.	The fewness of them that are saved	22-30
10.	Herod termed a fox: Jerusalem reproved	31-35
11.	In the Pharisee's house, he cures the dropsy on the Sabbath; and	xiv, 1-6
	Teaches humility	7-11
	Hospitality	12-14
	The nature of the great supper	15-24
	The necessity of self denial	25-35
12.	Joy over repenting sinners defended, and	Chap. xv, 1-10
	Illustrated by the story of the prodigal son	11-32
	The unjust steward, wise in his generation	xvi, 1-13
	The Pharisees reproved; and	14-18
	warned by the story of the rich man and Lazarus	19-31
	Cautions against scandals	xvii, 1-4
	The faith of the apostles increased	5-10
13.	In the confines of Samaria and Galilee he heals ten lepers	11-19
14.	Answers the question concerning the time when the kingdom	
	of God should come	20-37
	Commends constant prayer	xviii, 1-8
	Recommends humility by the story of the Pharisee and publican	9-14
15.	Blesses little children	15-17
	Answers the rich young man	18-27
	And Peter, asking what he should have	28-30
16.	Foretells his passion a third time	31-34
17.	Near Jericho, cures a blind man	35-42
18.	In Jericho, brings salvation to Zaccheus	xix, 1-10
	Answers touching the sudden appearance of his kingdom	11-28
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2.	The abuse of the temple corrected	45, 46
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3.	His discourses in the temple,	

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2. The answer concerning paying tribute	20-26
And the resurrection	27-40
3. The question concerning the Son of David	41-44
4. The disciples admonished	45-47
5. The poor widow's offering commended	xxi, 1-4
4. His prediction of the end of the temple, the city, and the world	5-38
5. Judas's agreement with the chief priests	xxii, 1-6
b. Thursday,	
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2. The Lord's Supper: discourse after it	14-23
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5. On the mount of Olives,	
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2. Is betrayed; unseasonably defended	47-53
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1. His passion and death: transactions,	
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2. His burial	50-53
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e. His resurrection made known,	
1. To the women	Chap. xxiv, 1-12
2. To the two going into the country, and to Peter	13-35
3. To the other apostles	36-45
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V. 5. **The course of Abia**-The priests were divided into twenty-four courses, of which that of Abia was the eighth, #1Ch 24:10. Each course ministered in its turn, for seven days, from Sabbath

to Sabbath. And each priest of the course or set in waiting, had his part in the temple service assigned him by lot.

V. 6. Walking in all the moral commandments, and ceremonial ordinances, blameless-How admirable a character! May our behaviour be thus unblamable, and our obedience thus sincere and universal!

V. 10. The people were praying without, at the time of the incense-So the pious Jews constantly did. And this was the foundation of that elegant figure, by which prayer is in Scripture so often compared to incense. Perhaps one reason of ordaining incense might be, to intimate the acceptableness of the prayer that accompanied it; as well as to remind the worshippers of that sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, which was once to be offered to God for them, and of that incense, which is continually *offered with the prayers of the saints, upon the golden altar that is before the throne*, #Re 8:3, 4.

V. 12. Zacharias was troubled-Although he was accustomed to converse with God, yet we see he was thrown into a great consternation, at the appearance of his angelical messenger, nature not being able to sustain the sight. Is it not then an instance of the goodness as well as of the wisdom of God, that the services, which these heavenly spirits render us, are generally invisible?

V. 13. Thy prayer is heard-Let us observe with pleasure, that the prayers of pious worshippers come up with acceptance before God; to whom no costly perfume is so sweet, as the fragrant of an upright heart. An answer of peace was here returned, when the case seemed to be most helpless. Let us wait patiently for the Lord, and leave to his own wisdom the time and manner wherein he will appear for us.

Thou shalt call his name John-John signifies the grace or favour of Jehovah. A name well suiting the person, who was afterward so highly in favour with God, and endued with abundance of grace; and who opened a way to the most glorious dispensation of grace in the Messiah's kingdom. And so Zacharias's former prayers for a child, and the prayer which he, as the representative of the people, was probably offering at this very time, for the appearing of the Messiah, were remarkably answered in the birth of his forerunner.

V. 15. He shall be great before the Lord-God the Father: of the Holy Ghost and the Son of God mention is made immediately after.

And shall drink neither wine nor strong drink-Shall be exemplary for abstemiousness and self-denial; and so much the more filled with the Holy Ghost.

V. 16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn-None therefore need be ashamed of "preaching like John the Baptist."

To the Lord their God-To Christ.

V. 17. **He shall go before him, Christ, in the power and spirit of Elijah**-With the same integrity, courage, austerity, and fervour, and the same power attending his word:

to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children-To reconcile those that are at variance, to put an end to the most bitter quarrels, such as are very frequently those between the nearest relations:

and the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just-And the most obstinate sinners to true wisdom, which is only found among them that are righteous before God.

V. 18. **Zacharias said, Whereby shall I know this?**-In how different a spirit did the blessed virgin say, *How shall this be?* Zacharias disbelieved the fact: Mary had no doubt of the thing; but only inquired concerning the manner of it.

V. 19. **I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God**-Seven angels thus stand before God, **#Re 7:2**; who seem the highest of all. There seems to be a remarkable gradation in the words, enhancing the guilt of Zacharias's unbelief. As if he had said, I am Gabriel, a holy angel of God: yea, one of the highest order. Not only so, but am now peculiarly sent from God; and that with a message to thee in particular. Nay,

and to show thee glad tidings, such as ought to be received with the greatest joy and readiness.

V. 20. **Thou shalt be dumb**-The Greek word signifies deaf, as well as dumb: and it seems plain, that he was as unable to hear, as he was to speak; for his friends were obliged to make signs to him, that he might understand them, **#Lu 1:62**.

V. 21. **The people were waiting**-For him to come and dismiss them (as usual) with the blessing.

V. 24. **Hid herself**-She retired from company, that she might have the more leisure to rejoice and bless God for his wonderful mercy.

V. 25. **He looked upon me to take away my reproach**-Barrenness was a great reproach among the Jews. Because fruitfulness was promised to the righteous.

V. 26. **In the sixth month**-After Elisabeth had conceived.

V. 27. **Espoused**-It was customary among the Jews, for persons that married to contract before witnesses some time before. And as Christ was to be born of a pure virgin, so the wisdom of God ordered it to be of one espoused, that to prevent reproach he might have a reputed father, according to the flesh.

V. 28. **Hail, thou highly favoured; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women**-*Hail* is the salutation used by our Lord to the women after his resurrection: *thou art highly favoured, or hast found favour with God*, **#Lu 1:30**, is no more than was said of Noah, Moses, and David. *The Lord is with thee*, was said to Gideon, **#Jud 6:12**; and *blessed shall she be above women*, of Jael,

#Jud 5:24. This salutation gives no room for any pretence of paying adoration to the virgin; as having no appearance of a prayer, or of worship offered to her.

V. 32. **He shall be called the Son of the Highest**-In this respect also: and that in a more eminent sense than any, either man or angel, can be called so.

The Lord shall give him the throne of his father David-That is, the spiritual kingdom, of which David's was a type.

V. 33. **He shall reign over the house of Jacob**-In which all true believers are included.

V. 35. **The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee**-The power of God was put forth by the Holy Ghost, as the immediate Divine agent in this work: and so he exerted the power of the Highest as his own power, who together with the Father and the Son is the most high God.

Therefore also-Not only as he is God from eternity, but on this account likewise he **shall be called the Son of God**.

V. 36. **And behold, thy cousin Elisabeth**-Though Elisabeth was of the house of Aaron, and Mary of the house of David, by the fathers side, they might be related by their mothers. For the law only forbade heiresses marrying into another tribe. And so other persons continually intermarried; particularly the families of David and of Levi.

V. 38. **And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord**-It is not improbable, that this time of the virgin's humble faith, consent, and expectation, might be the very time of her conceiving.

V. 39. **A city of Judah**-Probably Hebron, which was situated in the hill country of Judea, and belonged to the house of Aaron.

V. 41. **When Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary**-The discourse with which she saluted her, giving an account of what the angel had said, the joy of her soul so affected her body, that the very child in her womb was moved in an uncommon manner, as if it leaped for joy.

V. 45. **Happy is she that believed**-Probably she had in her mind the unbelief of Zacharias.

V. 46. **And Mary said**-Under a prophetic impulse, several things, which perhaps she herself did not then fully understand.

V. 47. **My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour**-She seems to turn her thoughts here to Christ himself, who was to be born of her, as the angel had told her, he should be the Son of the Highest, whose name should be Jesus, the Saviour. And she rejoiced in hope of salvation through faith in him, which is a blessing common to all true believers, more than in being his mother after the flesh, which was an honour peculiar to her. And certainly she had the same reason to rejoice in God her Saviour that we have: because he had

regarded the low estate of his handmaid, in like manner as he regarded our low estate; and vouchsafed to come and save her and us, when we were reduced to the lowest estate of sin and misery.

V. 51. **He hath wrought strength with his arm**-That is, he hath shown the exceeding greatness of his power. She speaks prophetically of those things as already done, which God was about to do by the Messiah.

He hath scattered the proud-Visible and invisible.

V. 52. **He hath put down the mighty**-Both angels and men.

V. 54. **He hath helped his servant Israel**-By sending the Messiah.

V. 55. **To his seed**-His spiritual seed: all true believers.

V. 56. **Mary returned to her own house**-And thence soon after to Bethlehem.

V. 60. **His mother said**-Doubtless by revelation, or a particular impulse from God.

V. 66. **The hand of the Lord**-The peculiar power and blessing of God.

V. 67. **And Zacharias prophesied**-Of things immediately to follow. But it is observable, he speaks of Christ chiefly; of John only, as it were, incidentally.

V. 69. **A horn**-Signifies honour, plenty, and strength.

A horn of salvation-That is, a glorious and mighty Saviour.

V. 70. **His prophets, who have been since the world began**-For there were prophets from the very beginning.

V. 74. **To serve him without fear**-Without any slavish fear. Here is the substance of the great promise. That we shall be always holy, always happy: that being delivered from Satan and sin, from every uneasy and unholy temper, we shall joyfully love and serve God, in every thought, word, and work.

V. 76. **And thou, child**-He now speaks to John; yet not as a parent, but as a prophet.

V. 77. **To give knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins**-The knowledge of the remission of our sins being the grand instrument of present and eternal salvation, **#Heb 8:11, 12**. But the immediate sense of the words seems to be, to preach to them the Gospel doctrine of salvation by the remission of their sins.

V. 78. **The day spring**-Or the rising sun; that is, Christ.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. II.

V. 1. **That all the world should be enrolled**-That all the inhabitants, male and female, of every town in the Roman empire, with their families and estates, should be registered.

V. 2. **When Cyrenius was governor of Syria**-When Publius Sulpicius Quirinus governed the province of Syria, in which Judea was then included.

V. 6. **And while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered**-Mary seems not to have known that the child must have been born in Bethlehem, agreeably to the prophecy. But the providence of God took care for it.

V. 7. **She laid him in the manger**-Perhaps it might rather be translated *in the stall*. They were lodged in the ox stall, fitted up on occasion of the great concourse, for poor guests.

There was no room for them in the inn-Now also, there is seldom room for Christ in an inn.
#Mt 1:25

V. 11. **To you**-Shepherds; Israel; mankind.

V. 14. **Glory be to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will toward men**-The shouts of the multitude are generally broken into short sentences. This rejoicing acclamation strongly represents the piety and benevolence of these heavenly spirits: as if they had said, **Glory be to God in the highest heavens:** let all the angelic legions resound his praises. For with the Redeemer's birth, **peace**, and all kind of happiness, come down to dwell **on earth:** yea, the overflowings of Divine **good will** and favour are now exercised **toward men**.

V. 20. **For all the things that they had heard**-From Mary;

as it was told them-By the angels.

V. 21. **To circumcise the child**-That he might visibly be *made under the law* by a sacred rite, which obliged him to keep the whole law; as also that he might be owned to be the seed of Abraham, and might put an honour on the solemn dedication of children to God.

V. 22. **The days**-The forty days prescribed, #Le 12:2, 4.

V. 23. #Ex 13:2.

V. 24. **A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons**-This offering sufficed for the poor. #Le 12:8.

V. 25. **The consolation of Israel**-A common phrase for the Messiah, who was to be the everlasting consolation of the Israel of God.

The Holy Ghost was upon him-That is, he was a prophet.

V. 27. **By the Spirit**-By a particular revelation or impulse from him.

V. 30. **Thy salvation**-Thy Christ, thy Saviour.

V. 32. **And the glory of thy people Israel**-For after the Gentiles are enlightened, *all Israel shall be saved*.

V. 33. **Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken**-For they did not thoroughly understand them.

V. 34. **Simeon blessed them**-Joseph and Mary.

This child is set for the fall and rising again of many-That is, he will be a savour of death to some, to unbelievers: a savour of life to others, to believers:

and for a sign which shall be spoken against-A sign from God, yet rejected of men: but the time for declaring this at large was not yet come:

that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed-The event will be, that by means of that contradiction, the inmost thoughts of many, whether good or bad, will be made manifest.

V. 35. **A sword shall pierce through thy own soul**-So it did, when he suffered: particularly at his crucifixion.

v. 37. **Fourscore and four years**-These were the years of her life, not her widowhood only.

Who departed not from the temple-Who attended there at all the stated hours of prayer.

But served God with fastings and prayers-Even at that age.

Night and day-That is, spending therein a considerable part of the night, as well as of the day.

V. 38. **To all that were waiting for redemption**-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, together 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.

Let the example of these aged saints animate those, whose hoary heads, like theirs, are a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness. Let those venerable lips, so soon to be silent in

the grave, be now employed in the praises of their Redeemer. Let them labour to leave those behind, to whom Christ will be as precious as he has been to them; and who will be waiting for God's salvation, when they are gone to enjoy it.

V. 40. **And the child grew**-In bodily strength and stature;

and waxed strong in spirit-The powers of his human mind daily improved;

filled with wisdom-By the light of the indwelling Spirit, which gradually opened itself in his soul;

and the grace of God was upon him-That is, the peculiar favour of God rested upon him, even as man.

V. 43. **The child Jesus**-St. Luke describes in order Jesus *the fruit of the womb*, #Lu 1:42; *an infant*, #Lu 2:12; *a little child*, #Lu 2:40; *a child* here, and afterward *a man*.

So our Lord passed through and sanctified every stage of human life. Old age only did not become him.

V. 44. **Supposing him to have been in the company**-As the men and women usually travelled in distinct companies.

V. 46. **After three days**-The first day was spent in their journey, the second, in their return to Jerusalem: and the third, in searching for him there:

they found him in the temple-In an apartment of it:

sitting in the midst of the doctors-Not one word is said of his disputing with them, but only of his **asking** and **answering questions**, which was a very usual thing in these assemblies, and indeed the very end of them. And if he was, with others, at the feet of these teachers (where learners generally sat) he might be said to be in the midst of them, as they sat on benches of a semicircular form, raised above their hearers and disciples.

V. 49. **Why sought ye me?**-He does not blame them for losing, but for thinking it needful to seek him: and intimates, that he could not be lost, nor found any where, but doing the will of a higher parent.

V. 50. It is observable that Joseph is not mentioned after this time; whence it is probable, he did not live long after.

V. 52. **Jesus increased in wisdom**-As to his human nature,

and in favour with God-In proportion to that increase. It plainly follows, that though a man were pure, even as Christ was pure, still he would have room to increase in holiness, and in consequence thereof to increase in the favour, as well as in the love of God.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. III.

V. 1. **The fifteenth year of Tiberius**-Reckoning from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire.

Herod being tetrarch of Galilee-The dominions of Herod the Great were, after his death, divided into four parts or tetrarchies. This Herod his son was tetrarch of Galilee, reigning over that fourth part of his dominions. His brother reigned over two other fourth parts, the region of Iturea, and that of Trachonitis (that tract of land on the other side Jordan, which had formerly belonged to the tribe of Manasseh.)

And Lysanias (probably descended from a prince of that name, who was some years before governor of that country) **was tetrarch** of the remaining part of Abilene, which was a large city of Syria, whose territories reached to Lebanon and Damascus, and contained great numbers of Jews. #Mt 3:1; #Mr 1:1.

V. 2. **Annas being high priest, and Caiaphas**-There could be but one high priest, strictly speaking, at once. Annas was the high priest at that time, and Caiaphas his sagan or deputy.

V. 4. #Isa 40:3.

V. 5. **Every valley shall be filled, &c.**-That is, every hinderance shall be removed.

V. 6. **The salvation of God**-The Saviour, the Messiah.

V. 8. **Say not within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father**-That is, trust not in your being members of the visible Church, or in any external privileges whatsoever: for God now requires a change of heart; and that without delay.

V. 10. **He answereth**-It is not properly John, but the Holy Ghost, who teaches us in the following answers, how to come ourselves, and how to instruct other penitent sinners to come to Christ, that he may give them rest. The sum of all this is, **Cease to do evil, learn to do well**. These are the **fruits worthy of repentance**.

V. 20. **He shut up John**-This circumstance, though it happened after, is here mentioned before our Lord's baptism, that his history (that of John being concluded) may then follow without any interruption.

V. 21. **Jesus praying, the heaven was opened**-It is observable, that the three voices from heaven, see #Lu 9:29, 35; #Joh 12:28; by which the Father bore witness to Christ, were pronounced either while he was praying, or quickly after it. #Mt 3:13; #Mr 1:9.

V. 23. **And Jesus was**-John's beginning was computed by the years of princes: our Saviour's by the years of his own life, as a more august era.

About thirty years of age-He did not now enter upon his thirtieth year (as the common translation would induce one to think) but he now entered on his public ministry: being of such an age as the Mosaic law required. Our great Master attained not, as it seems, to the conclusion of his thirty-fourth year. Yet what glorious achievements did he accomplish within those narrow limits of time! Happy that servant, who, with any proportionable zeal, despatches the great business of life; and so much the more happy, if his sun go down at noon. For the space that is taken from the labours of time, shall be added to the rewards of eternity.

The son of Heli-That is, the son-in-law: for Heli was the father of Mary. So St. Matthew writes the genealogy of Joseph, descended from David by Solomon; St. Luke that of Mary, descended from David by Nathan. In the genealogy of Joseph (recited by St. Matthew) that of Mary is implied, the Jews being accustomed to marry into their own families.

V. 38. **Adam the son of God**-That is, whatever the sons of Adam receive from their human parents, Adam received immediately from God, except sin and misery.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. IV.

V. 1. **The wilderness**-Supposed by some to have been in Judea; by others to have been that great desert of Horeb or Sinai, where the children of Israel were tried for forty years, and Moses and Elijah fasted forty days. #Mt 4:1; #Mr 1:12.

V. 4. #De 8:3.

V. 6. **I give it to whomsoever I will**-Not so, Satan. It is God, not thou, that putteth down one, and setteth up another: although sometimes Satan, by God's permission, may occasion great revolutions in the world.

V. 8. #De 6:13.

V. 10. #Ps 91:11.

V. 12. #De 6:16.

V. 13. **A convenient season**-In the garden of Gethsemane, #Lu 22:53.

V. 14. **Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit**-Being more abundantly strengthened after his conflict.

V. 15. **Being glorified of all**-So God usually gives strong cordials after strong temptations. But neither their approbation continued long, nor the outward calm which he now enjoyed.

V. 16. **He stood up**-Showing thereby that he had a desire to read the Scripture to the congregation: on which the book was given to him. It was the Jewish custom to read standing, but to preach sitting. #Mt 13:54; #Mr 6:1.

V. 17. **He found**-It seems, opening upon it, by the particular providence of God.

V.18. **He hath anointed me**-With the Spirit. He hath by the power of his Spirit which dwelleth in me, set me apart for these offices.

To preach the Gospel to the poor-Literally and spiritually.

How is the doctrine of the ever-blessed trinity interwoven, even in those scriptures where one would least expect it? How clear a declaration of the great Three-One is there in those very words,

The Spirit-of the **Lord** is upon **me!** **To proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised**-Here is a beautiful gradation, in comparing the spiritual state of men to the miserable state of those captives, who are not only cast

into prison, but, like Zedekiah, had their eyes put out, and were laden and bruised with chains of iron. **#Isa 61:1.**

V. 19. **The acceptable year**-Plainly alluding to the year of jubilee, when all, both debtors and servants, were set free.

V. 21. **To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears**-By what you hear me speak.

V. 22. **The gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth**-A person of spiritual discernment may find in all the discourses of our Lord a peculiar sweetness, gravity, and becomingness, such as is not to be found in the same degree, not even in those of the apostles.

V. 23. **Ye will surely say**-That is, your approbation now outweighs your prejudices. But it will not be so long. You will soon ask, why my love does not begin at home? Why I do not work miracles here, rather than at Capernaum? It is because of your unbelief. Nor is it any new thing for me to be despised in my own country. So were both Elijah and Elisha, and thereby driven to work miracles among heathens, rather than in Israel.

V. 24. **No prophet is acceptable in his own country**-That is, in his own neighbourhood. It generally holds, that a teacher sent from God is not so acceptable to his neighbours as he is to strangers. The meanness of his family, or lowness of his circumstances, bring his office into contempt: nor can they suffer that he, who was before equal with, or below themselves, should now bear a superior character.

V. 25. **When the heaven was shut up three years and six months**-Such a proof had they that God had sent him. In **#1Ki 18:1**, it is said, *The word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year*: namely, reckoning not from the beginning of the drought, but from the time when he began to sojourn with the widow of Sarepta. A year of drought had preceded this, while he dwelt at the brook Cherith. So that the whole time of the drought was (as St. James likewise observes) three years and six months. **#1Ki 17:19; 18:44.**

V. 27. **#2Ki 5:14.**

V. 28. **And all in the synagogue were filled with fury**-Perceiving the purport of his discourse, namely, that the blessing which they despised, would be offered to, and accepted by, the Gentiles. So changeable are the hearts of wicked men! So little are their starts of love to be depended on! So unable are they to bear the close application, even of a discourse which they most admire!

V. 30. **Passing through the midst of them**-Perhaps invisibly; or perhaps they were overawed; so that though they saw, they could not touch him.

V. 31. **He came down to Capernaum**-And dwelt there, entirely quitting his abode at Nazareth. **#Mr 1:21.**

V. 34. **What have we to do with thee**-Thy present business is with men, not with devils.

I know thee who thou art-But surely he did not know a little before, that he was God over all, blessed for ever; or he would not have dared to tell him, *All this power is delivered to me, and I give it to whomsoever I will.*

The Holy One of God-Either this confession was extorted from him by terror, (for the devils believe and tremble,) or he made it with a design to render the character of Christ suspected. Possibly it was from hence the Pharisees took occasion to say, *He casteth out devils by the prince of the devils.*

V. 38. **#Mt 8:14; #Mr 1:29.**

V. 40. **When the sun was set**-And consequently the Sabbath ended, which they reckoned from sunset to sunset. **#Mt 8:16; #Mr 1:32.**

V. 42. **#Mr 1:35.**

ST. LUKE

CHAP. V.

V. 1. **#Mt 4:18; #Mr 1:16.**

V. 6. **Their net brake**-Began to tear.

V. 8. **Depart from me, for I am a sinful man**-And therefore not worthy to be in thy presence.

V. 11. **They forsook all and followed him**-They had followed him before, **#Joh 1:43**, but not so as to forsake all. Till now, they wrought at their ordinary calling.

V. 12. **#Mt 8:2; #Mr 1:40.**

V. 14. **#Le 14:2.**

V. 16. **He withdrew**-The expression in the original implies, that he did so frequently.

V. 17. **Sitting by**-As being more honourable than the bulk of the congregation, who stood.

And the power of the Lord was present to heal them-To heal the sickness of their souls, as well as all bodily diseases.

V. 18. **#Mt 9:2; #Mr 2:3.**

V. 19. **Not being able to bring him in through the multitude, they went** round about by a back passage, and going up the stairs on the outside, they came **upon the flat-roofed house**, and **let him down** through the trap door, such as was on the top of most of the Jewish houses: doubtless, with such circumspection as the circumstances plainly required.

V. 26. **We have seen strange things to. day**-Sins forgiven, miracles wrought.

V. 27. **#Mt 9:9; #Mr 2:14.**

V. 28. **Leaving all**-His business and gain.

V. 29. **And Levi made him a great entertainment**-It was necessarily great, because of the great number of guests.

V. 33. **Make prayers**-Long and solemn. **#Mt 9:14; #Mr 2:18.**

V. 34. **Can ye make**-That is, is it proper to make men fast and mourn, during a festival solemnity?

V. 36. **He spake also a parable**-Taken from clothes and wine; therefore peculiarly proper at a feast.

V. 39. **And no man having drunk old wine**-And beside, men are not wont to be immediately freed from old prejudices.

CHAP. VI.

V. 1. **The first Sabbath**-So the Jews reckoned their Sabbaths, from the passover to pentecost; the first, second, third, and so on, till the seventh Sabbath (after the second day.) This immediately preceded pentecost, which was the fiftieth day after the second day of unleavened bread. #Mt 12:1; #Mr 2:23.

V. 2. **Why do ye**-St. Matthew and Mark represent the Pharisees as proposing the question to our Lord himself. It was afterward, probably, they proposed it to his disciples.

V. 4. #1Sa 21:6.

V. 6. #Mt 12:9; #Mr 3:1.

V. 9. **To save life or to kill**-He just then probably saw the design to kill him rising in their hearts.

V. 12. **In the prayer of God**-The phrase is singular and emphatical, to imply an extraordinary and sublime devotion. #Mr 3:13.

V. 13. #Mt 10:2; #Mr 3:14; #Ac 1:13.

V. 15. **Simon called Zelotes**-Full of zeal; otherwise called Simon the Canaanite.

V. 17. **On a plain**-At the foot of the mountain.

V. 20. In the following verses our Lord, in the audience of his newly-chosen disciples, and of the multitude, repeats, *standing on the plain*, many remarkable passages of the sermon he had before delivered, *sitting on the mount*.

He here again pronounces the *poor* and the *hungry*, the *mourners*, and the *persecuted*, happy; and represents as miserable those who are *rich*, and *full*, and *joyous*, and *applauded*: because generally prosperity is 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 is running over; when our spirits are gay; and we hear (what nature loves) our own praise from men.

Happy are ye poor-The word seems here to be taken literally: ye who have left all for me. #Mt 5:3.

V. 24. Miserable are **ye rich**-If ye have received or sought your consolation or happiness therein.

V. 25. **Full**-Of meat and drink, and worldly goods.

That laugh-That are of a light trifling spirit.

V. 26. **Wo to you when all men shall speak well of you**-But who will believe this?

V. 27. **But I say to you that hear**-Hitherto our Lord had spoken only to particular sorts of persons: now he begins speaking to all in general. #Mt 5:44.

V. 29. **To him that smiteth thee on the cheek-Taketh away thy cloak**-These seem to be proverbial expressions, to signify an invasion of the tenderest points of honour and property.

Offer the other-Forbid not thy coat-That is, rather yield to his repeating the affront or injury, than gratify resentment in righting your self; in any method not becoming Christian love. #Mt 5:39.

V. 30. **Give to every one**-Friend or enemy, what thou canst spare, and he really wants:

and of him that taketh away thy goods-By borrowing, if he be insolvent, **ask them not again.** #Mt 5:42.

V. 31. #Mt 7:12.

V. 32. It is greatly observable, our Lord has so little regard for one of the highest instances of *natural* virtue, namely, the returning love for love, that he does not account it even to deserve thanks.

For even sinners, saith he, **do the same**: men who do not regard God at all. Therefore he may do this, who has not taken one step in Christianity.

V. 37. #Mt 7:1.

V. 38. **Into your bosom**-Alluding to the mantles the Jews wore, into which a large quantity of corn might be received.

With the same measure that ye mete with, it shall be measured to you again-Amazing goodness! So we are permitted even to carve for ourselves! We ourselves are, as it were, to tell God *how much* mercy he shall show us! And can we be content with less than the very *largest measure*? Give then to man, what thou designest to receive of God.

V. 39. **He spake a parable**-Our Lord sometimes used parables when he knew plain and open declarations would too much inflame the passions of his hearers. It is for this reason he uses this parable,

Can the blind lead the blind?-Can the scribes teach this way, which they know not themselves? Will not they and their scholars perish together? Can they make their disciples any better than themselves? But as for those who will be my disciples, *they shall be all taught of God*; who will enable them to *come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of their Master*. Be not ye like their disciples, censuring others, and not amending yourselves. #Mt 15:14.

V. 40. **#Mt 10:24; #Joh 15:20.**

V. 41. **#Mt 7:3.**

V. 46. **And why call ye me Lord, Lord-**What will fair professions avail, without a life answerable thereto? **#Mt 7:21.**

V. 47. **#Mt 7:24.**

ST. LUKE

CHAP. VII.

V. 1. **#Mt 8:5.**

V. 3. **Hearing of Jesus**-Of his miracles, and of his arrival at Capernaum.

V. 18. **#Mt 11:2.**

V. 22. **To the poor the Gospel is preached**-Which is the greatest mercy, and the greatest miracle of all.

V. 24. **When the messengers were departed**-He did not speak the following things in the hearing of John's disciples, lest he should seem to flatter John, or to compliment him into an adherence to his former testimony. To avoid all suspicion of this kind, he deferred his commendation of him, till the messengers were gone; and then delivered it to the people, to prevent all imaginations, as if John were wavering in his judgment, and had sent the two disciples for his own, rather than their satisfaction.

V. 27. **#Mal 3:1.**

V. 28. **There is not a greater prophet than John**-A greater teacher.

But he that is least in the kingdom of God-The least teacher whom I send forth.

V. 29. **And all the people**-Our Lord continues his discourse:

justified God-Owned his wisdom and mercy in thus calling them to repentance, and preparing them for Him that was to come.

V. 30. **But the Pharisees and scribes**-The good, learned, honourable men:

made void the counsel, the gracious design, **of God toward them**-They disappointed all these methods of his love, and would receive no benefit from them.

V. 32. **They are like children sitting in the market place**-So froward and perverse, that no contrivance can be found to please them. It is plain our Lord means, that they were like the children complained of, not like those that made the complaint.

V. 34. **But wisdom is justified by all her children**-The children of wisdom are those who are truly wise unto salvation. The wisdom of God in all these dispensations, these various methods of calling sinners to repentance, is owned and heartily approved by all these.

V. 36. **And one of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him**-Let the candour with which our Lord accepted this invitation, and his gentleness and prudence at this ensnaring entertainment, teach us to mingle the wisdom of the serpent, with the innocence and sweetness of the dove. Let us neither absolutely refuse all favours, nor resent all neglects, from those whose friendship is at best very doubtful, and their intimacy by no means safe.

V. 37. **A woman**-Not the same with Mary of Bethany, who anointed him six days before his last passover.

V. 40. **And Jesus said, Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee**-So tender and courteous an address does our Lord use even to a proud, censorious Pharisee!

V. 43. **Which of them will love him most?**-Neither of them will love him at all, before he has forgiven them. An insolvent debtor, till he is forgiven, does not *love*, but *fly* his creditor.

V. 44. **Thou gavest me no water**-It was customary with the Jews to show respect and kindness to their welcome guests, by saluting them with a kiss, by washing their feet, and anointing their heads with oil, or some fine ointment.

V. 47. **Those many sins of hers are forgiven; therefore she loveth much**-The fruit of her having had much forgiven. It should carefully be observed here, that her love is mentioned as the *effect* and *evidence*, not the *cause* of her pardon. She knew that much had been forgiven her, and therefore she loved much.

V. 50. **Thy faith hath saved thee**-Not thy love. Love is salvation.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. VIII.

V. 2. **Mary Magdalene**-Or Mary of Magdala, a town in Galilee: probably the person mentioned in the last chapter.

V. 4. **#Mt 13:1; #Mr 4:1.**

V. 15. **Who-keep it**-Not like the highway side:

And bring forth fruit-Not like the thorny ground:

With perseverance-Not like the stony.

V. 16. **No man having lighted a candle**-As if he had said, And let your good fruit appear openly. **#Mt 5:15; #Mr 4:21; #Lu 11:33.**

V. 17. **For nothing is hid**-Strive not to conceal it at all; for you can conceal nothing long. **#Mt 10:26; #Mr 4:22; #Lu 12:2.**

V. 18. The word commonly translated **seemeth**, wherever it occurs, does not weaken, but greatly strengthens the sense. **#Mt 13:12; #Mr 4:25; #Lu 19:26.**

V. 19. **#Mt 12:46; #Mr 3:31.**

V. 22. **#Mt 8:23; #Mr 4:35.**

V. 26. **#Mt 8:28; #Mr 5:1.**

V. 29. **For many times it had caught him**-Therefore our compassionate Lord made the more haste to cast him out.

V. 31. **The abyss**-That is, the bottomless pit.

V. 32. **To enter into the swine**-Not that they were any easier in the swine than out of them. Had it been so, they would not so soon have dislodged themselves, by destroying the herd.

V. 37. **#Mt 9:1; #Mr 5:18.**

V. 40. **#Mr 5:21.**

V. 52. **She is not dead but sleepeth**-Her soul is not separated finally from the body; and this short separation is rather to be called sleep than death.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. IX.

V. 1. **#Mt 10:1; #Mr 6:7.**

V. 4. **There abide and thence depart**-That is, stay in that house till ye leave the city.

V. 7. **It was said by some**-And soon after by Herod himself. **#Mt 14:1; #Mr 6:14.**

V. 8. **That Elijah had appeared**-He could not rise again, because he did not die.

V. 10. **#Mr 6:30.**

V. 12. **#Mt 14:15; #Mr 6:35; #Joh 6:3.**

V. 18. **Apart**-From the multitude.

And he asked them-When he had done praying, during which they probably stayed at a distance. **#Mt 14:13; #Mr 8:27.**

V. 22. **Saying**-Ye must prepare for a scene far different from this.

V. 23. **Let him deny himself, and take up his cross**-The necessity of this duty has been shown in many places: the extent of it is specified here,

daily-Therefore that day is lost wherein no cross is taken up.

V. 24. **#Mt 16:25; #Mr 8:35; #Joh 12:25.**

V. 28. **#Mt 17:1; #Mr 9:2.**

V. 31. **In glory**-Like Christ with whom they talked.

V. 32. **They saw his glory**-The very same expression in which it is described by St. John, **#Joh 1:14**; and by St. Peter, **#2Pe 1:16.**

V.34. **A cloud came and overshadowed them all. And they, the apostles, feared, while they (Moses and Elijah) entered into the cloud,** which took them away.

V. 37. **#Mt 17:14; #Mr 9:14.**

V. 44. **Let these sayings sink down into your ears**-That is, consider them deeply. In joy remember the cross. So wisely does our Lord balance praise with sufferings. **#Mt 17:22; #Mr 9:31.**

V. 46. **And there arose a reasoning among them**-This kind of reasoning always arose at the most improper times that could be imagined.

V. 47. **#Mt 18:2; #Mr 9:37.**

V. 48. **And said to them**-If ye would be truly great, humble yourselves to the meanest offices. He that is least in his own eyes shall be great indeed.

V. 49. **#Mr 9:38.**

V. 51. **The days are fulfilled that he should be received up**-That is, the time of his passion was now at hand. St. Luke looks through this, to the glory which was to follow.

He steadfastly set his face-Without fear of his enemies, or shame of the cross, **#Heb 12:2.**

V. 52. **He sent messengers to make ready**-A lodging and needful entertainment for him and those with him.

V. 53. **His face was as though he would go to Jerusalem**-It plainly appeared, he was going to worship at the temple, and thereby, in effect, to condemn the Samaritan worship at Mount Gerizim.

V. 54. **As Elisha did**-At or near this very place, which might put it into the minds of the apostles to make the motion now, rather than at any other time or place, where Christ had received the like affront.

V. 55. **Ye know not what manner of spirit**-The spirit of Christianity is. It is not a spirit of wrath and vengeance, but of peace, and gentleness, and love.

V. 57. **#Mt 8:19.**

V. 58. **But Jesus said to him**-First understand the terms: consider on what conditions thou art to follow me.

V. 61. **Suffer me first to bid them farewell that are in my house**-As Elisha did after Elijah had called him from the plough, **#1Ki 19:19**; to which our Lord's answer seems to allude.

V. 62. **Is fit for the kingdom of God**-Either to propagate or to receive it.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. X.

V. 2. **Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would thrust forth labourers**-For God alone can do this: he alone can qualify and commission men for this work. #Mt 9:37.

V. 3. #Mt 10:16.

V. 4. **Salute no man by the way**-The salutations usual among the Jews took up much time. But these had so much work to do in so short a space, that they had not a moment to spare.

V. 6. **A son of peace**-That is, one worthy of it.

V. 7. #Mt 10:11.

V. 11. **The kingdom of God is at hand**-Though ye will not receive it.

V. 13. **Wo to thee, Chorazin**-The same declaration Christ had made some time before. By repeating it now, he warns the seventy not to lose time by going to those cities. #Mt 11:21.

V. 16. #Mt 10:40; #Joh 13:20.

V. 18. **I beheld Satan**-That is, when ye went forth, I saw the kingdom of Satan, which was highly exalted, swiftly and suddenly cast down.

V. 19. **I give you power**-That is, I continue it to you:

and nothing shall hurt you-Neither the power, nor the subtilty of Satan.

V. 20. **Rejoice not so much that the devils are subject to you, as that your names are written in heaven**-Reader, so is thine, if thou art a true, believer. God grant it may never be blotted out!

V. 21. **Lord of heaven and earth**-In both of which thy kingdom stands, and that of Satan is destroyed.

That thou hast hid these things-He rejoiced not in the destruction of the wise and prudent, but in the display of the riches of God's grace to others, in such a manner as reserves to Him the entire glory of our salvation, and hides pride from man. #Mt 11:25.

V. 22. **Who the Son is**-Essentially one with the Father:

who the Father is-How great, how wise, how good!

V. 23. #Mt 13:16.

V. 25. **#Mt 22:35; #Mr 12:28.**

V. 27. **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God**-That is, thou shalt unite all the faculties of thy soul to render him the most intelligent and sincere, the most affectionate and resolute service. We may safely rest in this general sense of these important words, if we are not able to fix the particular meaning of every single word. If we desire to do this, perhaps the heart, which is a general expression, may be explained by the three following, With all thy soul, with the warmest affection, with all thy strength, the most vigorous efforts of thy will, and with all thy mind or understanding, in the most wise and reasonable manner thou canst; thy understanding guiding thy will and affections. **#De 6:5; #Le 19:18.**

V. 28. **Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live**-Here is no irony, but a deep and weighty truth. He, and he alone, shall live for ever, who thus loves God and his neighbour in the present life.

V. 29. **To justify himself**-That is, to show he had done this. **#Le 18:5.**

V. 30. **From Jerusalem to Jericho**-The road from Jerusalem to Jericho (about eighteen miles from it) lay through desert and rocky places: so many robberies and murders were committed therein, that it was called **the bloody way**. Jericho was situated in the valley: hence the phrase of **going down to it**. About twelve thousand priests and Levites dwelt there, who all attended the service of the temple.

V. 31. The common translation is, **by chance**-Which is full of gross improprieties. For if we speak strictly, there is no such thing in the universe as either chance or fortune.

A certain priest came down that way, and passed by on the other side-And both he and the Levite no doubt could find an excuse for passing over on the other side, and might perhaps gravely thank God for their own deliverance, while they left their brother bleeding to death. Is it not an emblem of many living characters, perhaps of some who bear the sacred office? O house of Levi and of Aaron, is not the day coming, when the virtues of heathens and Samaritans will rise up in judgment against you?

V. 33. **But a certain Samaritan came where he was**-It was admirably well judged to represent the distress on the side of the Jew, and the mercy on that of the Samaritan. For the case being thus proposed, self interest would make the very scribe sensible, how amiable such a conduct was, and would lay him open to our Lord's inference. Had it been put the other way, prejudice might more easily have interposed, before the heart could have been affected.

V. 34. **Pouring in oil and wine**-Which when well beaten together are one of the best balsams that can be applied to a fresh wound.

V. 36. **Which of these was the neighbour to him that fell among the robbers**-Which acted the part of a neighbour?

V. 37. **And he said, He that showed mercy on him**-He could not for shame say otherwise, though he thereby condemned himself and overthrew his own false notion of the neighbour to whom our love is due.

Go and do thou in like manner-Let us *go and do likewise*, regarding every man as our neighbour who needs our assistance. Let us renounce that bigotry and party zeal which would contract our hearts into an insensibility for all the human race, but a small 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 that kindred between man and man, and cultivate that happy instinct whereby, in the original constitution of our nature, God has strongly bound us to each other.

V. 40. **Martha was encumbered**-The Greek word properly signifies **to be drawn** different ways at the same time, and admirably expresses the situation of a mind, surrounded (as Martha's then was) with so many objects of care, that it hardly knows which to attend to first.

V. 41. **Martha, Martha**-There is a peculiar spirit and tenderness in the repetition of the word:

thou art careful, inwardly, and **hurried**, outwardly.

V. 42. **Mary hath chosen the good part**-To save her soul. Reader, hast thou?

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XI.

V. 1. **Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples**-The Jewish masters used to give their followers some short form of prayer, as a peculiar badge of their relation to them. This it is probable John the Baptist had done. And in this sense it seems to be that the disciples now asked Jesus, *to teach them to pray*. Accordingly he here repeats that form, which he had before given them in his sermon on the mount, and likewise enlarges on the same head, though still speaking the same things in substance. And this prayer uttered from the heart, and in its true and full meaning, is indeed the badge of a real Christian: for is not he such whose first and most ardent desire is the glory of God, and the happiness of man by the coming of his kingdom? Who asks for no more of this world than his daily bread, longing meantime for the bread that came down from heaven? And whose only desires for himself are forgiveness of sins, (as he heartily forgives others,) and sanctification.

V. 2. **When ye pray, say**-And what he said to them is undoubtedly said to us also. We are therefore here directed, not only to imitate this in all our prayers, but to use this very form of prayer. #Mt 6:9.

V. 4. **Forgive us; for we forgive them**-Not once, but continually. This does not denote the meritorious cause of our pardon; but the removal of that hinderance which otherwise would render it impossible.

V. 5. **At midnight**-The most unseasonable time: but no time is unseasonable with God, either for hearing or answering prayer.

V. 9. #Mt 7:7.

V. 13. **How much more shall your heavenly Father**-How beautiful is the gradation! A friend: a father: God!

Give the Holy Spirit-The best of gifts, and that which includes every good gift.

V. 14. **It was dumb**-That is, it made the man so. #Mt 12:22.

V. 15. **But some said, He casteth out devils by Beelzebub**-These he answers, #Lu 11:17. Others, to try whether it were so or no, sought a sign from heaven. These he reproves in #Lu 11:29 and following verses. *Beelzebub* signifies *the lord of flies*, a title which the heathens gave to Jupiter, whom they accounted the chief of their gods, and yet supposed him to be employed in driving away flies from their temple and sacrifices. The Philistines worshipped a deity under this name, as the god of Ekron: from hence the Jews took the name, and applied it to the chief of the devils. #Mr 3:22.

V. 16. #Mt 12:38.

V. 17. **A house**-That is, a family.

V. 20. **If I cast out devils by the finger of God**-That is, by a power manifestly Divine. Perhaps the expression intimates farther, that it was done without any labour:

then the kingdom of God is come upon you-Unawares, unexpected: so the Greek word implies.

V. 21. **The strong one armed**-The devil, strong in himself, and armed with the pride, obstinacy, and security of him in whom he dwells.

V. 26. **The last state of that man becometh worse than the first**-Whoever reads the sad account Josephus gives of the temple and conduct of the Jews, after the ascension of Christ and 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 degree of madness. But this also is fulfilled in all who totally and finally apostatize from true faith.

V. 27. **Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked!**-How natural was the thought for a woman! And how gently does our Lord reprove her!

V. 28. **Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it**-For if even she that bare him had not done this, she would have forfeited all her blessedness.

V. 29. **It seeketh**-The original word implies seeking more, or over and above what one has already.

V. 32. **They repented at the preaching of Jonah**-But it was only for a season. Afterward they relapsed into wickedness, till (after about forty years) they were destroyed. It is remarkable, that in this also the comparison held. God reprieved the Jews for about forty years; but they still advanced in wickedness, till having filled up their measure, they were destroyed with an utter destruction.

V. 33. The meaning is, God gives you this Gospel light, that you may repent. Let your eye be singly fixed on him, aim only at pleasing God; and while you do this, your whole soul will be full of wisdom, holiness, and happiness. #Mt 5:15; #Mr 4:21; #Lu 8:16.

V. 34. **But when thine eye is evil**-When thou aimest at any thing else, thou wilt be full of folly, sin, and misery. On the contrary, #Lu 11:36. #Mt 6:22

V. 36. **If thy whole body be full of light**-If thou art filled with holy wisdom, having no part dark, giving way to no sin or folly, then that heavenly principle will, like the clear flame of a lamp in a room that was dark before, shed its light into all thy powers and faculties.

V. 39. **Now ye Pharisees**-Probably many of them were present at the Pharisee's house. #Mt 23:25.

V. 41. **Give what is in them**-The vessels which ye clean, **in alms, and all things are clean to you**. As if he had said, By acts directly contrary to rapine and wickedness, show that your hearts are cleansed, and these outward washings are needless.

V. 42. **Wo to you**-That is, miserable are you. In the same manner is the phrase to be understood throughout the chapter.

V. 44. **For ye are as graves which appear not**-Probably in speaking this our Lord fixed his eyes on the scribes. *As graves which appear not*, being overgrown with grass, so that men are not aware, till they stumble upon them, and either hurt themselves, or at least are defiled by touching them. On another occasion Christ compared them to whited sepulchres, fair without, but foul within; **#Mt 23:27**.

V. 45. **One of the lawyers**-That is scribes; expounders of the law.

V. 48. **Whom they killed, ye build their sepulchres**-Just like them pretending great reverence for the ancient prophets, while ye destroy those whom God sends to yourselves. Ye therefore *bear witness* by this deep hypocrisy that ye are of the very same spirit with them.

V. 49. **The wisdom of God**, agreeably to this, **hath said**-In many places of Scripture, though not in these very words,

I will send them prophets-Chiefly under the Old Testament:

and apostles-Under the New. **#Mt 23:34**.

V. 50. **The blood of all shall be required of this generation**-That is, shall be visibly and terribly punished upon it.

V. 51. And so it was within forty years, in a most astonishing manner, by the dreadful destruction of the temple, the city, and the whole nation.

Between the temple and the altar-In the court of the temple.

V. 52. **Ye have taken away the key of knowledge**-Ye have obscured and destroyed the knowledge of the Messiah, which is the key of both the present and the future kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of grace and glory.

Ye have not entered in-Into the present kingdom of heaven.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XII.

V. 1. **He said to his disciples first**-But afterward **#Lu 12:54** to all the people. **#Mt 16:6.**

V. 3. **#Mt 10:27.**

V. 4. **But I say to you, Fear not**-Let not the fear of man make you act the hypocrite, or conceal any thing which I have commissioned you to publish.

V. 5. **Fear him who hath power to cast into hell**-Even to his peculiar friends, Christ gives this direction. Therefore the fearing of God as having power to cast into hell, is to be pressed even on true believers.

V. 6. **Are not five sparrows**-But trust as well as fear him.

V. 7. **#Mt 10:30.**

V. 8. **And I say to you**-If you avoid all hypocrisy, and openly avow my Gospel:

The Son of man shall confess you-before the angels-At the last day. **#Mr 8:38; #Lu 9:26.**

V. 10. **And whosoever**-As if he had said, Yet the denying me in some degree, may, upon true repentance, be forgiven; but if it rise so high as that of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it shall never be forgiven, neither is there place for repentance. **#Mt 12:31; #Mr 3:28.**

V. 11. **Take no thought**-Be not solicitous about the matter or manner of your defence; nor how to express yourselves. **#Mt 10:19; #Lu 21:12.**

V. 14. **Who made me a judge?**-In worldly things. His kingdom is not of this world.

V. 15. **He said to them**-Perhaps to the two brothers, and through them to the people.

A man's life-That is, the comfort or happiness of it.

V. 17. **What shall I do?**-The very language of want! Do? Why, lay up treasure in heaven.

V. 20. **Thou fool**-To think of satisfying thy soul with earthly goods! To depend on living many years! Yea, one day!

They-The messengers of death, commissioned by God, *require thy soul of thee!*

V. 21. **Rich toward God**-Namely, in faith, and love, and good works.

V. 22. **#Mt 6:25.**

V. 25. **Which of you can add the least measure**-It seems, to add one cubit to a thing (which is the phrase in the original) was a kind of proverbial expression for making the least addition to it.

V. 28. **The grass**-The Greek word means all sorts of herbs and flowers.

V. 29. **Neither be ye of a doubtful mind**-The word in the original signifies, any speculations or musings in which the mind fluctuates, or is suspended (like meteors in the air) in an uneasy hesitation.

V. 32. **It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom**-How much more food and raiment? And since ye have such an inheritance, regard not your earthly possessions.

V. 33. **Sell what ye have**-This is a direction, not given to all the multitude: (much less is it a standing rule for all Christians;) neither to the apostles; for they had nothing to sell, having left all before: but to his other disciples, (mentioned **#Lu 12:22**, and **#Ac 1:15**,) especially to the seventy, that they might be free from all worldly entanglements. **#Mt 6:19.**

V. 35. **Let your loins be girt**-An allusion to the long garments, worn by the eastern nations, which they girded or tucked up about their loins, when they journeyed or were employed in any labour: as also to the lights that servants used to carry at weddings, which were generally in the night.

V. 37. **He will come and serve them**-The meaning is, he will show them his love, in the most condescending and tender manner.

V. 38. The Jews frequently divided the night into three watches, to which our Lord seems here to allude.

V. 41. **Speakest thou this parable to us**-Apostles and disciples:

Or to all-The people? Does it concern us alone? Or all men?

V. 42. **Who is that faithful and wise steward**-Our Lord's answer manifestly implies, that he had spoken this parable primarily (though not wholly) to the ministers of his word:

Whom his lord shall make ruler over his household-For his wisdom and faithfulness.

V. 43. **Happy is that servant**-God himself pronounces him wise, faithful, happy! Yet we see, he might fall from all, and perish for ever.

V. 46. **The Lord will appoint him his portion**-His everlasting portion,

with the unfaithful-As faithful as he was once, God himself being the Judge!

V. 47. **And that servant who knew his Lord's will shall be beaten with many stripes**-And his having much knowledge will increase, not lessen, his punishment.

V. 49. **I am come to send fire**-To spread the fire of heavenly love over all the earth.

V. 50. **But I have a baptism to be baptized with**-I must suffer first, before I can set up my kingdom. And how I long to fight my way through all!

V. 51. **Suppose ye that I am come to send peace upon earth**-That universal peace will be the immediate effect of my coming? Not so, but quite the contrary. #Mt 10:34.

V. 52. **There shall be five in one house, three against two, and two against three**-There being an irreconcilable enmity between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world.

V. 53. **The father against the son**-For those who reject me will be implacable toward their very nearest relations who receive me. At this day also is this scripture fulfilled. Now likewise there is no concord between Christ and Belial.

V. 54. **And he said to the people also**-In the preceding verses he speaks only to his disciples.

From the west-In Judea, the west wind, blowing from the sea, usually brought rain: the south wind, blowing from the deserts of Arabia, occasioned sultry heat. #Mt 16:2.

V. 56. **How do ye not discern this season**-Of the Messiah's coming, distinguishable by so many surer signs.

V. 57. **Why even of yourselves**, without any external sign, **judge ye not what is right?**-Why do ye not discern and acknowledge the intrinsic excellence of my doctrine?

V. 58. **When thou art going**-As if he had said, And ye have not a moment to lose. For the executioners of God's vengeance are at hand. And when he hath once delivered you over to them, ye are undone for ever. #Mt 5:25.

V. 59. **A mite**-was about the third part of a farthing sterling.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XIII.

V. 1. **The Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices**-Some of the followers of Judas Gaulonites. They absolutely refused to own the Roman authority. Pilate surrounded and slew them, while they were worshipping in the temple, at a public feast.

V. 3. **Ye shall all likewise perish**-All ye of Galilee and of Jerusalem shall perish in the very same manner. So the Greek word implies. And so they did. There was a remarkable resemblance between the fate of these Galileans and of the main body of the Jewish nation; the flower of which was slain at Jerusalem by the Roman sword, while they were assembled at one of their great festivals. And many thousands of them perished in the temple itself, and were literally buried under its ruins.

V. 6. **A man had a fig tree**-Either we may understand God the Father by him that had the vineyard, and Christ by him that kept it: or Christ himself is he that hath it, and his ministers they that keep it. #Ps 80:8. &c.

V. 7. **Three years**-Christ was then in the third year of his ministry. But it may mean only several years; a certain number being put for an uncertain.

Why doth it also cumber the ground?-That is, not only bear no fruit itself, but take up the ground of another tree that would.

V. 11. **She was bowed together, and utterly unable to lift up herself**-The evil spirit which possessed her afflicted her in this manner. To many doubtless it appeared a natural distemper. Would not a modern physician have termed it a *nervous case*?

V. 15. **Thou hypocrite**-For the real motive of his speaking was envy, not (as he pretended) pure zeal for the glory of God.

V. 16. **And ought not this woman?**-Ought not any human creature, which is so far better than an ox or an ass? Much more,

this daughter of Abraham-probably in a spiritual as well as natural sense, **to be loosed?**

V. 18. #Mt 13:31; #Mr 4:30.

V. 20. #Mt 13:33.

V. 21. **Covered up**-So that, for a time, nothing of it appeared.

V. 24. **Strive to enter in**-Agonize. Strive as in an agony. So the word signifies Otherwise none shall enter in. Barely *seeking* will not avail. #Mt 7:13.

V. 25. And even *agonizing* will not avail, after the door is shut. Agonize, therefore, now by faith, prayer, holiness, patience.

And ye begin to stand without-Till then they had not thought of it! O how new will that sense of their misery be? How late? How lasting?

I know not whence ye are-I know not, that is, I approve not of your ways.

V. 27. **#Mt 7:23.**

V. 28. **#Mt 8:11.**

V. 29. **They shall sit down in the kingdom of God**-Both the kingdom of grace and of glory.

V. 30. **But there are last**-Many of the Gentiles who were latest called, shall be most highly rewarded; and many of the Jews who were first called, shall have no reward at all. **#Mt 19:30.**

V. 31. **Herod is minded to kill thee**-Possibly they gave him the caution out of good will.

V. 32. **And he said, Go and tell that fox**-With great propriety so called, for his subtilty and cowardice. The meaning of our Lord's answer is, Notwithstanding all that he can do, I shall for the short time I have left, do the works of him that sent me. When that time is fulfilled, I shall be offered up. Yet not here, but in the bloody city.

Behold, I cast out devils-With what majesty does he speak to his enemies! With what tenderness to his friends!

The third day I am perfected-On the third day he left Galilee, and set out for Jerusalem, to die there.

But let us carefully distinguish between those things wherein Christ is our pattern, and those which were peculiar to his office. His extraordinary office justified him in using that *severity of language*, when speaking of *wicked princes, and corrupt teachers*, to which we have no call; and by which we should only bring scandal on religion, and ruin on ourselves, while we irritated rather than convinced or reformed those whom we so indecently rebuked.

V. 33. **It cannot be, that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem**-Which claims prescription for murdering the messengers of God. Such cruelty and malice cannot be found elsewhere.

V. 34. **How often would I have gathered thy children together**-Three solemn visits he had made to Jerusalem since his baptism for this very purpose. **#Mt 23:37.**

V. 35. **Your house is left to you desolate**-Is now irrecoverably consigned to desolation and destruction:

And verily I say to you, after a very short space, **ye shall not see me till the time come, when** taught by your calamities, **ye shall** be ready and disposed to **say,**

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. It does not imply, that they should then see Jesus at all; but only that they would earnestly wish for the Messiah, and in their extremity be ready to entertain any who should assume that character.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XIV.

V. 2. **There was a certain man before him**-It does not appear that he was come thither with any insidious design. Probably he came, hoping for a cure, or perhaps was one of the family.

V. 3. **And Jesus answering, spake**-Answering the thoughts which he saw rising in their hearts.

V. 7. **He spake a parable**-The ensuing discourse is so termed, because several parts are not to be understood literally. The general scope of it is, Not only at a marriage feast, but on every occasion, *he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that abaseth himself shall be exalted.*

V. 11. **#Mt 23:12.**

V. 12. **Call not thy friends**-That is, I do not bid thee call thy friends or thy neighbours. Our Lord leaves these offices of humanity and courtesy as they were, and teaches a higher duty. But is it not implied herein, that we should be sparing in entertaining those that need it not, in order to assist those that do need, with all that is saved from those needless entertainments?

Lest a recompense be made-This fear is as much unknown to the world, as even the fear of riches.

V. 14. **One of them that sat at table hearing these things**-And being touched therewith, **said,**

Happy is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God-Alluding to what had just been spoken. It means, he that shall have a part in the resurrection of the just.

V. 16. **Then said he**-Continuing the allusion.

A certain man made a great supper-As if he had said, All men are not sensible of this happiness. Many might have a part in it, and will not.

V. 18. **They all began to make excuse**-One of them pleads only his own will,

I go: another, a pretended necessity,

I must needs go: the third, impossibility,

I cannot come: all of them want the holy hatred mentioned **#Lu 14:26**. All of them perish by things in themselves lawful.

I must needs go-The most urgent worldly affairs frequently fall out just at the time when God makes the freest offers of salvation.

V. 21. **The servant came and showed his lord these things**-So ministers ought to lay before the Lord in prayer the obedience or disobedience of their hearers.

V. 23. **Compel them to come in**-With all the violence of love, and the force of God's word. Such compulsion, and such only, in matters of religion, was used by Christ and his apostles.

V. 24. **For** refers to **Go out**, #Lu 14:23.

V. 26. **If any man come to me, and hate not his father**-Comparatively to Christ: yea, so as actually to renounce his field, oxen, wife, all things, and act as if he hated them, when they stand in competition with him. #Mt 10:37.

V. 28. **And which of you intending to build a tower**-That is, and whoever of you intends to follow me, let him first seriously weigh these things.

V. 31. **Another king**-Does this mean, the prince of this world? Certainly he has greater numbers on his side. How numerous are his children and servants!

V. 33. **So**-Like this man, who, being afraid to face his enemy, sends to make peace with him, **every one who forsaketh not all that he hath**—

1. By withdrawing his affections from all the creatures; 2. By enjoying them only in and for God, only in such a measure and manner as leads to him; 3. By hating them all, in the sense above mentioned,

cannot be my disciple-But will surely desist from building that tower, neither can he persevere in fighting the good fight of faith.

V. 34. **Salt**-Every Christian, but more eminently every minister. #Mt 5:13; #Mr 9:50.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XV.

V. 1. **All the publicans**-That is, all who were in that place. It seems our Lord was in some town of Galilee of the Gentiles, from whence he afterward went to Jerusalem, #Lu 17:11.

V. 3. **He spake**-Three parables of the same import: for the sheep, the piece of silver, and the lost son, all declare (in direct contrariety to the Pharisees and scribes) in what manner God receiveth sinners.

V. 4. **Leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness**-Where they used to feed: all uncultivated ground, like our commons, was by the Jews termed wilderness or desert.

And go after-In recovering a lost soul, God as it were labours. May we not learn hence, that to let them alone who are in sin, is both unchristian and inhuman! #Mt 18:12.

V. 7. **Joy shall be**-Solemn and festal joy, **in heaven**-First, in our blessed Lord himself, and then among the angels and spirits of just men, perhaps informed thereof by God himself, or by the angels who ministered to them.

Over one sinner-One gross, open, notorious sinner,

that repenteth-That is, thoroughly changed in heart and life;

more than over ninety and nine just persons-Comparatively just, outwardly blameless:

that need not such a repentance-For they need not, cannot repent of the sins which they never committed.

The sum is, as a father peculiarly rejoices when an extravagant child, supposed to be utterly lost, comes to a thorough sense of his duty; or as any other person who has recovered what he had given up for gone, has a more sensible satisfaction in it, than in several other things equally valuable, but not in such danger: so do the angels in heaven peculiarly rejoice in the conversion of the most abandoned sinners. Yea, and God himself so readily forgives and receives them, that he may be represented as having part in the joy.

V. 12. **Give me the part of goods that falleth to me**-See the root of all sin! A desire of disposing of ourselves; of independency on God!

V. 13. **He took a journey into a far country**-Far from God: God was not in all his thoughts:

And squandered away his substance-All the grace he had received.

V. 14. **He began to be in want**-All his worldly pleasures failing, he grew conscious of his want of real good.

V. 15. **And he joined himself to a citizen of that country**-Either the devil or one of his children, the genuine citizens of that country which is far from God.

He sent him to feed swine-He employed him in the base drudgery of sin.

V. 16. **He would fain have filled his belly with the husks**-He would fain have satisfied himself with worldly comforts. Vain, fruitless endeavour!

V. 17. **And coming to himself**-For till then he was beside himself, as all men are, so long as they are without God in the world.

V. 18. **I will arise and go to my father**-How accurately are the first steps of true repentance here pointed out!

Against Heaven-Against God.

V. 20. **And he arose and came to his father**-The moment he had resolved, he began to execute his resolution.

While he was yet a great way off, his father saw him-Returning, starved, naked.

V. 22. **But the father said**-Interrupting him before he had finished what he intended to say. So does God frequently cut an earnest confession short by a display of his pardoning love.

V. 23. **Let us be merry**-Both here, and wherever else this word occurs, whether in the Old or New Testament, it implies nothing of levity, but a solid, serious, religious, heartfelt joy: indeed this was the ordinary meaning of the word two hundred years ago, when our translation was made.

V. 25. **The elder son** seems to represent the Pharisees and scribes, mentioned **#Lu 15:2**.

V. 27. **Thy father hath killed the fatted calf**-Perhaps he mentions this rather than the robe or ring, as having a nearer connection with the music and dancing.

V. 28. **He was angry, and would not go in**-How natural to us is this kind of resentment!

V. 29. **Lo, so many years do I serve thee**-So he was one of the instances mentioned **#Lu 15:7**. How admirably therefore does this parable confirm that assertion!

Yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends-Perhaps God does not usually give much joy to those who never felt the sorrows of repentance.

V. 31. **Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine**-This suggests a strong reason against murmuring at the indulgence shown to the greatest of sinners. As the father's receiving the younger son did not cause him to disinherit the elder; so God's receiving notorious sinners will be no loss to those who have always served him; neither will he raise these to a state of glory equal to that of those who have always served him, if they have, upon the whole, made a greater progress in inward as well as outward holiness.

V. 32. **This thy brother was dead, and is alive**-A thousand of these delicate touches in the inspired writings escape an inattentive reader. In **#Lu 15:30**, the elder son had unkindly and indecently said, *This thy son*. The father in his reply mildly reproves him, and tenderly says,

This thy brother-Amazing intimation, that the best of men ought to account the worst sinners their brethren still; and should especially remember this relation, when they show any inclination to return.

Our Lord in this whole parable shows, not only that the Jews had no cause to murmur at the reception of the Gentiles, (a point which did not at that time so directly fall under consideration,) but that if the Pharisees were indeed as good as they fancied themselves to be, still they had no reason to murmur at the kind treatment of any sincere penitent. Thus does he condemn them, even on their own principles, and so leaves them without excuse.

We have in this parable a lively emblem of the condition and behaviour of sinners in their natural state. Thus, when enriched by the bounty of the great common Father, do they ungratefully run from him, **#Lu 15:12**. Sensual pleasures are eagerly pursued, till they have squandered away all the grace of God, **#Lu 15:13**. And while these continue, not a serious thought of God can find a place in their minds. And even when afflictions come upon them, **#Lu 15:14**, still they will make hard shifts before they will let the grace of God, concurring with his providence, persuade them to think of a return, **#Lu 15:15, 16**.

When they see themselves naked, indigent, and undone, then they recover the exercise of their reason, **#Lu 15:17**. Then they remember the blessings they have thrown away, and attend to the misery they have incurred. And hereupon they resolve to return to their father, and put the resolution immediately in practice, **#Lu 15:18, 19**.

Behold with wonder and pleasure the gracious reception they find from Divine, injured goodness! When such a prodigal comes to his father, he sees him afar off, **#Lu 15:20**. He pities, meets, embraces him, and interrupts his acknowledgments with the tokens of his returning favour, **#Lu 15:21**. He arrays him with the robe of a Redeemer's righteousness, with inward and outward holiness; adorns him with all his sanctifying graces, and honours him with the tokens of adopting love, **#Lu 15:22**. And all this he does with unutterable delight, in that he who was lost is now found, **#Lu 15:23, 24**.

Let no elder brother murmur at this indulgence, but rather welcome the prodigal back into the family. And let those who have been thus received, wander no more, but emulate the strictest piety

of those who for many years have served their heavenly Father, and not transgressed his commandments.

CHAP. XVI.

V. 1. **And he said also to his disciples**-Not only to the scribes and Pharisees to whom he had hitherto been speaking, but to all the *younger* as well as the *elder* brethren: to the returning prodigals who were now *his disciples*.

A certain rich man had a steward-Christ here teaches all that are now in favour with God, particularly pardoned penitents, to behave wisely in what is committed to them.

V. 3. **To beg I am ashamed**-But not ashamed to cheat! This was likewise a sense of honour! "By men called honour, but by angels pride."

V. 4. **I know**-That is, I am resolved, what to do.

V. 8. **And the lord commended the unjust steward**-Namely, in this respect, because he had used timely precaution: so that though the dishonesty of such a servant be detestable, yet his foresight, care, and contrivance, about the interests of this life, deserve our imitation, with regard to the more important affairs of another.

The children of this world-Those who seek no other portion than this world:

Are wiser-Not absolutely, for they are, one and all, egregious fools; but they are more consistent with themselves; they are truer to their principles; they more steadily pursue their end; they are wiser

in their generation-That is, in their own way,

than the children of light-The children of God, whose light shines on their hearts.

V. 9. **And I say to you**-Be good stewards even of the lowest talents wherewith God hath intrusted you.

Mammon means riches or money. It is termed the **mammon of unrighteousness**, because of the manner wherein it is commonly either procured or employed. Make yourselves friends of this, by doing all possible good, particularly to the children of God: that when ye fail, when your flesh and your heart faileth, when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, those of them who have gone before may receive, may welcome you into the everlasting habitations.

V. 10. And whether ye have more or less, see that ye be faithful as well as wise stewards. He that is faithful in what is meanest of all, worldly substance, is also faithful in things of a higher nature; and he that uses these lowest gifts unfaithfully, is likewise unfaithful in spiritual things.

V. 11. **Who will intrust you with the true riches?**-How should God intrust you with spiritual and eternal, which alone are true riches?

V. 12. **If ye have not been faithful in that which was another's**-None of these temporal things are yours: you are only stewards of them, not proprietors: God is the proprietor of all; he lodges them in your hands for a season: but still they are his property. Rich men, understand and consider this. If your steward uses any part of your estate (so called in the language of men) any farther or any otherwise than you direct, he is a knave: he has neither conscience nor honour. Neither have you either one or the other, if you use any part of that estate, which is in truth God's, not yours, any otherwise than he directs.

That which is your own-Heaven, which when you have it, will be your own for ever.

V. 13. And you cannot be faithful to God, if you trim between God and the world, if you do not serve him alone. #Mt 6:24.

V. 15. **And he said to them, Ye are they who justify yourselves before men**-The sense of the whole passage is, that pride, wherewith you justify yourselves, feeds covetousness, derides the Gospel, #Lu 16:14, and destroys the law, #Lu 16:18. All which is illustrated by a terrible example.

Ye justify yourselves before men-Ye think yourselves righteous, and persuade others to think you so.

V. 16. **The law and the prophets were in force until John: from that time** the Gospel takes place; and humble upright men receive it with inexpressible earnestness. #Mt 11:13.

V. 17. Not that the Gospel at all destroys the law. #Mt 5:18.

V. 18. But ye do; particularly in this notorious instance. #Mt 5:31; 19:7.

V. 19. **There was a certain rich man**-Very probably a Pharisee, and one that *justified himself before men*; a very honest, as well as honourable gentleman: though it was not proper to mention his name on this occasion:

who was clothed in purple and fine linen-and doubtless esteemed on this account, (perhaps not only by those who sold it, but by most that knew him,) as encouraging trade, and acting according to his quality:

And feasted splendidly every day-And consequently was esteemed yet more, for his generosity and hospitality in keeping so good a table.

V. 20. **And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus**, (according to the Greek pronunciation) or Eleazer. By his name it may be conjectured, he was of no mean family, though it was thus reduced. There was no reason for our Lord to conceal his name, which probably was then well known. Theophylact observes, from the tradition of the Hebrews, that he lived at Jerusalem.

Yea, the dogs also came and licked his sores-It seems this circumstance is recorded to show that all his ulcers lay bare, and were not closed or bound up.

V. 22. **And the beggar**-Worn out with hunger, and pain, and want of all things, **died: and was carried by angels** (amazing change of the scene!) **into Abraham's bosom**-So the Jews styled paradise; the place where the souls of good men remain from death to the resurrection.

The rich man also died, and was buried-Doubtless with pomp enough, though we do not read of his lying in state; that stupid, senseless pageantry, that shocking insult on a poor, putrefying carcass, was reserved for our enlightened age!

V. 23. **He seeth Abraham afar off**-And yet knew him at that distance: and shall not Abraham's children, when they are together in paradise, know each other!

V. 24. **Father Abraham, have mercy on me**-It cannot be denied, but here is one precedent in Scripture of praying to departed saints: but who is it that prays, and with what success? Will any, who considers this, be fond of copying after him?

V. 25. **But Abraham said, Son**-According to the flesh. Is it not worthy of observation, that Abraham will not revile even a damned soul? and shall living men revile one another?

Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things-Thou didst choose and accept of worldly things as thy good, thy happiness. And can any be at a loss to know why he was in torments? This damnable idolatry, had there been nothing more, was enough to sink him to the nethermost hell.

V. 26. **Beside this there is a great gulf fixed**-Reader, to which side of it wilt thou go?

V. 28. **Lest they also come into this place**-He might justly fear lest their reproaches should add to his own torment.

V. 31. **Neither will they be persuaded**-Truly to repent: for this implies an entire change of heart: but a thousand apparitions cannot, effect this. God only can, applying his word.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XVII.

V. 1. **It is impossible but offences will come**-And they ever did and do come chiefly by Pharisees, that is, men who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others. #Mt 18:6; #Mr 9:42.

V. 2. **Little ones**-Weak believers.

V. 3. **Take heed to yourselves**-That ye neither offend others, nor be offended by others. #Mt 18:15.

V. 4. **If he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day return, saying, I repent**-That is, if he give sufficient proof that he does really repent, after having sinned ever so often, receive him just as if he had never sinned against thee. But this forgiveness is due only to real penitents. In a lower sense we are to forgive all, penitent or impenitent; (so as to bear them the sincerest good will, and to do them all the good we can;) and that not seven times only, but seventy times seven.

V. 5. **Lord, increase our faith**-That we may thus forgive, and may neither offend nor be offended. #Mt 17:20.

V. 6. **And he said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed**-If ye had the least measure of true faith, no instance of duty would be too hard for you.

Ye would say to this sycamine tree-This seems to have been a kind of proverbial expression.

V. 7. **But which of you**-But is it not meet that you should first obey, and then triumph? Though still with a deep sense of your utter unprofitableness.

V. 9. **Doth he thank that servant**-Does he account himself obliged to him?

V. 10. **When ye have done all, say, We are unprofitable servants**-For a man cannot profit God. Happy is he who judges himself an unprofitable servant: miserable is he whom God pronounces such. But though we are unprofitable to him, our serving him is not unprofitable to us. For he is pleased to give by his grace a value to our good works, which in consequence of his promise entitles us to an eternal reward.

V. 20. **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation**-With such outward pomp as draws the observation of every one.

V. 21. **Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there**-This shall not be the language of those who are, or shall be sent by me, to declare the coming of my kingdom.

For behold the kingdom of God is within or among you-Look not for it in distant times or remote places: it is now in the midst of you: it is come: it is present in the soul of every true believer: it is a spiritual kingdom, an internal principle. Wherever it exists, it exists in the heart.

V. 22. **Ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man**-One day of mercy. or one day wherein you might converse with me, as you do now.

V. 23. **They shall say, See, Christ is here, or there**-Limiting his presence to this or that place. **#Mt 24:23.**

V. 24. **So shall also the Son of man be**-So swift, so wide, shall his appearing be:

In his day-The last day.

V. 26. **The days of the Son of man**-Those which immediately follow that which is eminently styled his day. **#Mt 24:37.**

V. 31. **In that day**-(Which will be the grand type of the last day) when ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies.

V. 32. **Remember Lot's wife**-And escape with all speed, without ever looking behind you. **#Lu 9:24; #Joh 12:25.**

V. 33. The sense of this and the following verses is, Yet as great as the danger will be, do not seek to save your life by violating your conscience: if you do, you will surely lose it: whereas if you should lose it for my sake, you shall be paid with life everlasting. But the most probable way of preserving it now, is to be always ready to give it up: a peculiar Providence shall then watch over you, and put a difference between you and other men.

V. 37. **#Mt 24:28.**

CHAP. XVIII.

V. 1. **He spake a parable to them**-This and the following parable warn us against two fatal extremes, with regard to prayer: the former against faintness and weariness, the latter against self confidence.

V. 7. **And shall not God**-The most just Judge, **vindicate his own elect**-Preserve the Christians from all their adversaries, and in particular save them out of the general destruction, and avenge them of the Jews?

Though he bear long with them-Though he does not immediately put an end, either to the wrongs of the wicked, or the sufferings of good men.

V. 8. **Yet when the Son of man cometh, will he find faith upon earth**-Yet notwithstanding all the instances both of his long suffering and of his justice, whenever he shall remarkably appear, against their enemies in this age or in after ages, how few true believers will be found upon earth!

V. 9. **He spake this parable**-Not to hypocrites; the Pharisee here mentioned was no hypocrite, no more than an outward adulterer: but he *sincerely trusted in himself that he was righteous*, and accordingly told God so, in the prayer which none but God heard.

V. 12. **I fast twice in the week**-So did all the strict Pharisees: every Monday and Thursday.

I give tithes of all that I possess-Many of them gave one full tenth of their income in tithes, and another tenth in alms. The sum of this plea is, I do no harm: I use all the means of grace: I do all the good I can.

V. 13. **The publican standing afar off**-From the holy of holies,

would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven-Touched with shame, which is more ingenuous than fear.

V. 14. **This man went down**-From the hill on which the temple stood,

justified rather than the other-That is, and not the other.

V. 15. **#Mt 19:13; #Mr 10:13.**

V. 16. **Calling them**-Those that brought the children:

of such is the kingdom of God-Such are subjects of the Messiah's kingdom. And such as these it properly belongs to.

V. 18. **#Mt 19:16; #Mr 10:17.**

V. 20. **#Ex 20:12, &c.**

V. 22. **Yet lackest thou one thing**-Namely, to love God more than mammon. Our Saviour knew his heart, and presently put him upon a trial which laid it open to the ruler himself. And to cure his love of the world, which could not in him be cured otherwise, Christ commanded him to sell all that he had. But he does not command us to do this; but to use all to the glory of God.

V. 31. **#Mt 20:17; #Mr 10:32.**

V. 34. **They understood none of these things**-The literal meaning they could not but understand. But as they could not reconcile this to their preconceived opinion of the Messiah, they were utterly at a loss in what parabolical or figurative sense to take what he said concerning his sufferings; having their thoughts still taken up with the temporal kingdom.

V. 35. **#Mt 20:29; #Mr 10:46.**

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XIX.

V. 1. **He passed through Jericho**-So that Zaccheus must have lived near the end of the town: the tree was in the town itself.

And he was rich-These words seem to refer to the discourse in the last chapter, **#Lu 18:24-27**, particularly to **#Lu 18:27**. Zaccheus is a proof, that it is possible by the power of God for even *a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven*.

V. 2. **The chief of the publicans**-What we would term, commissioner of the customs. A very honourable as well as profitable place.

V. 4. **And running before**-With great earnestness.

He climbed up-Notwithstanding his quality: desire conquering honour and shame.

V. 5. **Jesus said, Zaccheus, make haste and come down**-What a strange mixture of passions must Zaccheus have now felt, hearing one speak, as knowing both his name and his heart!

V. 7. **They all murmured**-All who were near: though most of them rather out of surprise than indignation.

V. 8. **And Zaccheus stood**-Showing by his posture, his deliberate, purpose and ready mind,

and said, Behold, Lord, I give-I determine to do it immediately.

V. 9. **He also is a son of Abraham**-A Jew born, and as such has a right to the first offer of salvation.

V. 10. **#Mt 18:11**.

V. 11. **They thought the kingdom of God**-A glorious temporal kingdom, *would immediately appear*.

V. 12. **He went into a far country to receive a kingdom**-Christ went to heaven, to receive his sovereign power as man, even all authority in heaven and earth. **#Mt 25:14; #Mr 13:34**.

V. 13. **Trade till I come**-To visit the nation, to destroy Jerusalem, to judge the world: or, in a more particular sense, to require thy soul of thee.

V. 14. **But his citizens**-Such were those of Jerusalem, **hated him, and sent an embassy after him**-The word seems to imply, their sending ambassadors to a superior court, to enter their protest

against his being admitted to the regal power. In such a solemn manner did the Jews protest, as it were, before God, that Christ should not reign over them:

this man-So they call him in contempt.

V. 15. **When he was returned**-In his glory.

V. 23. **With interest**-Which does not appear to be contrary to any law of God or man. But this is no plea for usury, that is, the taking such interest as implies any degree of oppression or extortion.

V. 25. **They said**-With admiration, not envy.

V. 26. **#Mt 25:29; #Lu 8:18.**

V. 27. **He went before**-The foremost of the company, showing his readiness to suffer.

V. 29. **He drew nigh to** the place where the borders of Bethphage and Bethany met, which was *at the foot of the mount of Olives*. **#Mt 21:1; #Mr 11:1.**

V. 37. **The whole multitude began to praise God**-Speaking at once, as it seems, from a Divine impulse, words which most of them did not understand.

V. 38. **Peace in heaven**-God being reconciled to man.

V. 39. **Rebuke thy disciples**-Paying thee this immoderate honour.

V. 40. **If these should hold their peace, the stones**, which lie before you, **would cry out**-That is, God would raise up some still more unlikely instruments to declare his praise. For the power of God will not return empty.

V. 42. **O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day**-After thou hast neglected so many.

Thy day-The day wherein God still offers thee his blessings.

V. 43. **Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee around**-All this was exactly performed by Titus, the Roman general.

V. 44. **And thy children within thee**-All the Jews were at that time gathered together, it being the time of the passover.

They shall not leave in thee one stone upon another-Only three towers were left standing for a time, to show the former strength and magnificence of the place. But these likewise were afterward levelled with the ground.

V. 45. **#Mt 21:12; #Mr 11:11.**

V. 46. #Isa 56:7.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XX.

V. 1. **#Mt 21:23; #Mr 11:27.**

V. 9. **A long time**-It was a long time from the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan to the birth of Christ. **#Mt 21:33; #Mr 12:1.**

V. 16. **He will destroy these husbandmen**-Probably he pointed to the scribes, chief priests, and elders: who allowed, *he will miserably destroy those wicked men*, **#Mt 21:41**; but could not bear that this should be applied to themselves. They might also mean, *God forbid* that we should be guilty of such a crime as your parable seems to charge us with, namely, rejecting and killing the heir. Our Saviour answers, But yet will ye do it, as is prophesied of you.

V. 17. **He looked on them**-To sharpen their attention. **#Ps 118:22.**

V. 18. **#Mt 21:45.**

V. 20. **Just men**-Men of a tender conscience.

To take hold of his discourse-If he answered as they hoped he would. **#Mt 22:16; #Mr 12:12.**

V. 21. **Thou speakest**-In private,

and teachest-In public.

V. 24. **Show me a penny**-A Roman penny, which was the money that was usually paid on that occasion.

V. 26. **They could not take hold of his words before the people**-As they did afterward before the sanhedrim, in the absence of the people, **#Lu 22:67**, &c.

V. 27. **#Mt 22:23; #Mr 12:18.**

V. 28. **#De 25:5.**

V. 34. **The children of this world**-The inhabitants of earth,

marry and are given in marriage-As being all subject to the law of mortality; so that the species is in need of being continually repaired.

V. 35. **But they who obtain that world**-Which they enter into, before **the resurrection of the dead.**

V. 36. **They are the children of God**-In a more eminent sense when they rise again.

V. 37. **That the dead are raised**, even Moses, as well as the other prophets showed,
when he calleth-That is, when he recites the words which God spoke of himself,

I am the God of Abraham, &c. It cannot properly be said, that God is the God of any who are totally perished. #Ex 3:6.

V. 38. **He is not a God of the dead**, or, *there is no God of the dead*-That is, the term God implies such a relation, as cannot possibly subsist between him and the dead; who in the Sadducees' sense are extinguished spirits; who could neither worship him, nor receive good from him.

So that all live to him-All who have him for their God, live to and enjoy him. This sentence is not an argument for what went before; but the proposition which was to be proved. And the consequence is apparently just. For as all the faithful are the children of Abraham, and the Divine promise of being *a God to him and his seed* is entailed upon them, it implies their continued existence and happiness in a future state as much as Abraham's. And as the body is an essential part of man, it implies both his resurrection and theirs; and so overthrows the entire scheme of the Sadducean doctrine.

V. 40. **They durst not ask him any question**-The Sadducees durst not. One of the scribes did, presently after.

V. 41. #Mt 22:41; #Mr 12:35.

V. 42. #Ps 110:1.

V. 46. #Mt 23:5.

V. 47. #Mt 23:14.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XXI.

V. 1. **He looked up**-From those on whom his eyes were fixed before. #Mr 12:41.

V. 5. **Goodly stones**-Such as no engines now in use could have brought, or even set upon each other. Some of them (as an eye witness who lately measured them writes) were forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad; yet brought thither from another country.

And gifts-Which persons delivered from imminent dangers had, in accomplishment of their vows, hung on the walls and pillars.

The marble of the temple was so white, that it appeared like a mountain of snow at a distance. And the gilding of many parts made it, especially when the sun shone, a most splendid and beautiful spectacle. #Mt 24:1; #Mr 13:1.

V. 8. **I am the Christ; and the time is near**-When I will deliver you from all your enemies. They are the words of the seducers.

V. 9. **Commotions**-Intestine broils; civil wars.

V. 11. **Fearful sights and signs from heaven**-Of which Josephus gives a circumstantial account.

V. 12. #Mr 13:9.

V. 13. **It shall turn to you for a testimony**-Of your having delivered your own souls, and of their being without excuse.

V. 16. #Mt 10:21.

V. 17. #Mt 24:13; #Mr 13:13.

V. 18. **Not a hair of your head**-A proverbial expression, **shall perish**-Without the special providence of God. And then, not before the time, nor without A full reward.

V. 19. **In your patience possess ye your souls**-Be calm and serene, masters of yourselves, and superior to all irrational and disquieting passions. By keeping the government of your spirits, you will both avoid much misery, and guard the better against all dangers.

V. 21. **Let them that are in the midst of it**-Where Jerusalem stands (that is, they that are in Jerusalem) **depart out of it**, before their retreat is cut off by the uniting of the forces near the city, **and let not them that are in the adjacent countries** by any means **enter into it**.

V. 22. **And things which are written**-Particularly in Daniel.

V. 24. **They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive**-Eleven hundred thousand perished in the siege of Jerusalem, and above ninety thousand were sold for slaves. So terribly was this prophecy fulfilled!

And Jerusalem shall be trodden by the Gentiles-That is, inhabited. So it was indeed. The land was sold, and no Jew suffered even to come within sight of Jerusalem. The very foundations of the city were ploughed up, and a heathen temple built where the temple of God had stood.

The times of the Gentiles-That is, the times limited for their treading the city; which shall terminate in the full conversion of the Gentiles.

V. 25. **And there shall be**-Before the great day, which was typified by the destruction of Jerusalem:

signs-Different from those mentioned #**Lu 21:11**, &c. #**Mt 24:29**; #**Mr 13:24**.

V. 28. **Now when these things**-Mentioned #**Lu 21:8, 10**, &c, **begin to come to pass, look up** with firm faith, **and lift up your heads with joy: for your redemption** out of many troubles **draweth nigh**, by God's destroying your implacable enemies.

V. 29. **Behold the fig tree and all the trees**-Christ spake this in the spring, just before the passover; when all the trees were budding on the mount of Olives, where they then were.

V. 30. **Ye know of yourselves**-Though none teach you.

V. 31. **The kingdom of God is nigh**-The destruction of the Jewish city, temple, and religion, to make way for the advancement of my kingdom.

V. 32. **Till all things be effected**-All that has been spoken of the destruction of Jerusalem, to which the question, #**Lu 21:7**, relates: and which is treated of from #**Lu 21:8-24**.

V. 34. **Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be overloaded with gluttony and drunkenness**-And was there need to warn the apostles themselves against such sins as these? Then surely there is reason to warn even strong Christians against the very grossest sins. Neither are we wise, if we think ourselves out of the reach of any sin:

and so that day-Of judgment or of death, **come upon you**, even you that are not of this world-**Unawares**. #**Mt 24:42**; #**Mr 13:33**; #**Lu 12:35**.

V. 35. **That sit**-Careless and at ease.

V. 36. **Watch ye therefore**-This is the general conclusion of all that precedes.

That ye may be counted worthy-This word sometimes signifies an honour conferred on a person, as when the apostles are said to be *counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ*, #**Ac 5:41**.

Sometimes *meet* or *becoming*: as when John the Baptist exhorts, *to bring fruits worthy of repentance*, #Lu 3:8. And so to *be counted worthy to escape*, is to have the honour of it, and to be fitted or prepared for it.

To stand-With joy and triumph: not to fall before him as his enemies.

V. 37. **Now by day**-In the day time, **he was teaching in the temple**-This shows how our Lord employed his time after coming to Jerusalem: but it is not said, he was this day in the temple, and next morning the people came. It does not therefore by any means imply, that he came any more after this into the temple.

V. 38. **And all the people came early in the morning to hear him**-How much happier were his disciples in these early lectures, than the slumbers of the morning could have made them on their beds! Let us not scruple to deny ourselves the indulgence of unnecessary sleep, that we may morning after morning place ourselves at his feet, receiving the instructions of his word, and seeking those of his Spirit.

CHAP. XXII.

V. 1. **#Mt 26:1; #Mr 14:1.**

V. 3. **Then entered Satan**-Who is never wanting to assist those whose heart is bent upon mischief.

V. 4. **Captains**-Called *captains of the temple*, **#Lu 22:52**. They were Jewish officers, who presided over the guards which kept watch every night in the temple.

V. 7. **#Mt 26:17; #Mr 14:12.**

V. 14. **#Mt 26:20; #Mr 14:17.**

V. 15. **With desire have I desired**-That is, I have earnestly desired it. He desired it, both for the sake of his disciples, to whom he desired to manifest himself farther, at this solemn parting: and for the sake of his whole Church, that he might institute the grand memorial of his death.

V. 16. **For I will not eat thereof any more**-That is, it will be the last I shall eat with you before I die.

The kingdom of God did not properly commence till his resurrection. Then was *fulfilled* what was typified by the passover.

V. 17. **And he took the cup**-That cup which used to be brought at the beginning of the paschal solemnity, **and said,**

Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I will not drink-As if he had said, Do not expect me to drink of it: I will drink no more before I die.

V. 19. **And he took bread**-Namely, some time after, when supper was ended, wherein they had eaten the paschal lamb.

This is my body-As he had just now celebrated the paschal supper, which was called the passover, so in like figurative language, he calls this bread his body. And this circumstance of itself was sufficient to prevent any mistake, as if this bread was his real body, any more than the paschal lamb was really the passover.

V. 20. **This cup is the New Testament**-Here is an undeniable figure, whereby the cup is put for the wine in the cup. And this is called,

The New Testament in Christ's blood, which could not possibly mean, that it was the New Testament itself, but only the seal of it, and the sign of that blood which was shed to confirm it.

V. 21. **The hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table**-It is evident Christ spake these words before he instituted the Lord's Supper: for all the other evangelists mention the sop, *immediately after receiving which he went out: #Joh 13:30*. Nor did he return any more, till he came into the garden to betray his Master. Now this could not be dipped or given, but while the meat was on the table. But this was all removed before that bread and cup were brought.

V. 24. **There was also a contention among them**-It is highly probable, this was the same dispute which is mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark: and consequently, though it is related here, it happened some time before.

V. 25. **They that exercise the most arbitrary authority over them, have from their flatterers the vain title of benefactors.**

V. 26. **But** ye are to be benefactors to mankind, not by governing, but by serving.

V. 27. **For**-This he proves by his own example.

I am in the midst of you-Just now: see with your eyes. I take no state upon me, but *sit in the midst*, on a level with the lowest of you.

V. 28. **Ye have continued with me in my temptations**-And all his life was nothing else, particularly from his entering on his public ministry.

V. 29. **And I**-Will preserve you in all your temptations, till ye enter into the kingdom of glory:

appoint to you-By these very words. Not a primacy to one, but a kingdom to every one: on the same terms:

as my Father hath appointed to me-Who have fought and conquered.

V. 30. **That ye may eat and drink at my table**-That is, that ye may enjoy the highest happiness, as guests, not as servants. These expressions seem to be primarily applicable to the twelve apostles, and secondarily, to all Christ's servants and disciples, whose spiritual powers, honours, and delights, are here represented in figurative terms, with respect to their advancement both in the kingdom of grace and of glory.

V. 31. **Satan hath desired to have you**-My apostles,

that he might sift you as wheat-Try you to the uttermost.

V. 32. **But I have prayed for thee**-Who wilt be in the greatest danger of all:

that thy faith fail not-Altogether:

and when thou art returned-From thy flight,

strengthen thy brethren-All that are weak in faith; perhaps scandalized at thy fall.

V. 34. **It shall not be the time of cock crowing this day**-The common time of cock crowing (which is usually about three in the morning) probably did not come till after the cock which Peter heard had crowed twice, if not oftener.

V. 35. **When I sent you-lacked ye any thing**-Were ye not borne above all want and danger?

V. 36. **But now**-You will be quite in another situation. You will want every thing.

He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one-It is plain, this is not to be taken literally. It only means, This will be a time of extreme danger.

V. 37. **The things** which are written **concerning me have an end**-Are now drawing to a period; are upon the point of being accomplished. **#Isa 53:12.**

V. 38. **Here are two swords**-Many of Galilee carried them when they travelled, to defend themselves against robbers and assassins, who much infested their roads. But did the apostles need to seek such defence?

And he said; It is enough-I did not mean literally, that every one of you must have a sword.

V. 39. **#Mt 26:30.**

V. 40. **The place**-The garden of Gethsemane.

V. 43. **Strengthening him**-Lest his body should sink and die before the time.

V. 44. **And being in an agony**-Probably just now grappling with the powers of darkness: feeling the weight of the wrath of God, and at the same time surrounded with a mighty host of devils, who exercised all their force and malice to persecute and distract his wounded spirit.

He prayed more earnestly-Even with stronger cries and tears:

and his sweat-As cold as the weather was,

was as it were great drops of blood-Which, by the vehement distress of his soul, were forced out of the pores, in so great a quantity as afterward united in large, thick, grumous drops, and even *fell to the ground.*

V. 48. **Betrayest thou the Son of man**-He whom thou knowest to be the Son of man, the Christ?

V. 49. **Seeing what would follow**-That they were just going to seize him. **#Mt 26:51; #Mr 14:47.**

V. 51. **Suffer** me at least to have my hands at liberty **thus far**, while I do one more act of mercy.

V. 52. **Jesus said to the chief priests, and captains, and the elders who were come**-And all these came of their own accord: the soldiers and servants were sent.

V. 53. **This is your hour**-Before which ye could not take me:

and the power of darkness-The time when Satan has power.

V. 54. **#Mt 26:57; #Mr 14:53; #Joh 18:12.**

V. 58. **Another man saw him and said**-Observe here, in order to reconcile the four evangelists, that divers persons concurred in charging Peter with belonging to Christ.

1. The maid that led him in, afterward seeing him at the fire, first put the question to him, and then positively affirmed, that he was with Christ.
2. Another maid accused him to the standers by, and gave occasion to the man here mentioned, to renew the charge against him, which caused the second denial.
3. Others of the company took notice of his being a Galilean, and were seconded by the kinsman of Malchus, who affirmed he had seen him in the garden. And this drew on the third denial.

V. 59. **And about one hour after**-So he did not recollect himself in all that time.

V. 63. **#Mt 26:67; #Mr 14:65.**

V. 64. **And having blindfolded him, they struck him on the face**-This is placed by St. Matthew and Mark, after the council's condemning him. Probably he was abused in the same manner, both before and after his condemnation.

V. 65. **Many other things blasphemously spake they against him**-The expression is remarkable. They charged him with blasphemy, because he said he was the Son of God: but the evangelist fixes that charge on them, because he really was so.

V. 66. **#Mt 26:63; #Mr 14:61.**

V. 70. **They all said, Art thou then the Son of God?**-Both these, the Son of God, and the Son of man, were known titles of the Messiah; the one taken from his Divine, and the other from his human nature.

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XXIII.

V. 1. **#Mt 27:1; #Mr 15:1; #Joh 18:28.**

V. 4. **Then said Pilate**-After having heard his defence-I find no **fault in this man**-I do not find that he either asserts or attempts any thing seditious or injurious to Cesar.

V. 5. **He stirreth up the people, beginning from Galilee**-Probably they mentioned Galilee to alarm Pilate, because the Galileans were notorious for sedition and rebellion.

V. 7. **He sent him to Herod**-As his proper judge.

V. 8. **He had been long desirous to see him**-Out of mere curiosity.

V. 9. **He questioned him**-Probably concerning the miracles which were reported to have been wrought by him.

V. 11. **Herod set him at nought**-Probably judging him to be a fool, because he answered nothing.

In a splendid robe-In royal apparel; intimating that he feared nothing from this king.

V. 15. **He hath done nothing worthy of death**-According to the judgment of Herod also.

V. 16. **I will therefore chastise him**-Here Pilate began to give ground, which only encouraged them to press on. **#Mt 27:15; #Mr 15:6; #Joh 18:39.**

V. 22. **He said to them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done?**-As Peter, a disciple of Christ, dishonoured him by denying him thrice, so Pilate, a heathen, honoured Christ, by thrice owning him to be innocent.

V. 26. **#Mt 27:31; #Mr 15:21; #Joh 19:16.**

V. 30. **#Ho 10:8.**

V. 31. **If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?**-Our Lord makes use of a proverbial expression, frequent among the Jews, who compare a good man to a green tree, and a bad man to a dead one: as if he had said, If an innocent person suffer thus, what will become of the wicked? Of those who are as ready for destruction as dry wood for the fire?

V. 34. **Then said Jesus**-Our Lord passed most of the time on the cross in silence: yet seven sentences which he spoke thereon are recorded by the four evangelists, though no one evangelist has recorded them all. Hence it appears that the four Gospels are, as it were, four parts, which, joined

together, make one symphony. Sometimes one of these only, sometimes two or three, sometimes all sound together.

Father-So he speaks both in the beginning and at the end of his sufferings on the cross:

Forgive them-How striking is this passage! While they are actually nailing him to the cross, he seems to feel the injury they did to their own souls more than the wounds they gave him; and as it were to forget his own anguish out of a concern for their own salvation.

And how eminently was his prayer heard! It procured forgiveness for all that were penitent, and a suspension of vengeance even for the impenitent.

V. 35. **If thou be the Christ; #Lu 23:37.**

If thou be the king-The priests deride the name of Messiah: the soldiers the name of king.

V. 38. **#Mt 27:37; #Mr 15:26; #Joh 19:19.**

V. 39. **And one of the malefactors reviled him**-St. Matthew says, the robbers: St. Mark, they that were crucified with him, reviled him. Either therefore St. Matthew and Mark put the plural for the singular (as the best authors sometimes do) or both reviled him at the first, till one of them felt "the overwhelming power of saving grace."

V. 40. **The other rebuked him**-What a surprising degree was here of repentance, faith, and other graces! And what abundance of good works, in his public confession of his sin, reproof of his fellow criminal, his honourable testimony to Christ, and profession of faith in him, while he was in so disgraceful circumstances as were stumbling even to his disciples! This shows the power of Divine grace. But it encourages none to put off their repentance to the last hour; since, as far as appears, this was the first time this criminal had an opportunity of knowing any thing of Christ, and his conversion was designed to put a peculiar glory on our Saviour in his lowest state, while his enemies derided him, and his own disciples either denied or forsook him.

V. 42. **Remember me when thou comest**-From heaven,

in thy kingdom-He acknowledges him a king, and such a king, as after he is dead, can profit the dead. The apostles themselves had not then so clear conceptions of the kingdom of Christ.

V. 43. **In paradise**-The place where the souls of the righteous remain from death till the resurrection. As if he had said, I will not only remember thee then, but this very day.

V. 44. **There was darkness over all the earth**-The noon-tide darkness, covering the sun, obscured all the upper hemisphere. And the lower was equally darkened, the moon being in opposition to the sun, and so receiving no light from it. **#Mt 27:45.**

V. 45. **#Mr 15:38.**

V. 46. **Father, into thy hands**-The Father receives the Spirit of Jesus: Jesus himself the spirits of the faithful.

V. 47. **Certainly this was a righteous man**-Which implies an approbation of all he had done and taught.

V. 48. **All the people**-Who had not been actors therein,
returned smiting their breasts-In testimony of sorrow.

V. 50. **#Mt 27:57; #Mr 15:43; #Joh 19:38.**

ST. LUKE

CHAP. XXIV.

V. 1. **Certain others with them**-Who had not come from Galilee. #Mt 28:1; #Mr 16:1; #Joh 20:1.

V. 4. **Behold two**-Angels in the form of men. Mary had seen them a little before. They had disappeared on these women's coming to the sepulchre, but now appeared again. St. Matthew and Mark mention only one of them, appearing like a young man.

V. 6. **Remember how he spake to you, saying, The Son of man must be delivered**-This is only a repetition of the words which our Lord had spoken to them before his passion. But it is observable, he never styles himself the Son of man after his resurrection.

V. 13. #Mr 16:12.

V. 21. **To-day is the third day**-The day he should have risen again, if at all.

V. 25. **O foolish**-Not understanding the designs and works of God:

And slow of heart-Unready to believe what the prophets have so largely spoken.

V. 26. **Ought not Christ**-If he would redeem man, and fulfil the prophecies concerning him,

to have suffered these things?-These very sufferings which occasion your doubts, are the proofs of his being the Messiah.

And to enter into his glory-Which could be done no other way.

V. 28. **He made as though he would go farther**-Walking forward, as if he was going on; and he would have done it, had they not pressed him to stay.

V. 29. **They constrained him**-By their importunate entreaties.

V. 30. **He took the bread, and blessed, and brake**-Just in the same manner as when he instituted his last supper.

V. 31. **Their eyes were opened**-That is, the supernatural cloud was removed:

And he vanished-Went away insensibly.

V. 32. **Did not our heart burn within us**-Did not we feel an unusual warmth of love! Was not our heart burning, &c.

V. 33. **The same hour**-Late as it was.

V. 34. **The Lord hath appeared to Simon**-Before he was seen of the twelve apostles, #1Co 15:5.

He had, in his wonderful condescension and grace, taken an opportunity on the former part of that day (though where, or in what manner, is not recorded) to show himself to Peter, that he might early relieve his distresses and fears, on account of having so shamefully denied his Master.

V. 35. **In the breaking of bread**-The Lord's Supper.

V. 36. **Jesus stood in the midst of them**-It was just as easy to his Divine power to open a door undiscernibly, as it was to come in at a door opened by some other hand. #Mr 16:14, 19; #Joh 20:19.

V. 40. **He showed them his hands and his feet**-That they might either see or feel the prints of the nails.

V. 41. **While they believed not for joy**-They did in some sense believe: otherwise they would not have rejoiced. But their excess of joy prevented a clear, rational belief.

V. 43. **He took it and ate before them**-Not that he had any need of food; but to give them still farther evidence.

V. 44. **And he said**-On the day of his ascension.

In the law, and the prophets, and the psalms-The prophecies as well as types, relating to the Messiah, are contained either in the books of Moses (usually called the law) in the Psalms, or in the writings of the prophets; little being said directly concerning him in the historical books.

V. 45. **Then opened he their understanding, to understand the Scriptures**-He had explained them before to the two as they went to Emmaus. But still they Understood them not, till he took off the veil from their hearts, by the illumination of his Spirit.

V. 47. **Beginning at Jerusalem**-This was appointed most graciously and wisely: graciously, as it encouraged the, greatest sinners to repent, when they saw that even the murderers of Christ were not excepted from mercy: and wisely, as hereby Christianity was more abundantly attested; the facts being published first on the very spot where they happened.

V. 49. **Behold I send the promise**-Emphatically so called; the Holy Ghost.

V. 50. **He led them out as far as Bethany**-Not the town, but the district: to the mount of Olives, #Ac 1:12, which stood within the boundaries of Bethany.

V. 51. **And while he was blessing them, he was parted from them**-It was much more proper that our Lord should ascend into heaven, than that he should rise from the dead, in the sight of the

apostles. For his resurrection was proved when they **saw him alive after his passion:** but they could not see him in heaven while they continued on earth.

NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

In this book is set down the history of the Son of God dwelling among men; that,

- I. Of the first days, where the apostle, premising the sum of the whole . . . Chap. i, 1-14
 - Mentions the testimony given by John, after the baptism of Christ, and the first calling of some of the apostles. Here is noted what fell out,
 - The first day 15-28
 - The day after 29-34
 - The day after 35-42
 - The day after 43-52
 - The third day ii, 1-11
 - After this 12
 - II. Of the two years between, spent chiefly in journeys to and from Jerusalem,
 - A. The first journey, to the passover 13
 - a. Transactions in the city,
 1. Zeal for his Father's house 14-22
 2. The power and wisdom of Jesus 23-25
 3. The instruction of Nicodemus iii, 1-21
 - b. His abode in Judea; the rest of John's testimony 22-36
 - c. His journey through Samaria (where he confers with the Samaritan woman) into Galilee, where he heals the nobleman's son iv, 1-54
 - B. The second journey to the feast of pentecost.

Here may be observed transactions,

 - a. In the city, relating to the impotent man, healed at the pool of Bethesda v, 1-47
 - b. In Galilee, before the second passover and after. Here we may note,
 1. His feeding the five thousand vi, 1-14
 2. Walking upon the sea 15-21
 3. Discourse of himself, as the bread of life 22-59
 4. Reproof of those who objected to it 60-65
 5. Apostasy of many, and steadiness of the apostles 66-71
 6. His continuance in Galilee vii, 1
 - C. The third journey, to the feast of tabernacles 2-13

Here may be observed transactions,

 - a. In the city,
 1. In the middle and end of the feast 14-53
- viii; 1
- Where note,
1. The woman taken in adultery 2-12
 2. Christ's preaching and vindicating his doctrine 13-30
 3. His confuting the Jews and escape from them 31-59
 4. His healing the man born blind ix, 1-7

5. Several discourses on that occasion	8-41
6. Christ the Door and the Shepherd of the sheep	x, 1-18
7. Different opinions concerning him	19-21
2. At the feast of the dedication. here occur,	
1. His disputes with the Jews	Chap. x, 22-38
2. His escaping their fury	39
b. Beyond Jordan	40-42
III. Of the last days, which were,	
A. Before the great week, where we may note,	
a. The two days spent out of Judea, while Lazarus was sick and died	xi, 1-6
b. The journey into Judea; the raising of Lazarus; the advice of Caiaphas; Jesus's abode in Ephraim; the order given by his adversaries	7-57
c. The sixth day, before the passover; the supper at Bethany; the ointment poured on Jesus	xii, 1-11
B. In the great week, wherein was the third passover, occur,	
a. On the three former days, his royal entry into the city; the desire of the Greeks; the obstinacy of the Jews; the testimony given to Jesus from heaven	12-50
b. On the fourth day, the washing the feet of the disciples; the discovery of the traitor, and his going out by night	xiii, 1-30
c. On the fifth day,	
I. His discourse	
1. Before the paschal supper	31
	Chap. xiv, 1-31
2. After it	xv, and xvi.
2. His prayer	xvii, 1-26
3. The beginning of his passion,	
1. In the garden	xviii, 1-11
2. In Caiaphas's house	12-27
d. On the sixth day,	
I. His passion under Pilate,	
1. In the palace of Pilate	28
	xix, 1-16
2. On the cross	17-30
2. His death	30-37
3. His burial	38-42
C. After the great week,	
a. On the day of the resurrection	xx, 1-25
b. Eight days after	26-31
c. After that	
1. He appears to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias	xxi, 1-14
2. Orders Peter to feed his sheep and lambs	15-17
3. Foretells the manner of Peter's death, and checks his curiosity about St John	18-23
4. The conclusion	24, 25

ST. JOHN

CHAP. I.

V. 1. **In the beginning**-(Referring to **#Ge 1:1**, and **#Pr 8:23**.) When all things began to be made by the Word: in the beginning of heaven and earth, and this whole frame of created beings, the Word existed, without any beginning. He was when all things began to be, whatsoever had a beginning.

The Word-So termed **#Ps 33:6**, and frequently by the seventy, and in the Chaldee paraphrase. So that St. John did not borrow this expression from Philo, or any heathen writer. He was not yet named Jesus, or Christ. He is *the Word* whom the Father begat or *spoke* from eternity; by whom the Father *speaking*, maketh all things; who speaketh the Father to us. We have, in **#Joh 1:18**, both a real description of the Word, and the reason why he is so called. *He is the only begotten Son of the Father, who is in the bosom of the Father, and hath declared him.*

And the Word was with God-Therefore distinct from God the Father. The word rendered *with*, denotes a perpetual tendency as it were of the Son to the Father, in unity of essence. He was *with* God alone; because nothing beside God had then any being.

And the Word was God-Supreme, eternal, independent. There was no creature, in respect of which he could be styled God in a relative sense. Therefore he is styled so in the absolute sense. The Godhead of the Messiah being clearly revealed in the Old Testament, (**#Jer 23:7**; **#Ho 1:6**; **#Ps 23:1**.) the other evangelists aim at this, to prove that Jesus, a true man, was the Messiah. But when, at length, some from hence began to doubt of his Godhead, then St. John expressly asserted it, and wrote in this book as it were a supplement to the Gospels, as in the Revelation to the prophets.

V. 2. **The same was in the beginning with God**-This verse repeats and contracts into one the three points mentioned before. As if he had said, This Word, who was God, was in the beginning, and was with God.

V. 3. **All things** beside God were made, and all things which were made, were made by the Word. In **#Joh 1:1, 2** is described the state of things before the creation: **#Joh 1:3**, In the creation: **#Joh 1:4**, In the time of man's innocency: **#Joh 1:5**, In the time of man's corruption.

V. 4. **In him was life**-He was the foundation of life to every living thing, as well as of being to all that is.

And the life was the light of men-He who is essential life, and the giver of life to all that liveth, was also the light of men; the fountain of wisdom, holiness, and happiness, to man in his original state.

V. 5. **And the light shineth in darkness**-Shines even on fallen man;

but the darkness-Dark, sinful man, perceiveth it not.

V. 6. **There was a man**-The evangelist now proceeds to him who testified of *the light*, which he had spoken of in the five preceding verses.

V. 7. **The same came for** (that is, in order to give) **a testimony**-The evangelist, with the most strong and tender affection, interweaves his own testimony with that of John, by noble digressions, wherein he explains the office of the Baptist; partly premises and partly subjoins a farther explication to his short sentences. What St. Matthew, Mark, and Luke term the Gospel, in respect of the promise going before, St. John usually terms the testimony, intimating the certain knowledge of the relator;

to testify of the light-Of Christ.

V. 9. **Who lighteth every man**-By what is vulgarly termed natural conscience, pointing out at least the general lines of good and evil. And this light, if man did not hinder, would shine more and more to the perfect day.

V. 10. **He was in the world**-Even from the creation.

V. 11. **He came**-In the fulness of time,

to his own-Country, city, temple:

And his own-People, received him not.

V. 12. **But as many as received him**-Jews or Gentiles;

that believe on his name-That is, on him. The moment they believe, they are sons; and because they are sons, *God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

V. 13. **Who were born**-Who became the sons of God,

not of blood-Not by descent from **Abraham, nor by**

the will of the flesh-By natural generation,

nor by the will of man-Adopting them,

but of God-By his Spirit.

V. 14. **Flesh** sometimes signifies corrupt nature; sometimes the body; sometimes, as here, the whole man.

We beheld his glory-We his apostles, particularly Peter, James, and John, **#Lu 9:32.**

Grace and truth-We are all by nature liars and children of wrath, to whom both grace and truth are unknown. But we are made partakers of them, when we are accepted *through the Beloved*.

The whole verse might be paraphrased thus: **And** in order to raise us to this dignity and happiness, **the eternal Word**, by a most amazing condescension, **was made flesh**, united himself to our miserable nature, with all its innocent infirmities. **And** he did not make us a transient visit, but **tabernacled among us** on earth, displaying his glory in a more eminent manner, than even of old in the tabernacle of Moses. **And we** who are now recording these things **beheld his glory** with so strict an attention, that we can testify, it was in every respect such a glory as became the **only begotten of the Father**. For it shone forth not only in his transfiguration, and in his continual miracles, but in all his tempers, ministrations, and conduct through the whole series of his life. In all he appeared **full of grace and truth**: he was himself most benevolent and upright; made those ample discoveries of pardon to sinners, which the Mosaic dispensation could not do: and really exhibited the most substantial blessings, whereas that was but **a shadow of good things to come**.

V. 15. **John cried**-With joy and confidence;

This is he of whom I said-John had said this before our Lord's baptism, although he *then* knew him not in person: he knew him first at his baptism, and afterward cried, *This is he of whom I said*. &c.

He is preferred before me-in his office:

for he was before me-in his nature.

V. 16. **And**-Here the apostle confirms the Baptist's words: as if he had said, He is indeed preferred before thee: so we have experienced:

We all-That believe:

have received-All that we enjoy *out of his fulness*: and in the particular,

grace upon grace-One blessing upon another, immeasurable grace and love.

V. 17. **The law**-Working wrath and containing shadows:

was given-No philosopher, poet, or orator, ever chose his words so accurately as St. John.

The law, saith he, was given **by Moses**: **grace was by Jesus Christ**. Observe the reason for placing each word thus: *The law* of Moses was not his own. *The grace* of Christ was. His *grace* was opposite to the *wrath*, his *truth* to the *shadowy* ceremonies of the law.

Jesus-St. John having once mentioned the incarnation {**#Joh 1:14**), no more uses that name, *the Word*, in all his book.

V. 18. **No man hath seen God**-With bodily eyes: yet believers see him with the eye of faith.

Who is in the bosom of the Father-The expression denotes the highest unity, and the most intimate knowledge.

V. 19. **The Jews**-Probably the great council sent.

V. 20. **I am not the Christ**-For many supposed he was.

V. 21. **Art thou Elijah?**-He was not that Elijah (the Tishbite) of whom they spoke.

Art thou the prophet-Of whom Moses speaks, **#De 18:15**.

V. 23. **He said**-I am that forerunner of Christ of whom Isaiah speaks.

I am the voice-As if he had said, Far from being Christ, or even Elijah, I am nothing but a voice: a sound that so soon as it has expressed the thought of which it is the sign, dies into air, and is known no more. **#Isa 40:3**.

V. 24. **They who were sent were of the Pharisees**-Who were peculiarly tenacious of old customs, and jealous of any innovation (except those brought in by their own scribes) unless the innovator had unquestionable proofs of Divine authority.

V. 25. **They asked him, Why baptizest thou then?**-Without any commission from the sanhedrim? And not only heathens (who were always baptized before they were admitted to circumcision) but Jews also?

V. 26. **John answered, I baptize**-To prepare for the Messiah; and indeed to show that Jews, as well as Gentiles, must be proselytes to Christ, and that these as well as those stand in need of being washed from their sins.

V. 28. **Where John was baptizing**-That is, used to baptize.

V. 29. **He seeth Jesus coming and saith, Behold the Lamb**-Innocent; to be offered up; prophesied of by Isaiah, **#Isa 53:7**, typified by the paschal lamb, and by the daily sacrifice:

The Lamb of God-Whom God gave, approves, accepts of;

who taketh away-Atoneth for;

the sin-That is, all the sins:

of the world-Of all mankind. Sin and the world are of equal extent.

V. 31. **I knew him not**-Till he came to be baptized. How surprising is this; considering how nearly they were related, and how remarkable the conception and birth of both had been. But there was a peculiar providence visible in our Saviour's living, from his infancy to his baptism, at Nazareth: John all the time living the life of a hermit in the deserts of Judea, **#Lu 1:80**, ninety or more miles from Nazareth: hereby that acquaintance was prevented which might have made John's testimony of Christ suspected.

V. 34. **I saw it**-That is, the Spirit so descending and abiding on him.

And testified-From that time.

V. 37. **They followed Jesus**-They walked after him, but had not the courage to speak to him.

V. 41. **He first findeth his own brother Simon**-Probably both of them sought him:

Which is, being interpreted, the Christ-This the evangelist adds, as likewise those words in **#Joh 1:38**, *that is, being interpreted, Master*.

V. 42. **Jesus said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonah**-As none had told our Lord these names, this could not but strike Peter.

Cephas, which is Peter-Moaning the same in Syriac which *Peter* does in Greek, namely, a rock.

V. 45. **Jesus of Nazareth**-So Philip thought, not knowing he was born in Bethlehem. Nathanael was probably the same with Bartholomew, that is, the son of Tholomew. St. Matthew joins Bartholomew with Philip, **#Mt 10:3**, and St. John places Nathanael in the midst of the apostles, immediately after Thomas, **#Joh 21:2**, just as Bartholomew is placed, **#Ac 1:13**.

V. 46. **Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?**-How cautiously should we guard against popular prejudices? When these had once possessed so honest a heart as that of Nathanael, they led him to suspect the blessed Jesus himself for an impostor, because he had been brought up at Nazareth. But his integrity prevailed over that foolish bias, and laid him open to the force of evidence, which a candid inquirer will always be glad to admit, even when it brings the most unexpected discoveries.

Can any good thing-That is, have we ground from Scripture to expect the Messiah, or any eminent prophet from Nazareth?

Philip saith, Come and see-The same answer which he had received himself from our Lord the day before.

V. 48. **Under the fig tree I saw thee**-Perhaps at prayer.

V. 49. **Nathanael answered**-Happy are they that are ready to believe, swift to receive the truth and grace of God.

Thou art the Son of God-So he acknowledges now more than he had heard from Philip:

The Son of God, the king of Israel-A confession both of the person and office of Christ.

V. 51. **Hereafter ye shall see**-All of these, as well as thou, who believe on me now in my state of humiliation, shall hereafter see me come in my glory, and all the angels of God with me. This seems the most natural sense of the words, though they may also refer to his ascension.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. II.

V. 1. **And the third day**-After he had said this.

In Cana of Galilee-There were two other towns of the same name, one in the tribe of Ephraim, the other in Caelosyria.

V. 2. **Jesus and his disciples were invited to the marriage**-Christ does not take away human society, but sanctifies it. Water might have quenched thirst; yet our Lord allows wine; especially at a festival solemnity. Such was his facility in drawing his disciples at first, who were afterward to go through rougher ways.

V. 3. **And wine falling short**-How many days the solemnity had lasted, and on which day our Lord came, or how many disciples might follow him, does not appear.

His mother saith to him, They have not wine-Either she might mean, supply them by miracle; or, Go away, that others may go also, before the want appears.

V. 4. **Jesus saith to her, Woman**-So our Lord speaks also, **#Joh 19:26**. It is probable this was the constant appellation which he used to her. He regarded his Father above all, not *knowing* even his mother *after the flesh*.

What is it to me and thee? A mild reproof of her inordinate concern and untimely interposal.

Mine hour is not yet come-The time of *my* working this miracle, or of my going away.

May we not learn hence, if his mother was rebuked for attempting to direct him in the days of his flesh, how absurd it is to address her as if she had a right to command him, on the throne of his glory? Likewise how indecent it is for us to direct his supreme wisdom, as to the time or manner in which he shall appear for us in any of the exigencies of life!

V. 5. **His mother saith to the servants**-Gathering from his answer he was about to do something extraordinary.

V. 6. **The purifying of the Jews**-Who purified themselves by frequent washings particularly before eating.

V. 9. **The governor of the feast**-The bridegroom generally procured some friend to order all things at the entertainment.

V. 10. **And saith**-St. John barely relates the words he spoke, which does not imply his approving them.

When they have well drunk-does not mean any more than toward the close of the entertainment.

V. 11. **And his disciples believed**-More steadfastly.

V. 14. **Oxen, and sheep, and doves**-Used for sacrifice:

And the changers of money-Those who changed foreign money for that which was current at Jerusalem, for the convenience of them that came from distant countries.

V. 15. **Having made a scourge of rushes**-(Which were strewed on the ground,) **he drove all out of the temple**, (that is, the court of it,) **both the sheep and the oxen**-Though it does not appear that he struck even them; and much less, any of the men. But a terror from God, it is evident, fell upon them.

V. 17. **#Ps 69:9.**

V. 18. **Then answered the Jews**-Either some of those whom he had just driven out, or their friends:

What sign showest thou?-So they require a miracle, to confirm a miracle!

V. 19. **This temple**-Doubtless pointing, while he spoke, to his body, the temple and habitation of the Godhead.

V. 20. **Forty and six years**-Just so many years before the time of this conversation, Herod the Great had begun his most magnificent reparation of the temple, (one part after another,) which he continued all his life, and which was now going on, and was continued thirty-six years longer, till within six or seven years of the destruction of the state, city, and temple by the Romans.

V. 22. **They believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said**-Concerning his resurrection.

V. 23. **Many believed**-That he was a teacher sent from God.

V. 24. **He did not trust himself to them**-Let us learn hence not rashly to put ourselves into the power of others. Let us study a wise and happy medium between universal suspiciousness and that easiness which would make us the property of every pretender to kindness and respect.

V. 25. **He**-To whom all things are naked,

knew what was in man-Namely, a desperately deceitful heart.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. III.

V. 1. **A ruler**-One of the great council.

V. 2. **The same came**-Through desire; but

by night-Through shame:

We know-Even we rulers and Pharisees.

V. 3. **Jesus answered**-That knowledge will not avail thee unless thou

be born again-Otherwise thou canst not see, that is, experience and enjoy, either the inward or the glorious kingdom of God.

In this solemn discourse our Lord shows, that no external profession, no ceremonial ordinances or privileges of birth, could entitle any to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom: that an entire change of heart as well as of life was necessary for that purpose: that this could only be wrought in man by the almighty power of God: that every man born into the world was by nature in a state of sin, 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: that all mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, might share in these benefits, procured by his being lifted up on the cross, and to be received by faith in him: but that if they rejected him, their eternal, aggravated condemnation, would be the certain consequence.

Except a man be born again-If our Lord by being *born again* means only reformation of life, instead of making any new discovery, he has only thrown a great deal of obscurity on what was before plain and obvious.

V. 4. **When he is old**-As Nicodemus himself was.

V. 5. **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit**-Except he experience that great inward change by the Spirit, and be baptized (wherever baptism can be had) as the outward sign and means of it.

V. 6. **That which is born of the flesh is flesh**-Mere flesh, void of the Spirit, yea, at enmity with it;

And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit-Is spiritual, heavenly, divine, like its Author.

V. 7. **Ye must be born again**-To be born again, is to be inwardly changed from all sinfulness to all holiness. It is fitly so called, because as great a change then passes on the soul as passes on the body when it is born into the world.

V. 8. **The wind bloweth**-According to its own nature, not thy will,

and thou hearest the sound thereof-Thou art sure it doth blow,

but canst not explain the particular manner of its acting.

So is every one that is born of the Spirit-The fact is plain, the manner of his operations inexplicable.

V. 11. **We speak what we know**-I and all that believe in me.

V. 12. **Earthly things**-Things done on earth; such as the new birth, and the present privileges of the children of God.

Heavenly things-Such as the eternity of the Son, and the unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

V. 13. **For no one**-For here you must rely on my single testimony, whereas there you have a cloud of witnesses:

Hath gone up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven.

Who is in heaven-Therefore he is omnipresent; else he could not be in heaven and on earth at once. This is a plain instance of what is usually termed the communication of properties between the Divine and human nature; whereby what is proper to the Divine nature is spoken concerning the human, and what is proper to the human is, as here, spoken of the Divine.

V. 14. **And as Moses**-And even this single witness will soon be taken from you; yea, and in a most ignominious manner. #Nu 21:8, 9.

V. 15. **That whosoever**-He must be *lifted up*, that hereby he may purchase salvation for all believers: all those who look to him by faith recover spiritual health, even as all that looked at that *serpent* recovered bodily health.

V. 16. Yea, and this was the very design of God's love in sending him into the world.

Whosoever believeth on him-With that faith which worketh by love, and hold fast the beginning of his confidence steadfast to the end.

God so loved the world-That is, all men under heaven; even those that despise his love, and will *for that cause* finally perish. Otherwise not to believe would be no sin to them. For what should they believe? Ought they to believe that Christ was given for them? Then he was given for them.

He gave his only Son-Truly and seriously. And *the Son of God gave himself*, #Ga 1:4, truly and seriously.

V. 17. **God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world**-Although many accuse him of it.

V. 18. **He that believeth on him is not condemned**-Is acquitted, is justified before God.

The name of the only-begotten Son of God-The name of a person is often put for the person himself. But perhaps 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 the Son.

V. 19. **This is the condemnation**-That is, the cause of it. So God is clear.

V. 21. **He that practiseth the truth** (that is, true religion) **cometh to the light**-So even Nicodemus, afterward did.

Are wrought in God-That is, in the light, power, and love of God.

V. 22. **Jesus went**-From the capital city, *Jerusalem, into the land of Judea*-That is, into the country.

There he baptized-Not himself; but his disciples by his order, #Joh 4:2.

V. 23. **John also was baptizing**-He did not repel them that offered, but he more willingly referred them to Jesus.

V. 25. **The Jews**-Those men of Judea, who now went to be baptized by Jesus; and John's disciples, who were mostly of Galilee:

about purifying-That is, baptism. They disputed, which they should be baptized by.

V. 27. **A man can receive nothing**-Neither he nor I. Neither could he do this, unless God had sent him: nor can I receive the title of Christ, or any honour comparable to that which he hath received from heaven. They seem to have spoken with jealousy and resentment; John answers with sweet composure of spirit.

V. 29. **He that hath the bride is the bridegroom**-He whom the bride follows. But all men now come to Jesus. Hence it is plain he is the bridegroom.

The friend who heareth him-Talk with the bride;

rejoiceth greatly-So far from envying or resenting it.

V. 30. **He must increase, but I must decrease**-So they who are now, like John, burning and shining lights, must (if not suddenly eclipsed) 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 how to rise; and let it comfort our declining days to trace, in those who are likely to succeed us in our work, the openings of yet greater usefulness.

V. 31. It is not improbable, that what is added, to the end of the chapter, are the words of the evangelist, not the Baptist.

He that is of the earth-A mere man; of earthly original, has a spirit and speech answerable to it.

V. 32. **No man**-None comparatively, exceeding few; *receiveth his testimony*-With true faith.

V. 33. **Hath set to his seal**-It was customary among the Jews for the witness to set his seal to the testimony he had given.

That God is true-Whose words the Messiah speaks.

V. 34. **God giveth not him the Spirit by measure**-As he did to the prophets, but immeasurably. Hence he speaketh the words of God in the most perfect manner.

V. 36. **He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life**-He hath it already. For he loves God. And love is the essence of heaven.

He that obeyeth not-A consequence of not believing.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. IV.

V. 1. **The Lord knew**-Though none informed him of it.

V. 3. **He left Judea**-To shun the effects of their resentment.

V. 4. **And he must needs go through Samaria**-The road lying directly through it.

V. 5. **Sychar**-Formerly called Sichem or Shechem.

Jacob gave-On his death bed, #Ge 48:22.

V. 6. **Jesus sat down**-Weary as he was.

It was the sixth hour-Noon; the heat of the day.

V. 7. **Give me to drink**-In this one conversation he brought her to that knowledge which the apostles were so long in attaining.

V. 8. **For his disciples were gone**-Else he needed not have asked her.

V. 9. **How dost thou**-Her open simplicity appears from her very first words.

The Jews have no dealings-None by way of friendship. They would receive no kind of favour from them.

V. 10. **If thou hadst known the gift**-The living water;

and who it is-He who alone is able to give it:

thou wouldst have asked of him-On those words the stress lies.

Water-In like manner he draws the allegory from bread, #Joh 6:27, and from light, #Joh 8:12; the first, the most simple, necessary, common, and salutary things in nature.

Living water-The Spirit and its fruits. But she might the more easily mistake his meaning, because living water was a common phrase among the Jews for spring water.

V. 12. **Our father Jacob**-So they fancied he was; whereas they were, in truth, a mixture of many nations, placed there by the king of Assyria, in the room of the Israelites whom he had carried away captive, #2Ki 17:24.

Who gave us the well-In Joseph their supposed forefather:

and drank thereof-So even he had no better water than this.

V. 14. **Will never thirst**-Will never (provided he continue to drink thereof) be miserable, dissatisfied, without refreshment. If ever that thirst returns, it will be the fault of the man, not the water.

But the water that I shall give him-The spirit of faith working by love,

shall become in him-An inward living principle,

a fountain-Not barely a well, which is soon exhausted,

springing up into everlasting life-Which is a confluence, or rather an ocean of streams arising from this fountain.

V. 15. **That I thirst not**-She takes him still in a gross sense.

V. 16. **Jesus saith to her**-He now clears the way that he might give her a better kind of water than she asked for.

Go, call thy husband-He strikes directly at her bosom sin.

V. 17. **Thou hast well said**-We may observe in all our Lord's discourses the utmost weightiness, and yet the utmost courtesy.

V. 18. **Thou hast had five husbands**-Whether they were all dead or not, her own conscience now awakened would tell her.

V. 19. **Sir, I perceive**-So soon was her heart touched.

V. 20. The instant she perceived this, she proposes what she thought the most important of all questions.

This mountain-Pointing to Mount Gerizim. Sanballat, by the permission of Alexander the Great, had built a temple upon Mount Gerizim, for Manasseh, who for marrying Sanballat's daughter had been expelled from the priesthood and from Jerusalem, **#Ne 13:28**. This was the place where the Samaritans used to worship in opposition to Jerusalem. And it was so near Sychar, that a man's voice might be heard from the one to the other.

Our fathers worshipped-This plainly refers to Abraham and Jacob (from whom the Samaritans pretended to deduce their genealogy) who erected altars in this place: **#Ge 12:6, 7**, and **#Ge 33:18, 20**. And possibly to the whole congregation, who were directed when they came into the land of Canaan to put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, **#De 11:29**.

Ye Jews say, In Jerusalem is the place-Namely, the temple.

V. 21. **Believe me**-Our Lord uses this expression in this manner but once; and that to a Samaritan. To his own people, the Jews, his usual language is, *I say unto you*.

The hour cometh when ye-Both Samaritans and Jews,

shall worship neither in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem-As preferable to any other place. True worship shall be no longer confined to any one place or nation.

V. 22. **Ye worship ye know not what**-Ye Samaritans are ignorant, not only of the place, but of the very object of worship. Indeed, *they feared the Lord* after a fashion; but at the same time served their own gods, #2Ki 17:33.

Salvation is from the Jews-So spake all the prophets, that the Saviour should arise out of the Jewish nation: and that from thence the knowledge of him should spread to all nations under heaven.

V. 23. **The true worshippers shall worship the Father**-Not here or there only, but at all times and in all places.

V. 24. **God is a Spirit**-Not only remote from the body, and all the properties of it, but likewise full of all spiritual perfections, power, wisdom, love, holiness. And our worship should be suitable to his nature. We should worship him with the truly spiritual worship of faith, love, and holiness, animating all our tempers, thoughts, words, and actions.

V. 25. **The woman saith**-With joy for what she had already learned, and desire of fuller instruction.

V. 26. **Jesus saith**-Hasting to satisfy her desire before his disciples came.

I am He-Our Lord did not speak this so plainly to the Jews who were so full of the Messiah's temporal kingdom. If he had, many would doubtless have taken up arms in his favour, and others have accused him to the Roman governor. Yet he did in effect declare the thing, though he denied the particular title. For in a multitude of places he represented himself, both as the Son of man, and as the Son of God: both which expressions were generally understood by the Jews as peculiarly applicable to the Messiah.

V. 27. **His disciples marvelled that he talked with a woman**-Which the Jewish rabbis reckoned scandalous for a man of distinction to do. They marvelled likewise at his talking with a woman of that nation, which was so peculiarly hateful to the Jews.

Yet none said-To the woman,

What seekest thou?-Or to Christ, *Why talkest thou with her?*

V. 28. **The woman left her water pot**-Forgetting smaller things.

V. 29. **A man who told me all things that ever I did**-Our Lord had told her but a few things. But his words awakened her conscience, which soon told her all the rest.

Is not this the Christ?-She does not doubt of it herself, but incites them to make the inquiry.

V. 31. **In the meantime**-Before the people came.

V. 34. **My meat**-That which satisfies the strongest appetite of my soul.

V. 35. **The fields are white already**-As if he had said, The spiritual harvest is ripe already. The Samaritans, ripe for the Gospel, covered the ground round about them.

V. 36. **He that reapeth**-Whoever saves souls,

receiveth wages-A peculiar blessing to himself,

and gathereth fruit-Many souls:

that he that soweth-Christ the great sower of the seed,

and he that reapeth may rejoice together-In heaven.

V. 37. **That saying**-A common proverb;

One soweth-The prophets and Christ;

another reapeth-The apostles and succeeding ministers.

V. 38. **I**-he Lord of the whole harvest,

have sent you-He had employed them already in baptizing, **#Joh 4:2**.

V. 42. **We know that this is the Saviour of the world**-And not of the Jews only.

V. 43. **He went into Galilee**-That is, into the country of Galilee: but not to Nazareth. It was at that town only that he *had no honour*. Therefore he went to other towns.

V. 44. **#Mt 13:57**.

V. 47. **To come down**-For Cana stood much higher than Capernaum.

V. 48. **Unless ye see signs and wonders**-Although the Samaritans believed without them.

V. 52. **He asked the hour when he amended**-The more exactly the works of God are considered, the more faith is increased.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. V.

V. 1. **A feast**-Pentecost.

V. 2. **There is in Jerusalem**-Hence it appears, that St. John wrote his Gospel before Jerusalem was destroyed: it is supposed about thirty years after the ascension.

Having five porticos-Built for the use of the sick. Probably the basin had five sides!

Bethesda signifies **the house of mercy**.

V. 4. **An angel**-Yet many undoubtedly thought the whole thing to be purely natural.

At certain times-Perhaps at a certain hour of the day, during this paschal week,

went down-The Greek word implies that he had ceased going down, before the time of St. John's writing this. God might design this to raise expectation of the acceptable time approaching, to add a greater lustre to his Son's miracles, and to show that his ancient people were not entirely forgotten of him.

The first-Whereas the Son of God healed every day not one only, but whole multitudes that resorted to him.

V. 7. **The sick man answered**-Giving the reason why he was not made whole, notwithstanding his desire.

V. 14. **Sin no more**-It seems his former illness was the effect or punishment of sin.

V. 15. **The man went and told the Jews, that it was Jesus who had made him whole**-One might have expected, that when he had published the name of his benefactor, crowds would have thronged about Jesus, to have heard the words of his mouth, and to have received the blessings of the Gospel. Instead of this, they surround him with a hostile intent: they even conspire against his life, and for an imagined transgression in point of ceremony, would have put out this light of Israel. Let us not wonder then, if our good be evil spoken of: if even candour, benevolence, and usefulness, do not disarm the enmity of those who have been taught to prefer sacrifice to mercy; and who, disrelishing the genuine Gospel, naturally seek to slander and persecute the professors, but especially the defenders of it.

V. 17. **My Father worketh until now, and I work**-From the creation till now he hath been working without intermission. I do likewise. This is the proposition which is explained **#Joh 5:19-30**, confirmed and vindicated in **#Joh 5:31** and following verses.

V. 18. **His own Father**-The Greek word means *his own Father* in such a sense as no creature can speak.

Making himself equal with God-It is evident all the hearers so understood him, and that our Lord never contradicted, but confirmed it.

V. 19. **The Son can do nothing of himself**-This is not his imperfection, but his glory, resulting from his eternal, intimate, indissoluble unity with the Father. Hence it is absolutely impossible, that the Son should *judge, will, testify, or teach* any thing without the Father, **#Joh 5:30, &c; #Joh 6:38; 7:16**; or that he should be known or believed on, separately from the Father. And he here defends his doing good every day, without intermission, by the example of his Father, from which he cannot depart:

these doth the Son likewise-All *these*, and only these; seeing he and the Father are one.

V. 20. **The Father showeth him all things that himself doth**-A proof of the most intimate unity.

And he will show him-By doing them. At the same time (not at different times) the Father showeth and doth, and the Son seeth and doth.

Greater works-Jesus oftener terms them works, than signs or wonders, because they were not wonders in his eyes.

Ye will marvel-So they did, when he raised Lazarus.

V. 21. **For**-He declares which are those greater works, raising the dead, and judging the world. The power of *quickenning whom he will* follows from the power of *judging*. These two, *quickenning* and *judging*, are proposed **#Joh 5:21, 22**. The acquittal of believers, which presupposes *judgment*, is treated of **#Joh 5:24**; the quickening some of the dead, **#Joh 5:25**; and the general resurrection, **#Joh 5:28**.

V. 22. **For neither doth the Father judge**-Not without the Son: but he doth *judge by that man whom he hath ordained*, **#Ac 17:31**.

V. 23. **That all men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father**-Either willingly, and so escaping condemnation, by faith: or unwillingly, when feeling the wrath of the Judge. This *demonstrates* the EQUALITY of the Son with the Father. If our Lord were God only by office or investiture, and not in the unity of the Divine essence, and in all respects equal in Godhead with the Father, he could not be honoured *even as*, that is, with the *same* honour that they honoured the Father.

He that honoureth not the Son-With the *same* equal honour, greatly dishonoureth **the Father that sent him**.

V. 24. **And cometh not into condemnation**-Unless he make shipwreck of the faith.

V. 25. **The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God**-So did Jairus's daughter, the widow's son, Lazarus.

V. 26. **He hath given to the Son**-By eternal generation,

to have life in himself-Absolute, independent.

V. 27. **Because he is the Son of man**-He is appointed to judge mankind because he was made man.

V. 28. **The time is coming**-When not two or three, but all shall rise.

V. 29. **The resurrection of life**-That resurrection which leads to life everlasting.

V. 30. **I can do nothing of myself**-It is impossible I should do any thing separately from my Father.

As I hear-Of the Father, and see, so I judge and do; A because I am essentially united to him. See **#Joh 5:19**.

V. 31. **If I testify of myself**-That is, if I alone, (which indeed is impossible,) **my testimony is not valid**.

V. 32. **There is another**-The Father, **#Joh 5:37**,

and I know that, even in your judgment, his testimony in beyond exception.

V. 33. **He bare testimony**-That I am the Christ.

V. 34. **But I** have no need to **receive, &c.**

But these things-Concerning John, whom ye yourselves reverence,

I say, that ye may be saved-So really and seriously did he will their salvation. Yet they were not saved. Most, if not all of them, died in their sins.

V. 35. **He was a burning and a shining light**-Inwardly burning with love and zeal, outwardly shining in all holiness.

And even ye were willing for a season-A short time only.

V. 37. **He hath testified of me**-Namely at my baptism. I speak not of my supposed father Joseph. Ye are utter strangers to him of whom I speak.

V. 38. **Ye have not his word**-All who believe have the word of the Father (the same with the word of the Son) abiding in them, that is, deeply ingrafted in their hearts.

V. 39. **Search the Scriptures**-A plain command to all men.

In them ye are assured ye have eternal life-Ye know they show you the way to eternal life. And these very Scriptures testify of me.

V. 40. **Yet ye will not come unto me**-As they direct you.

V. 41. **I receive not honour from men**-I need it not. I seek it not from you for my own sake.

V. 42. **But I know you**-With this ray he pierces the hearts of the hearers. And this doubtless he spake with the tenderest compassion.

V. 43. **If another shall come**-Any false Christ.

V. 44. **While ye receive honour**-That is, while ye seek the praise of men rather than the praise of God. At the feast of pentecost, kept in commemoration of the giving the law from Mount Sinai, their sermons used to be full of the praises of the law, and of the people to whom it was given. How mortifying then must the following words of our Lord be to them, while they were thus exulting in Moses and his law!

V. 45. **There is one that accuseth you**-By his writings.

V. 46. **He wrote of me**-Every where; in all his writings; particularly #De 18:15, 18.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. VI.

V. 1. **After these things**-The history of between ten and eleven months is to be supplied here from the other evangelists. #Mt 14:13; #Mr 6:32; #Lu 9:10.

V. 3. **Jesus went up**-Before the people overtook him.

V. 5. **Jesus saith to Philip**-Perhaps he had the care of providing victuals for the family of the apostles.

V. 15. **He retired to the mountain alone**-Having ordered his disciples to cross over the lake.

V. 16. #Mt 14:22; #Mr 6:45.

V. 22. **Who had stood on the other side**-They were forced to stay a while, because there were then no other vessels; and they stayed the less unwillingly, because they saw that Jesus was not embarked.

V. 26. Our Lord does not satisfy their curiosity, but corrects the wrong motive they had in seeking him:

because ye did eat-Merely for temporal advantage. Hitherto Christ had been gathering hearers: he now begins to try their sincerity, by a figurative discourse concerning his passion, and the fruit of it, to be received by faith.

V. 27. **Labour not for the meat which perisheth**-For bodily food: not for that only not chiefly: not at all, but in subordination to grace, faith, love, the *meat which endureth to everlasting life*. Labour, **work** for this; **for everlasting life**. So our Lord expressly commands, *work for life*, as well as *from life*: from a principle of faith and love.

Him hath the Father sealed-By this very miracle, as well as by his whole testimony concerning him. See #Joh 3:33.

Sealing is a mark of the authenticity of a writing.

V. 28. **The works of God**-Works pleasing to God.

V. 29. **This is the work of God**-The work most pleasing to God, and the foundation of all others:

that ye believe-He expresses it first properly, afterward figuratively.

V. 30. **What sign dost thou?**-Amazing, after what they had just seen!

V. 31. **Our fathers ate manna**-This sign Moses gave them.

He gave them bread from heaven-From the lower sublunary heaven; to which Jesus opposes the highest heaven: in which sense he says seven times, **#Joh 6:32, 33, 38, 50, 58, 62**, that he himself *came down from heaven*.

V. 32. **Moses gave you not bread from heaven**-It was not Moses who gave the manna to your fathers; but **my Father** who now **giveth the true bread from heaven**. **#Ps 78:24**.

V. 33. **He that-giveth life to the world**-Not (like the manna) to one people only: and that from generation to generation. Our Lord does not yet say, I am that bread; else the Jews would not have given him so respectful an answer, **#Joh 6:34**.

V. 34. **Give us this bread**-Meaning it still, in a literal sense: yet they seem now to be not far from believing.

V. 35. **I am the bread of life**-Having and giving life:

he that cometh-he that believeth-Equivalent expressions:

shall never hunger, thirst-Shall be satisfied, happy, for ever.

V. 36. **I have told you**-Namely, **#Joh 6:26**.

V. 37. **All that the Father giveth me**-All that feel themselves lost, and follow the drawings of the Father, he in a peculiar manner giveth to the Son:

will come to me-By faith. **And him that thus cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out**-I will give him pardon, holiness, and heaven, if he endure to the end-*to rejoice in his light*.

V. 39. **Of all which he hath already given me**-See **#Joh 17:6, 12**. If they endure to the end. But Judas did not.

V. 40. Here is the sum of the three foregoing verses. **This is the will of him that sent me**-This is the whole of what I have said: this is the eternal, unchangeable will of God. Every one who truly believeth, shall have everlasting life.

Every one that seeth and believeth-The Jews saw, and yet believed not.

And I will raise him up-As this is the will of him that sent me, I will perform it effectually.

V. 44. **Christ** having checked their murmuring, continues what he was saying, **#Joh 6:40**.

No man comes to me, unless my Father draw him-No man can believe in Christ, unless God give him power: he draws us first, by good desires. Not by compulsion, not by laying the will under any necessity; but by the strong and sweet, yet still resistible, motions of his heavenly grace.

V. 45. **Every man that hath heard**-The secret voice of God, he, and he only believeth. **#Isa 54:13.**

V. 46. **Not that any one**-Must expect him to appear in a visible shape.

He who is from or with God-In a more eminent manner than any creature.

V. 50. **Not die**-Not spiritually; not eternally.

V. 51. **If any eat of this bread**-That is, believe in me:

he shall live for ever-In other words, he that believeth to the end shall be saved.

My flesh which I will give you-This whole discourse concerning his flesh and blood refers directly to his passion, and but remotely, if at all, to the Lord's Supper.

V. 52. Observe the degrees: the Jews are tried here; the disciples, **#Joh 6:60-66**, the apostles, **#Joh 6:67**.

V. 53. **Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man**-Spiritually: unless ye draw continual virtue from him by faith. Eating his flesh is only another expression for believing.

V. 55. **Meat-drink indeed**-With which the soul of a believer is as truly fed, as his body with meat and drink.

V. 57. **I live by the Father**-Being one with him.

He shall live by me-Being one with me. Amazing union!

V. 58. **This is**-That is, I am **the bread**-Which is not like the manna your fathers ate, who died notwithstanding.

V. 60. **This is a hard saying**-Hard to the children of the world, but sweet to the children of God. Scarce ever did our Lord speak more sublimely, even to the apostles in private.

Who can hear-Endure it?

V. 62. **What if ye shall see the Son of man ascend where he was before?**-How much more incredible will it then appear to you, that he should give you his flesh to eat?

V. 63. **It is the Spirit**-The spiritual meaning of these words, by which God giveth life.

The flesh-The bare, carnal, literal meaning, **profiteth nothing**.

The words which I have spoken, they are spirit-Are to be taken in a spiritual sense **and**, when they are so understood,

they are life-That is, a means of spiritual life to the hearers.

V. 64. **But there are some of you who believe not**-And so receive no life by them, because you take them in a gross literal sense.

For Jesus knew from the beginning-Of his ministry:

who would betray him-Therefore it is plain, God does foresee future contingencies:—

"But his foreknowledge causes not the fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown."

V. 65. **Unless it be given**-And it is given to those only who will receive it on God's own terms.

V. 66. **From this time many of his disciples went back**-So our Lord now began to purge his floor: the proud and careless were driven away, and those remained who were meet for the Master's use.

V. 68. **Thou hast the words of eternal life**-Thou, and thou alone, speakest the words which show the way to life everlasting.

V. 69. **And we**-Who have been with thee from the beginning, whatever others do,

have known-Are absolutely assured, **that thou art the Christ**.

V. 70. **Jesus answered the**-And yet even ye have not all acted suitable to this knowledge.

Have I not chosen or elected you twelve?-But they might fall even from that election.

Yet one of you-On this gracious warning, Judas ought to have repented; **is a devil**-Is now influenced by one.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. VII.

V. 1. **After these things Jesus walked in Galilee**-That is, continued there, for some months after the second passover.

For he would not walk-Continue in Judea;

because the Jews-Those of them who did not believe; and in particular the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, **sought an opportunity to kill him.**

V. 2. **The feast of tabernacles**-The time, manner, and reason of this feast may be seen, #Le 23:34, &c.

V. 3. **His brethren**-So called according to the Jewish way of speaking. They were his cousins, the sons of his mother's sister.

Depart hence-From this obscure place.

V. 4. **For no man doth any thing**-Of this kind, **in secret;**

but rather desireth to be of public use.

If thou really dost these things-These miracles which are reported;

show thyself to the world-To all men.

V. 6. **Jesus saith, Your time is always ready**-This or any time will suit you.

V. 7. **The world cannot hate you**-Because ye are of the world.

But me it hateth-And all that bear the same testimony.

V. 10. **He also went up to the feast**-This was his last journey but one to Jerusalem. The next time he went up he suffered.

V. 11. **The Jews**-The men of Judea, particularly of Jerusalem.

V. 12. **There was much murmuring among the multitude**-Much whispering; many private debates with each other, among those who were come from distant parts.

V. 13. **However no man spake openly of him**-Not in favour of him:

for fear of the Jews-Those that were in authority.

V. 14. **Now at the middle of the feast**-Which lasted eight days. It is probable this was on the Sabbath day.

Jesus went up into the temple-Directly, without stopping anywhere else.

V. 15. **How does this man know letters, having never learned?**-How comes he to be so well acquainted with sacred literature as to be able thus to expound the Scripture, with such propriety and gracefulness, seeing he has never learned this, at any place of education?

V. 16. **My doctrine is not mine**-Acquired by any labour of learning;

but his that sent me-Immediately infused by him.

V. 17. **If any man be willing to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God**-This is a universal rule, with regard to all persons and doctrines. He that is thoroughly willing to do it, shall certainly know what the will of God is.

V. 18. **There is no unrighteousness in him**-No deceit or falsehood.

V. 19. But ye are unrighteous; for ye violate the very law which ye profess so much zeal for.

V. 20. **The people answered, Thou hast a devil**-A lying spirit.

Who seeketh to kill thee?-These, coming from distant parts, probably did not know the design of the priests and rulers.

V. 21. **I did**-At the pool of Bethesda:

one work-Out of many:

and ye all marvelled at it-Are amazed, because I did it on the Sabbath day.

V. 22. **Moses gave you circumcision**-The sense is, because Moses enjoined you circumcision (though indeed it was far more ancient than him) you think it no harm to circumcise a man on the Sabbath: and are ye angry at me (which anger had now continued sixteen months) for doing so much greater a good, for healing a man, body and soul, on the Sabbath?

V. 27. **When Christ cometh, none knoweth whence he is**-This Jewish tradition was true, with regard to his Divine nature: in that respect none could *declare his generation*. But it was not true with regard to his human nature, for both his family and the place of his birth were plainly foretold.

V. 28. **Then cried Jesus**-With a loud and earnest voice.

Do ye both know me, and know whence I am ?-Ye do indeed know whence I am as a man. But ye know not my Divine nature, nor that I am sent from God.

V. 29. **I am from him**-By eternal generation:

and he hath sent me-His mission follows from his generation. These two points answer those: *Do ye know me? Do ye know whence I am?*

V. 30. **His hour**-The time of his suffering.

V. 33. **Then said Jesus**-Continuing his discourse (from **#Joh 7:29**) which they had interrupted.

V. 34. **Ye shall seek me**-Whom ye now despise. These words are, as it were, the text which is commented upon in this and the following chapter.

Where I am-Christ's so frequently saying while on earth, *where I am*, when he spake of his being in heaven, intimates his perpetual presence there in his Divine nature: though his going thither was a future thing, with regard to his human nature.

V. 35. **Will he go to the dispersed among the Greeks**-The Jews scattered abroad in heathen nations, Greece particularly. Or,

Will he teach the Greeks?-The heathens themselves.

V. 37. **On the last, the great day of the feast**-On this day there was the greatest concourse of people, and they were then wont to fetch water from the fountain of Siloam, which the priests poured out on the great altar, singing one to an other, *With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation*. On this day likewise they commemorated God's miraculously giving water out of the rock, and offered up solemn prayers for seasonable rains.

V. 38. **He that believeth**-This answers to *let him come* to me. And whosoever doth come to him by faith, his inmost soul shall be filled with *living water*, with abundance of peace, joy, and love, which shall likewise flow from him to others.

As the Scripture hath said-Not expressly in any one particular place. But here is a general reference to all those scriptures which speak of the *effusion of the Spirit* by the Messiah, under the similitude of *pouring out water*. **#Zec 14:8**.

V. 39. **The Holy Ghost was not yet given**-That is, those fruits of the Spirit were *not yet given* even to true believers, in that full measure.

V. 40. **The prophet**-Whom we expect to be the forerunner of the Messiah.

V. 42. **From Bethlehem**-And how could they forget that Jesus was born there? Had not Herod given them terrible reason to remember it? **#Mic 5:2**.

V. 48. **Hath any of the rulers**-Men of rank or eminence,

or of the Pharisees-Men of learning or religion, **believed on him?**

V. 49. **But this populace, who know not the law**-This ignorant rabble;

are accursed-Are by that ignorance exposed to the curse of being thus seduced.

V. 50. **Nicodemus, he that came to him by night**-Having now a little more courage,

being one of them-Being present as a member of the great council,

saith to them-Do not we ourselves act as if we *knew not the law*, if we pass sentence on a man before we hear him?

V. 52. **They answered**-By personal reflection; the argument they could not answer, and therefore did not attempt it.

Art thou also a Galilean?-One of his party?

Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet-They could not but know the contrary. They knew Jonah arose out of Gethhepher; and Nahum from another village in Galilee. Yea, and Thisbe, the town of Elijah, the Tishbite, was in Galilee also. They might likewise have known that Jesus was not born in Galilee, but at Bethlehem, even from the public register there, and from the genealogies of the family of David. They were conscious this poor answer would not bear examination, and so took care to prevent a reply.

V. 53. **And every man went to his own house**-So that short plain question of Nicodemus spoiled all their measures, and broke up the council! *A word spoken in season, how good it is!* Especially when God gives it his blessing.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. VIII.

V. 5. **Moses hath commanded us to stone such**-If they spoke accurately, this must have been a woman, who, having been *betrothed to a husband*, had been guilty of this crime before the marriage was completed; for such only Moses commanded to be stoned. He commanded indeed that other adulteresses should be put to death; but the manner of death was not specified. #De 22:23.

V. 6. **That they might have to accuse him**-Either of usurping the office of a judge, if he condemned her, or of being an enemy to the law, if he acquitted her.

Jesus stooping down, wrote with his finger on the ground-God wrote once in the Old Testament; Christ once in the New: perhaps the words which he afterward spoke, when they continued asking him. By this silent action, he, 1. fixed their wandering, hurrying thoughts, in order to awaken their consciences: and, 2. signified that he was not then come to condemn but to save the world.

V. 7. **He that is without sin**-He that is not guilty: his own conscience being the judge) either of the same sin, or of some nearly resembling it;

let him-as a witness, **cast the first stone at her**.

V. 9. **Beginning at the eldest**-Or the elders.

Jesus was left alone-By all those scribes and Pharisees who proposed the question. But many others remained, to whom our Lord directed his discourse presently after.

V. 10. **Hath no man condemned thee?**-Hath no judicial sentence been passed upon thee?

V. 11. **Neither do I condemn thee**-Neither do I take upon me to pass any such sentence. Let this deliverance lead thee to repentance.

V. 12. **He that followeth me shall in nowise walk in darkness**-In ignorance, wickedness, misery: **but shall have the light of life**-He that closely, humbly, steadily follows me, shall have the Divine light continually shining upon him, diffusing over his soul knowledge, holiness, joy, till he is guided by it to life everlasting.

V. 13. **Thou testifiest of thyself; thy testimony is not valid**-They retort upon our Lord his own words, #Joh 5:31; *if I testify of myself, my testimony is not valid*. He had then added,

There is another who testifieth of me. To the same effect he replies here, #Joh 8:14,

Though I testify of myself, yet my testimony is valid; for I am inseparably united to the Father.

I know-And from firm and certain knowledge proceeds the most unexceptionable testimony:

whence I came, and whither I go-To these two heads may be referred all the doctrine concerning Christ. The former is treated of **#Joh 8:16**, &c, the latter **#Joh 8:21**, &c.

For I know whence I came-That is, For *I came from God*, both as God and as man. And *I know it*, though ye do not.

V. 15. **Ye judge after the flesh**-As the flesh, that is, corrupt nature dictates.

I judge no man-Not thus; not now; not at my first coming.

V. 16. **I am not alone**-No more in judging, than in testifying:

but I and the Father that sent me-His Father *is in him, and he is in the Father*, **#Joh 14:10, 11**; and so the Father is no more alone without the Son, than the Son is without the Father, **#Pr 8:22, 23, 30**. His Father and he are not one and another God, but one God, (though distinct persons,) and so inseparable from each other. And though the Son came from the Father, to assume human nature, and perform his office as the Messiah upon earth, as God is sometimes said to come from heaven, for particular manifestations of himself; yet Christ did not leave the Father, nor the Father leave him, any more than God leaves heaven when he is said to come down to the earth.

V. 17. **#De 19:15**.

V. 19. **Then said they to him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered**-Showing the perverseness of their question; and teaching that they ought first to know the Son, if they would know the Father.

Where the Father is-he shows, **#Joh 8:23**. Meantime he plainly intimates that the Father and he were distinct persons, as they were two witnesses; and yet one in essence, as the knowledge of him includes the knowledge of the Father.

V. 23. **Ye are**-Again he passes over their interruption, and proves what he advanced, **#Joh 8:21**.

Of them that are beneath-From the earth.

I am of them that are above-Here he directly shows whence he came, even from heaven, and whither he goes.

V. 24. **If ye believe not that I AM**-Here (as in **#Joh 8:58**) our Lord claims the Divine name, I AM, **#Ex 3:14**. But the Jews, as if he had stopped short, and not finished the sentence, answered, **Who art thou?**

V. 25. **Even what I say to you from the beginning**-The same which **I say to you**, as it were in one discourse, with one even tenor from the time I first spake to you.

V. 26. **I have many things to say and to judge of you**-I have much to say concerning your inexcusable unbelief:

but he that sent me is true-Whether ye believe or no.

And I speak the things which I have heard from him-I deliver truly what he hath given me in charge.

V. 27. **They understood not**-That by him that sent him he meant God the Father. Therefore in **#Joh 8:28, 29** he speaks plainly of the Father, and again claims the Divine name, I AM.

V. 28. **When ye shall have lifted up**-On the cross,

ye shall know-And so many of them did,

that I AM-God over all;

and that I do nothing of myself-Being one with the Father.

V. 29. **The Father hath not left me alone**-Never from the moment I came into the world.

V. 32. **The truth**-Written in your hearts by the Spirit of God,

shall make you free-From guilt, sin, misery, Satan.

V. 33. **They**-The other Jews that were by, (not those that believed,) as appears by the whole tenor of the conversation.

We were never enslaved to any man-A bold, notorious untruth. At that very time they were enslaved to the Romans.

V. 34. **Jesus answered**-Each branch of their objection, first concerning freedom, then concerning their being Abraham's offspring, **#Joh 8:37**, &c.

He that committeth sin, is, in fact, the slave of sin.

V. 35. **And the slave abideth not in the house**-All sinners shall be cast out of God's house, as the slave was out of Abraham's:

but I, the Son, abide therein for ever.

V. 36. **If I therefore make you free, ye**-shall partake of the same privilege: being made free from all guilt and sin, ye shall abide in the house of God for ever.

V. 37. **I know that ye are Abraham's offspring**-As to the other branch of your objection, **I know that ye are Abraham's offspring**, after the flesh; but not in a spiritual sense. Ye are not followers of the faith of Abraham: my word hath no place in your hearts.

V. 41. **Ye do the deeds of your father**-He is not named yet. But when they presumed to call God their Father, then he is expressly called the devil, **#Joh 8:44**.

V. 42. **I proceeded forth**-As God,

and come-As Christ.

V. 43. **Ye cannot**-Such is your stubbornness and pride,

hear-Receive, obey my word. Not being desirous to do my will, ye cannot understand my doctrine, **#Joh 7:17**.

V. 44. **He was a murderer**-In inclination,

from the beginning-Of his becoming a devil;

and abode not in the truth-Commencing murderer and liar at the same time. And certainly *he was a killer of men* (as the Greek word properly signifies) *from the beginning* of the world: for from the very creation he designed and contrived the ruin of men.

When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own-For he is the proper parent, and, as it were, creator of it. See the origin not only of lies, but of evil in general!

V. 45. **Because I speak the truth**-Which liars hate.

V. 46. **Which of you convicteth me of sin?**-And is not my life as unreprouable as my doctrine? Does not my whole behaviour confirm the truth of what I teach?

V. 47. **He that is of God**-That either loves or fears him,

heareth-With joy and reverence,

God's words-Which I preach.

V. 48. **Say we not well**-Have we not just cause to say,

Thou art, a Samaritan-An enemy to our Church and nation;

and hast a devil?-Art possessed by a proud and lying spirit?

V. 49. **I honour my Father**-I seek his honour only.

V. 50. **I seek not my own glory**-That is, as I am the Messiah, I consult not my own glory. I need not. For my Father consulteth it, and will pass sentence on you accordingly.

V. 51. **If a man keep my word**-So will my Father consult my glory. We keep his doctrine by believing, his promises by hoping, his command by obeying.

He shall never see death-That is, death eternal. He shall live for ever. Hereby he proves that he was no Samaritan; for the Samaritans in general were Sadducees.

V. 54. **If I honour myself**-Referring to their words, **Whom makest thou thyself?**

V. 56. **He saw it**-By faith in types, figures, and promises; as particularly in Melchisedec; in the appearance of Jehovah to him in the plains of Mamre, **#Ge 18:1**; and in the promise that *in his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*. Possibly he had likewise a peculiar revelation either of Christ's first or second coming.

V. 57. **Thou art not yet fifty years old**-At the most. Perhaps the gravity of our Lord's countenance, together with his afflictions and labours, might make him appear older than he really was.

Hast thou seen Abraham-Which they justly supposed must have been, if Abraham had seen him.

V. 58. **Before Abraham was I AM**-Even from everlasting to everlasting. This is a direct answer to the objection of the Jews, and shows how much *greater* he was than Abraham.

V. 59. **Then they took up stones**-To stone him as a blasphemer;

but Jesus concealed himself-Probably by becoming invisible;

and so passed on-With the same ease as if none had been there.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. IX.

V. 2. **Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?**-That is, was it for his own sins, or the sins of his parents? They suppose (as many of the Jews did, though without any ground from Scripture) that he might have sinned in a pre-existent state, before he came into the world.

V. 3. **Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents**-It was not the manner of our Lord to answer any questions that were of no use, but to gratify an idle curiosity. Therefore he determines nothing concerning this. The scope of his answer is, It was neither for any sins of his own, nor yet of his parents; but that the power of God might be displayed.

V. 4. **The night is coming**-Christ is the light. When the light is withdrawn night comes,

when no man can work-No man can do any thing toward working out his salvation after this life is ended. Yet Christ can work always. But he was not to work upon earth, only during the day, or season which was appointed for him.

V. 5. **I am the light of the world**-I teach men inwardly by my Spirit, and outwardly by my preaching, what is the will of God; and I show them, by my example, how they must do it.

V. 6. **He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay**-This might almost have blinded a man that had sight. But what could it do toward curing the blind? It reminds us that God is no farther from the event, when he works either with, or without means, and that all the creatures are only that which his almighty operation makes them.

V. 7. **Go, wash at the pool of Siloam**-Perhaps our Lord intended to make the miracle more taken notice of. For a crowd of people would naturally gather round him to observe the event of so strange a prescription, and it is exceeding probable, the guide who must have led him in traversing a great part of the city, would mention the errand he was going upon, and so call all those who saw him to a greater attention.

From the fountain of Siloam, which was without the walls of Jerusalem, a little stream flowed into the city, and was received in a kind of basin, near the temple, and called the pool of Siloam.

Which is, by interpretation, Sent-And so was a type of the Messiah, who was sent of God.

He went and washed, and came seeing-He believed, and obeyed, and found a blessing. Had he been wise in his own eyes, and reasoned, like Naaman, on the impropriety of the means, he had justly been left in darkness. Lord, may our proud hearts be subdued to the methods of thy recovering grace! May we leave thee to choose how thou wilt bestow favours, which it is our highest interest to receive on any terms.

V. 11. **A man called Jesus**-He seems to have been before totally ignorant of him.

V. 14. **Anointing the eyes**-With any kind of medicine on the Sabbath, was particularly forbidden by the tradition of the elders.

V. 16. **This man is not of God**-Not sent of God.

How can a man that is a sinner-That is, one living in wilful sin, **do such miracles?**

V. 17. **What sayest thou of him, for that he hath opened thine eyes?**-What inference dost thou draw herefrom?

V. 22. **He should be put out of the synagogue**-That is be excommunicated.

V. 27. **Are ye also**-As well as I, at length convinced and **willing to be his disciples?**

V. 29. **We know not whence he is**-By what power and authority he does these things.

V. 30. **The man answered**-Utterly illiterate as he was. And with what strength and clearness of reason! So had God opened the eyes of his understanding, as well as his bodily eyes.

Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye-The teachers and guides of the people, should not know, that a man who has wrought a miracle, the like of which was never heard of before, must be from heaven, sent by God.

V. 31. **We**-Even we of the populace, **know that God heareth not sinners**-Not impenitent sinners, so as to answer their prayers in this manner. The honest courage of this man in adhering to the truth, though he knew the consequence, **#Joh 9:22**, gives him claim to the title of a confessor.

V. 33. **He could do nothing**-Of this kind; nothing miraculous.

V. 34. **Born in sin**-And therefore, they supposed, born blind.

They cast him out-Of the synagogue; excommunicated him.

V. 35. **Having found him**-For he had sought him.

V. 36. **Who is he, that I may believe?**-This implies some degree of faith already. He was ready to receive whatever Jesus said.

V. 37. **Lord, I believe**-What an excellent spirit was this man of! Of so deep and strong an understanding; (as he had just shown to the confusion of the Pharisees,) and yet of so teachable a temper!

V. 39. **For judgment am I come into the world**-That is, the consequence of my coming will be, that by the just judgment of God, while the blind in body and soul receive their sight, they who boast they see, will be given up to still greater blindness than before.

V. 41. **If ye had been blind**-Invincibly ignorant; if ye had not had so many means of knowing:

ye would have had no sin-Comparatively to what ye have now.

But now ye say-Ye yourselves acknowledge,

Ye see, therefore your sin remaineth-Without excuse, without remedy.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. X.

V. 1. **He that entereth not by the door**-By Christ. He is the only lawful entrance.

Into the sheepfold-The Church.

He is a thief and a robber-In God's account. Such were all those teachers, to whom our Lord had just been speaking.

V. 3. **To him the door keeper openeth**-Christ is considered as the shepherd, #Joh 10:11.

As the door in the first and following verses. And as it is not unworthy of Christ to be styled *the door*, by which both the sheep and the true pastor enter, so neither is it unworthy of God the Father to be styled *the door keeper*. See #Ac 14:27; #Col 4:3; #Re 3:8; #Ac 16:14.

And the sheep hear his voice-The circumstances that follow, exactly agree with the customs of the ancient eastern shepherds. They *called their sheep by name, went before them* and the sheep *followed* them. So real Christians hear, listen to, understand, and obey the voice of the shepherd whom Christ hath sent. And he counteth them **his own**, dearer than any friend or brother: **calleth**, advises, directs each **by name**, and **leadeth them out**, in the paths of righteousness, beside the waters of comfort.

V. 4. **He goeth before them**-In all the ways of God, teaching them in every point, by example as well as by precept; and

the sheep follow him-They tread in his steps:

for they know his voice-Having the witness in themselves that his words are the wisdom and *the power of God*. Reader, art thou a shepherd of souls? Then answer to God. Is it thus with thee and thy flock?

V. 5. **They will not follow a stranger**-One whom Christ hath not sent, who doth not answer the preceding description. Him

they will not follow-And who can constrain them to it?

But will flee from him-As from the plague.

For they know not the voice of strangers-They cannot relish it; it is harsh and grating to them. They find nothing of God therein.

V. 6. **They**-The Pharisees, to whom our Lord more immediately spake, as appears from the close of the foregoing chapter.

V. 7. **I am the door**-Christ is both the Door and the Shepherd, and all things.

V. 8. **Whosoever are come**-Independently of me, assuming any part of my character, pretending, like your elders and rabbis, to a power over the consciences of men, attempting to make laws in the Church, and to teach their own traditions as the way of salvation: all those prophets and expounders of God's word, that enter not by the door of the sheepfold, but run before I have sent them by my Spirit. Our Lord seems in particular to speak of those that had undertaken this office since he began his ministry,

are thieves-Stealing temporal profit to themselves,

and robbers-Plundering and murdering the sheep.

V. 9. **If any one**-As a sheep,

enter in by me-Through faith,

he shall be safe-From the wolf, and from those murdering shepherds.

And shall go in and out-Shall continually attend on the shepherds whom I have sent;

and shall find pasture-Food for his soul in all circumstances.

V. 10. **The thief cometh not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy**-That is, nothing else can be the consequence of a shepherd's coming, who does not **enter in by me**.

V. 12. **But the hireling**-It is not the bare *receiving* hire, which denominates a man a hireling: (for *the labourer is worthy of his hire*; Jesus Christ himself being the Judge: yea, and the *Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel*;) but the *loving hire*: the loving the hire more than the work: the working *for the sake of the hire*. He is a hireling, who would not work, were it not for the hire; to whom this is the great (if not only) motive of working. O God! If a man who works only *for hire* is such a wretch, a mere *thief and a robber*, what is he who continually takes the hire, and yet does not work at all?

The wolf-signifies any enemy who, by force or fraud, attacks the Christian's faith, liberty, or life.

So the wolf seizeth and scattereth the flock-He seizeth some, and scattereth the rest; the two ways of hurting the flock of Christ.

V. 13. **The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling**-Because he loves the hire, not the sheep.

V. 14. **I know my sheep**-With a tender regard and special care: **and am known of mine**-With a holy confidence and affection.

V. 15. **As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father**-With such a knowledge as implies an inexpressible union:

and I lay down my life-Speaking of the present time. For his whole life was only a going unto death.

V. 16. **I have also other sheep**-Which he foreknew;

which are not of this fold-Not of the Jewish Church or nation, but Gentiles.

I must bring them likewise-Into my Church, the general assembly of those whose names are written in heaven.

And there shall be one flock-(Not one fold, a plain false print) no corrupt or divided flocks remaining.

And one shepherd-Who laid down his life for the sheep, and will leave no hireling among them. The unity both of the flock and the shepherd shall be completed in its season. The shepherd shall bring all into one flock: and the whole flock *shall hear the one shepherd*.

V. 17. **I lay down my life that I may take it again**-I cheerfully die to expiate the sins of men, to the end I may rise again for their justification.

V. 18. **I lay it down of myself**-By my own free act and deed.

I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again-I have an original power and right of myself, both to lay it down as a ransom, and to take it again, after full satisfaction is made, for the sins of the whole world.

This commission have I received of my Father-Which I readily execute.

He chiefly spoke of the Father, before his suffering: of his own glory, after it. Our Lord's receiving this commission as mediator is not to be considered as the ground of his power to lay down and resume his life. For this he had in him self, as having an original right to dispose thereof, antecedent to the Father's commission. But this commission was the reason why he thus used his power in laying down his life. He did it in obedience to his Father.

V. 21. **These are not the words**-The word in the original takes in actions too.

V. 22. **It was the feast of the dedication**-Instituted by Judas Maccabeus, **1Macc 4:59**, when he purged and dedicated the altar and temple after they had been polluted. So our Lord observed festivals even of human appointment. Is it not, at least, innocent for us to do the same?

V. 23. **In Solomon's portico**-Josephus informs us, that when Solomon built the temple, he filled up a part of the adjacent valley, and built a portico over it toward the east. This was a noble

structure, supported by a wall four hundred cubits high: and continued even to the time of Albinus and Agrippa, which was several years after the death of Christ.

V. 26. **Ye do not believe, because ye are not of my sheep**-Because ye do not, will not *follow me*: because ye are proud, unholy, lovers of praise, lovers of the world, lovers of pleasure, not of God.

V. 27, 28, 29. **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me**, &c.-Our Lord still alludes to the discourse he had before this festival. As if he had said, My sheep are they who, 1. **Hear my voice** by faith; 2. Are **known** (that is, approved) by me, as loving me; and 3. **Follow me**, keep my commandments, with a believing, loving heart. And to those who,

1. *Truly believe* (observe three promises annexed to three conditions) I give eternal life. He does not say, *I will*, but *I give*. *For he that believeth hath everlasting life*. Those whom,

2. *I know* truly to love me, **shall never perish**, provided they abide in my love. 3. Those who *follow me*, neither men nor devils can pluck out of my hand. **My Father who hath**, by an unchangeable decree, **given me** all that believe, love, and obey, **is greater than all** in heaven or earth, **and none is able to pluck them out of his hand**.

V. 30. **I and the Father are one**-Not by consent of will only, but by unity of power, and consequently of nature.

Are-This word confutes Sabellius, proving the plurality of persons:

one-This word confutes Arius, proving the unity of nature in God. Never did any prophet before, from the beginning of the world, use any one expression of himself, which could possibly be so interpreted as this and other expressions were, by all that heard our Lord speak. Therefore if he was not God he must have been the vilest of men.

V. 34. **#Ps 82:6**.

V. 35. **If he (God) called them gods unto whom the word of God came**, (that is, to whom God was then speaking,) **and the Scripture cannot be broken**-That is, nothing which is written therein can be censured or rejected.

V. 36. **Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world**-This sanctification (whereby he is essentially the Holy One of God) is mentioned as prior to his mission, and together with it implies, Christ was God in the highest sense, infinitely superior to that wherein those judges were so called.

V. 38. **That ye may know and believe**-In some a more exact knowledge precedes, in others it follows faith.

I am in the Father and the Father in me.

I and the Father are one-These two sentences illustrate each other.

V. 40. **To the desert place where John baptized**, and gave so honourable a testimony of him.

V. 41. **John did no miracle**-An honour reserved for him, whose forerunner he was.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XI.

V. 1. **One Lazarus**-It is probable, Lazarus was younger than his sisters. Bethany is named, the town of Mary and Martha, and Lazarus is mentioned after them, **#Joh 11:5**. Ecclesiastical history informs us, that Lazarus was now thirty years old, and that he lived thirty years after Christ's ascension.

V. 2. **It was that Mary who afterward anointed, &c.** She was more known than her elder sister Martha, and as such is named before her.

V. 4. **This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God**-The event of this sickness will not be death, in the usual sense of the word, a final separation of his soul and body; but a manifestation of the glorious power of God.

V. 7. **Let us go into Judea**-From the country east of Jordan, whither he had retired some time before, when the Jews sought to stone him, **#Joh 10:39, 40**.

V. 9. **Are there not twelve hours in the day?**-The Jews always divided the space from sunrise to sunset, were the days longer or shorter, into twelve parts: so that the hours of their day were all the year the same in number, though much shorter in winter than in summer.

If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not-As if he had said, So there is such a space, a determined time, which God has allotted me.

During that time I stumble not, amidst all the snares that are laid for me.

Because he seeth the light of this world-And so I see the light of God surrounding me.

V. 10. **But if a man walk in the night**-If he have not light from God; if his providence does no longer protect him.

V. 11. **Our friend Lazarus sleepeth**-This he spoke, just when he died.

Sleepeth-Such is the death of good men in the language of heaven. But the disciples did not yet understand this language. And the slowness of our understanding makes the Scripture often descend to our barbarous manner of speaking.

V. 16. **Thomas** in Hebrew, as **Didymus** in Greek, signifies a twin.

With him-With Jesus, whom he supposed the Jews would kill. It seems to be the language of despair.

V. 20. **Mary sat in the house**-Probably not hearing what was said.

V. 22. **Whatsoever thou wilt ask, God will give it thee**-So that she already believed he could raise him from the dead.

V. 25. **I am the resurrection**-Of the dead.

And the life-Of the living.

He that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live-In life everlasting.

V. 32. **She fell at his feet**-This Martha had not done. So she makes amends for her slowness in coming.

V. 33. **He groaned**-So he restrained his tears. So he stopped them soon after, **#Joh 11:38**.

He troubled himself-An expression amazingly elegant, and full of the highest propriety. For the affections of Jesus were not properly passions, but voluntary emotions, which were wholly in his own power. And this tender trouble which he now voluntarily sustained, was full of the highest order and reason.

V. 35. **Jesus wept**-Out of sympathy with those who were in tears all around him, as well as from a deep sense of the misery sin had brought upon human nature.

V. 37. **Could not this person have even caused, that this man should not have died?**-Yet they never dreamed that he could raise him again! What a strange mixture of faith and unbelief.

V. 38. **It was a cave**-So Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their wives, except Rachel, were buried in the cave of Machpelah, **#Ge 49:29-31**. These caves were commonly in rocks, which abounded in that country, either hollowed by nature or hewn by art. And the entrance was shut up with a great stone, which sometimes had a monumental inscription.

V. 39. **Lord, by this time he stinketh**-Thus did reason and faith struggle together.

V. 40. **Said I not**-It appears by this, that Christ had said more to Martha than is before recorded.

V. 41. **Jesus lifted up his eyes**-Not as if he applied to his Father for assistance. There is not the least show of this. He wrought the miracle with an air of absolute sovereignty, as the Lord of life and death. But it was as if he had said, I thank thee, that by the disposal of thy providence, thou hast granted my desire, in this remarkable opportunity of exerting my power, and showing forth thy praise.

V. 43. **He cried with a loud voice**-That all who were present might hear.

Lazarus, come forth-Jesus called him out of the tomb as easily as if he had been not only alive, but awake also.

V. 44. **And he came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes**-Which were wrapt round each hand and each foot, **and his face was wrapt about with a napkin**-If the Jews buried as the Egyptians did, the face was not covered with it, but it only went round the forehead, and under the chin; so that he might easily see his way.

V. 45. **Many believed on Him**-And so the Son of God was glorified, according to what our Lord had said, **#Joh 11:4**.

V. 46. **But some of them went to the Pharisees**-What a dreadful confirmation of that weighty truth, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead!

V. 47. **What do we?**-What? Believe. Yea, but death yields to the power of Christ sooner than infidelity.

V. 48. **All men will believe**-And receive him as the Messiah. And this will give such umbrage to the Romans that they

will come and subvert both our place-Temple;

and nation-Both our Church and state. Were they really afraid of this? Or was it a fair colour only? Certainly it was no more. For they could not but know, that he that raised the dead was able to conquer the Romans.

V. 49. **That year**-That memorable year, in which Christ was to die. It was the last and chief of Daniel's seventy weeks, the fortieth year before the destruction of Jerusalem, and was celebrated for various causes, in the Jewish history. Therefore that year is so peculiarly mentioned: Caiaphas was the high priest both before and after it.

Ye know nothing-He reproves their slow deliberations in so clear a case.

V. 50. **It is expedient that one man should die for the people**-So God overruled his tongue, for

he spake not of himself, by his own spirit only, but by the spirit of prophecy. And thus he gave unawares as clear a testimony to the priestly, as Pilate did to the kingly office of Christ.

V. 52. **But that, he might gather into one**-Church,

all the children of God that were scattered abroad-Through all ages and nations.

V. 55. **Many went up to purify themselves**-That they might remove all hinderances to their eating the passover.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XII.

V. 1. **Six days before the passover**-Namely, on the Sabbath: that which was called by the Jews, "The Great Sabbath." This whole week was anciently termed "The great and holy week."

Jesus came-From Ephraim, #Joh 11:54.

V. 2. It seems Martha was a person of some figure, from the great respect which was paid to her and her sister, in visits and condolences on Lazarus's death, as well as from the costly ointment mentioned in the next verse. And probably it was at their house our Lord and his disciples lodged, when he returned from Jerusalem to Bethany, every evening of the last week of his life, upon which he was now entered.

V. 3. **Then Mary, taking a pound of ointment**-There were two persons who poured ointment on Christ. One toward the beginning of his ministry, at or near Nain, #Lu 7:37, &c. The other six days before his last passover, at Bethany; the account of whom is given here, as well as by St. Matthew and Mark.

V. 7. **Against the day of my burial**-Which now draws nigh.

V. 10. **The chief priests consulted, how to kill Lazarus also**-Here is the plain reason why the other evangelists, who wrote while Lazarus was living, did not relate his story.

V. 12. **The next day**-On Sunday.

Who were come to the feast-So that this multitude consisted chiefly of Galileans, not men of Jerusalem. #Mt 21:8.

V. 13. #Ps 118:26; #Mr 11:8; #Lu 19:36.

V. 15. **Fear not**-For his meekness forbids fear, as well as the end of his coming. #Zec 9:9.

V. 16. **These things his disciples understood not at first**-The design of God's providential dispensations is seldom understood at first. We ought therefore to believe, though we understand not, and to give ourselves up to the Divine disposal. The great work of faith is, to embrace those things which we knew not now, but shall know hereafter.

When he had been glorified-At his ascension.

V. 17. **When he called Lazarus out of the tomb**-How admirably does the apostle express, as well the greatness of the miracle, as the facility with which it was wrought! The easiness of the Scripture style on the most grand occurrences, is more sublime than all the pomp of orators.

V. 18. **The multitude went to meet him, because they heard**-From those who had seen the miracle. So in a little time both joined together, to *go before* and to *follow him*.

V. 20. **Certain Greeks**-A prelude of the Gentile Church. That these were circumcised does not appear. But they *came up* on purpose *to worship* the God of Israel.

V. 21. **These came to Philip of Bethsaida in Galilee**-Perhaps they used to lodge there, in their journey to Jerusalem. Or they might believe, a Galilean would be more ready to serve them herein, than a Jew.

Sir-They spake to him, as to one they were little acquainted with.

We would see Jesus-A modest request. They could scarce expect that he would now have time to talk with them.

V. 23. **The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified**-With the Father and in the sight of every creature. But he must suffer first.

V. 24. **Unless a grain of wheat die**-The late resurrection of Lazarus gave our Lord a natural occasion of speaking on this subject. And agreeable to his infinite knowledge, he singles out, from among so many thousands of seeds, almost the only one that dies in the earth: and which therefore was an exceeding proper similitude, peculiarly adapted to the purpose for which he uses it. The like is not to be found in any other grain, except millet, and the large bean.

V. 25. **He that loveth his life**-More than the will of God;

shall lose it eternally:

and he that hateth his life-In comparison of the will of God, shall **preserve it**. #Mt 10:39.

V. 26. **Let him follow me**-By hating his life:

and where I am-In heaven.

If any man serve me-Thus, him will the Father honour.

V. 27. **Now is my soul troubled**-He had various foretastes of his passion.

And what shall I say?-Not what shall I *choose*? For his heart was fixed in choosing the will of his Father: but he laboured for utterance. The two following clauses,

Save me from this hour-For this cause I came-Into the world;

for the sake of this hour (of suffering) seem to have glanced through his mind in one moment. But human language could not so express it.

V. 28. **Father, glorify thy name**-Whatever I suffer. Now the trouble was over.

I have glorified it-By thy entrance into *this hour*.

And I will glorify it-By thy passing through it.

V. 29. **The multitude who stood and heard**-A sound, but not the *distinct words*-In the most glorious revelations there may remain something obscure, to exercise our faith.

Said, It thundered-Thunder did frequently attend a voice from heaven. Perhaps it did so now.

V. 31. **Now**-This moment. And from this moment Christ thirsted more than ever, till his baptism was accomplished.

Is the judgment of this world-That is, now is the judgment given concerning it, whose it shall be.

Now shall the prince of this world-Satan, who had gained possession of it by sin and death,

be cast out-That is, judged, condemned,

cast out of his possession, and out of the bounds of Christ's kingdom.

V. 32. **Lifted up from the earth**-This is a Hebraism which signifies dying. Death in general is all that is usually imported. But our Lord made use of this phrase, rather than others that were equivalent, because it so well suited the particular manner of his death.

I will draw all men-Gentiles as well as Jews. And those who follow my drawings, Satan shall not be able to keep.

V. 34. **How sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?**-How can these things be reconciled? Very easily. He first dies, and then **abideth for ever**.

Who is this Son of man?-Is he the Christ? #Ps 110:4.

V. 35. **Then Jesus said to them**-Not answering them directly, but exhorting them to improve what they had heard already.

The light-I and my doctrine.

V. 36. **The children of light**-The children of God, wise, holy, happy.

V. 37. **Though he had done so many miracles before them**-So that they could not but see them.

V. 38. **The arm of the Lord**-The power of God manifested by Christ, in his preaching, miracles, and work of redemption. **#Isa 53:1.**

V. 39. **Therefore now they could not believe**-That is, by the just judgment of God, for their obstinacy and wilful resistance of the truth, they were at length so left to the hardness of their hearts, that neither the miracles nor doctrines of our Lord could make any impression upon them.

V. 40. **#Isa 6:10; #Mt 13:14; #Ac 28:26.**

V. 41. **When he saw his glory**-Christ's, **#Isa 6:1**, &c. And it is there expressly said to be the glory of the Lord, Jehovah, the Supreme God.

V. 44. **Jesus said with a loud voice**-This which follows to the end of the chapter, is with St. John the epilogue of our Lord's public discourses, and a kind of recapitulation of them.

Believeth not on me-Not on me alone, **but also on him that sent me:** because the Father hath **sent** the Son, and because he and the Father *are one*.

V. 45. **And he that seeth me**-By the eye of faith.

V. 47. **I judge him not**-Not now: **for I am not come to judge the world.** See, Christ *came to save* even them that finally perish! Even these are a part of that world, which he lived and died to save.

V. 50. **His commandment**-Kept, **is life everlasting**-That is the way to it, and the beginning of it.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XIII.

V. 1. **Before the feast**-Namely, on Wednesday, in the paschal week. **Having loved his own**-His apostles,

he loved them to the end-Of his life.

V. 2. **Having now**-Probably now first.

V. 3. **Jesus knowing**-Though conscious of his own greatness, thus humbled himself.

V. 4. **Layeth aside his garments**-That part of them which would have hindered him.

V. 5. **Into the basin**-A large vessel was usually placed for this very purpose, wherever the Jews supped.

V. 7. **What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter**-We do not *now know* perfectly any of his works, either of creation, providence, or grace. It is enough that we can love and obey now, and that we shall **know hereafter**.

V. 8. **If I wash thee not**-If thou dost not submit to my will,

thou hast no part with me-Thou art not my disciple. In a more general sense it may mean, If I do not wash thee in my blood, and purify thee by my Spirit, thou canst have no communion with me, nor any share in the blessings of my kingdom.

V. 9. **Lord, not my feet only**-How fain would man be wiser than God! Yet this was well meant, though ignorant earnestness.

V. 10. And so ye, having been already cleansed, need only **to wash your feet**-That is, to walk holy and undefiled.

V. 14. **Ye ought also to wash one another's feet**-And why did they not? Why do we not read of any one apostle ever washing the feet of any other? Because they understood the Lord better. They knew he never designed that this should be literally taken. He designed to teach them the great lesson of humble love, as well as to confer inward purity upon them. And hereby he teaches us, 1. In every possible way to assist each other in attaining that purity; 2. To wash each other's feet, by performing all sorts of good offices to each other, even those of the lowest kind, when opportunity serves, and the necessity of any calls for them.

V. 16. **The servant is not greater than his lord**-Nor therefore ought to think much of either doing or suffering the same things.

V. 18. **I speak not of you all**-When I call you happy, **I know** one of *you twelve* **whom I have chosen**, will betray me; whereby that scripture will be fulfilled. **#Ps 41:9.**

. 20. And I put my own honour upon you, my ambassadors. **#Mt 10:40.**

V. 21. **One of you**-The speaking thus indefinitely at first was profitable to them all.

V. 23. **There was lying in the bosom of Jesus**-That is, sitting next to him at table. This phrase only expresses the then customary posture at meals, where the guests all leaned sidewise on couches. And each was said to *lie in the bosom* of him who was placed next above him.

One of the disciples whom Jesus loved-St. John avoids with great care the expressly naming himself. Perhaps our Lord now gave him the first proof of his peculiar love, by disclosing this secret to him.

V. 24. **Simon Peter**-Behind Jesus, who lay between them.

V. 25. **Leaning** down, and so asking him privately.

V. 26. **Jesus answered**-In his ear. So careful was he not to offend (if it had been possible) even Judas himself.

The sop-Which he took up while he was speaking.

He giveth it to Judas-And probably the other disciples thought Judas peculiarly happy! But when even this instance of our Lord's tenderness could not move him, then Satan took full possession.

V. 27. **What thou doest, do quickly**-This is not a permission, much less a command. It is only as if he had said, If thou art determined to do it, why dost thou delay? Hereby showing Judas, that he could not be hid, and expressing his own readiness to suffer.

V. 28. **None knew why he said this**-Save John and Judas.

V. 30. **He went out**-To the chief priests. But he returned afterward, and was with them when they ate the passover, **#Mt 26:20**, though not at the Lord's Supper.

V. 31. **Jesus saith**-Namely, the next day; on Thursday, in the morning. Here the scene, as it were, is opened, for the discourse which is continued in the following chapters.

Now-While I speak this, **the Son of man is glorified**-Being fully entered into his glorious work of redemption. This evidently relates to the glory which belongs to his suffering in so holy and victorious a manner.

V. 33. **Ye cannot come**-Not yet; being not yet ripe for it. **#Joh 7:34.**

V. 34. **A new commandment**-Not new in itself; but new in the school of Christ: for he had never before taught it them expressly. Likewise new, as to the degree of it, **as I have loved you**.

V. 36. **Peter saith, Lord, whither goest thou?**-St. Peter seems to have thought, that Christ, being rejected by the Jews, would go to some other part of the earth to erect his throne, where he might reign without disturbance, according to the gross notions he had of Christ's kingdom.

Thou canst not follow me now-But Peter would not believe him. And he did follow him, **#Joh 18:15**. But it was *afar off*. And not without great loss.

V. 38. **The cock shall not have crowed**-That is, cock crowing shall not be over, **till thou hast denied me thrice**-His three-fold denial was thrice foretold; first, at the time mentioned here; secondly, at that mentioned by St. Luke; lastly, at that recorded by St. Matthew and Mark.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XIV.

V. 1. **Let not your heart be troubled**-At my departure.

Believe-This is the sum of all his discourse, which is urged till they did believe, **#Joh 16:30**. And then our Lord prays and departs.

V. 2. **In my Father's house are many mansions**-Enough to receive both the holy angels, and your predecessors in the faith, and all that now believe, and a great multitude, which no man can number.

V. 4. **The way**-Of faith, holiness, sufferings.

V. 5. **Thomas saith**-Taking him in a gross sense.

V. 6. To the question concerning the way, he answers, **I am the way**. To the question concerning knowledge, he answers, **I am the truth**. To the question whither, **I am the life**. The first is treated of in this verse; the second, **#Joh 14:7-17**; the third, **#Joh 14:18**, &c.

V. 7. **Ye have known**-Ye have begun to know him.

V. 10. **I am in the Father-The words that I speak**, &c.-That is, I am one with the Father, in essence, in speaking, and in acting.

V. 11. **Believe me**-On my own word, **because I am** God.

The works-This respects not merely the miracles themselves, but his sovereign, Godlike way of performing them.

V. 12. **Greater works than these shall he do**-So one apostle wrought miracles merely by his shadow, **#Ac 5:15**; another by *handkerchiefs carried from his body*, **#Ac 19:12**; and all spake with various tongues. But the converting one sinner is a greater work than all these.

Because I go to my Father-To send you the Holy Ghost.

V. 15. **If ye love me, keep my commandments**-Immediately after faith he exhorts to love and good works.

V. 16. **And I will ask the Father**-The 21st verse, **#Joh 14:21**, shows the connection between this and the preceding verses.

And he will give you another Comforter-The Greek word signifies also an advocate, instructor, or encourager.

Another-For Christ himself was one.

To remain with you for ever-With you, and your followers in faith, to the end of the world.

V. 17. **The Spirit of truth-**Who has, reveals, testifies, and defends the truth as it is in Jesus.

Whom the world-All who do not love or fear God, **cannot receive, because it seeth him not-**Having no spiritual senses, no internal eye to discern him; nor consequently knoweth him.

He shall be in you-As a constant guest. Your bodies and souls shall be temples of the Holy Ghost dwelling in you.

V. 18. **I will not leave you orphans-**A word that is elegantly applied to those who have lost any dear friend.

I come to you-What was certainly and speedily to be, our Lord speaks of as if it were already.

V. 19. **But ye see me-**That is, ye shall certainly see me.

Because I live, ye shall live also-Because I am the living One in my Divine nature, and shall rise again in my human nature, and live for ever in heaven: therefore ye shall live the life of faith and love on earth, and hereafter the life of glory.

V. 20. **At that day-**When ye see me after my resurrection; but more eminently at the day of pentecost.

V. 21. **He that hath my commandments-**Written in his heart.

I will manifest myself to him-More abundantly.

V. 23. **Jesus answered-**Because ye love and obey me, and they do not, therefore I will reveal myself to you, and not to them.

My Father will love him-The more any man loves and obeys, the more God will love him.

And we will come to him, and make our abode with him-Which implies such a large manifestation of the Divine presence and love, that the former in justification is as nothing in comparison of it.

V. 26. **In my name-**For my sake, in my room, and as my agent.

He will teach you all things-Necessary for you to know. Here is a clear promise to the apostles, and their successors in the faith, that the Holy Ghost will teach them all that truth which is needful for their salvation.

V. 27. **Peace I leave with you**-Peace in general; peace with God and with your own consciences.

My peace-In particular; that peace which I enjoy, and which I create, **I give**-At this instant.

Not as the world giveth-Unsatisfying unsettled, transient; but filling the soul with constant, even tranquillity. Lord, evermore give us this peace! How serenely may we pass through the most turbulent scenes of life, when all is quiet and harmonious within! Thou hast made peace through the blood of thy cross. May we give all diligence to preserve the inestimable gift inviolate, till it issue in everlasting peace!

V. 28. **God the Father is greater than I**-As he was man. As God, neither is greater nor less than the other.

V. 29. **I have told you**-Of my going and return.

V. 30. **The prince of this world is coming**-To make his grand assault.

But he hath nothing in me-No right, no claim, or power. There is no guilt in me, to give him power over me; no corruption to take part with his temptation.

V. 31. **But** I suffer him thus to assault me, 1. Because it is the Father's commission to me, **#Joh 10:18**. 2. To convince the world of my love to the Father, in being *obedient unto death*, **#Php 2:8**.

Arise, let us go hence-Into the city, to the passover. All that has been related from **#Joh 12:31**, was done and said on Thursday, without the city. But what follows in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters, was said in the city, on the very evening of the passover just before he went over the brook Kedron.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XV.

V. 1. **I am the true vine-So the true bread, #Joh 6:32;** that is, the most excellent.

V. 2. **Every one that beareth fruit, he purifieth**-by obeying the truth, #1Pe 1:22; and by inward or outward sufferings, #Heb 12:10, 11. So purity and fruitfulness help each other.

That it may bear more fruit-For this is one of the noblest rewards God can bestow on former acts of obedience, to make us yet more holy, and fit for farther and more eminent service.

V. 3. **Ye are clean**-All of you, to whom I now speak, are purged from the guilt and power of sin;
by the word-Which, applied by the Spirit, is the grand instrument of purifying the soul.

V. 4. **Abide in me**-Ye who are now pure by living faith, producing all holiness; by which alone ye can be in me.

V. 5. **I am the vine, ye are the branches**-Our Lord in this whole passage speaks of no branches but such as are, or at least were once, united to him by living faith.

V. 6. **If any one abide not in me**-By living faith; not by Church communion only. He may thus abide in Christ, and be **withered** all the time, and **cast into the fire** at last.

He is cast out-Of the vineyard, the invisible Church. Therefore he was in it once.

V. 7. **If ye abide in me, ye shall ask**-Prayers themselves are a fruit of faith, and they produce more fruit.

V. 8. **So shall ye be my disciples**-Worthy of the name. To be a disciple of Christ is both the foundation and height of Christianity.

V. 9. **Abide ye in my love**-Keep your place in my affection. See that ye do not forfeit that invaluable blessing. How needless a caution, if it were impossible for them not to abide therein?

V. 10. **If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love**-On these terms, and no other, ye shall remain the objects of my special affection.

V. 11. **That my joy might remain in you**-The same joy which I feel in loving the Father, and keeping his commandments.

V. 12. **Your joy will be full, if ye so love one another.**

V. 13. **Greater love**-To his friends. He here speaks of them only.

V. 14. **Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you**-On this condition, not otherwise. A thunderbolt for Antinomianism! Who then dares assert that God's love does not at all depend on man's works?

V. 15. **All things**-Which might be of service to you.

V. 16. **Ye**-My apostles, **have not chosen me, but I have chosen you**-As clearly appears from the sacred history:

and appointed you, that ye may go and bear fruit-I have chosen and appointed you for this end, that ye may go and convert sinners:

and that your fruit may remain-That the fruit of your labours may remain to the end of the world; yea, to eternity;

that whatsoever ye shall ask-The consequence of your going and bearing fruit will be, that all your prayers will be heard.

V. 19. **Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you**-Because your maxims, tempers, actions, are quite opposite to theirs. For the very same reason must the world in all ages hate those who are not of the world.

V. 20. **#Joh 13:16; #Mt 10:24; #Lu 6:40.**

V. 21. **All these things will they do to you, because they know not him that sent me**-And in all ages and nations they who know not God will, *for this cause*, hate and persecute those that do.

V. 22. **They had not had sin**-Not in this respect.

V. 23. **He that hateth me**-As every unbeliever doth, For as the love of God is inseparable from faith, so is the hatred of God from unbelief.

V. 25. **#Ps 69:4.**

V. 26. **When the Comforter is come, whom I will send from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me**-The Spirit's *coming*, and being *sent* by our Lord *from the Father, to testify of him*, are personal characters, and plainly distinguish him from the Father and the Son; and his title *as the Spirit of truth*, together with his *proceeding from the Father*, can agree to none but a Divine person. And that he proceeds from the Son, as well as from the Father, may be fairly argued from his being called *the Spirit of Christ*, **#1Pe 1:11**; and from his being here said to be *sent by Christ from the Father*, as well as sent by the Father *in his name*.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XVI.

V. 2. **The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think he doth God service**-But, blessed be God, the time is so far past, that those who bear the name of Christ do not now generally suppose they do him service by killing each other for a difference in opinion or mode of worship.

V. 3. **They have not known the Father nor me**-This is the true root of persecution in all its forms.

V. 4. **I did not tell you these things at the beginning, because I was with you**-To bear the chief shock in my own person, and to screen you from it.

V. 5. **None of you asketh me**-Now when it is most seasonable. Peter did ask this before, **#Joh 13:36**.

V. 7. **It is expedient for you**-In respect of the Comforter, **#Joh 16:7**, &c, and of me, **#Joh 16:16**, &c, and of the Father, **#Joh 16:23**, &c.

V. 8. **He**-Observe his twofold office; toward the world, **#Joh 16:8**, &c; toward believers, **#Joh 16:12**, &c:

will convince-All of **the world**-Who do not obstinately resist, by your preaching and miracles,

of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment-He who is convinced *of sin* either accepts the *righteousness* of Christ, or is *judged* with Satan. An abundant accomplishment of this we find in the *Acts of the Apostles*.

V. 9. **Of sin**-Particularly of unbelief, which is the confluence of all sins, and binds them all down upon us.

V. 10. **Of righteousness, because I go to my Father**-Which the Spirit will testify, though ye do not then see me. But I could not go to him if I were not righteous.

V. 11. **The prince of this world is judged**-And in consequence thereof dethroned, deprived of the power he had so long usurped over men. Yet those who reject the deliverance offered them will remain slaves of Satan still.

V. 12. **I have yet many things to say**-Concerning my passion, death, resurrection, and the consequences of it. These things we have, not in uncertain traditions, but in the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation.

But ye cannot bear them now-Both because of your littleness of faith, and your immoderate sorrow.

V. 13. **When he is come**-It is universally allowed that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost dwell in all believers. And the internal agency of the Holy Ghost is generally admitted. That of the Father and the Son, as represented in this Gospel, deserves our deepest consideration.

V. 15. **All things that the Father hath are mine**-Could any creature say this?

V. 16. **A little while and ye shall not see me**-When I am buried:

and again, a little while, and ye shall see me-When I am risen:

because I go to my Father-I die and rise again, in order to ascend to my Father.

V. 19. **Jesus said to them**-Preventing their question.

V. 20. **Ye will weep and lament**-When ye see me dead;

but your sorrow will be turned into joy-When ye see me risen.

V. 22. **Ye now therefore have sorrow**-This gives us no manner of authority to assert all believers *must* come into a state of darkness. They never *need* lose either their peace, or love, or the witness that they are the children of God. They never *can* lose these, but either through sin, or ignorance, or vehement temptation, or bodily disorder.

V. 23. **Ye shall not question me about any thing**-Which you do not now understand. You will not need to inquire of me; for you will know all things clearly.

Whatsoever ye shall ask-Knowledge, love, or any thing else,

he will give it-Our Lord here gives us a charte blanche. Believer, write down what thou wilt. He had said, **#Joh 14:13**, I will do it, where the discourse was of *glorifying the Father through the Son*. Here, speaking of the love of the Father to believers, he saith, **He will give it**.

V. 24. **Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name**-For they had asked him directly for all they wanted.

V. 26. **At that day ye shall ask**-For true knowledge begets prayer.

And I say not that I will pray-This in nowise implies that he will not: it means only, The Father himself now loves you, not only because of my intercession, but also because of the faith and love which he hath wrought in you.

V. 30. **Thou knowest all things**-Even our hearts. Although no question is asked thee, yet thou answerest the thoughts of every one.

By this we believe that thou camest forth from God-They, as it were, echo back the words which he had spoken in **#Joh 16:27**, implying, *We believe in God; we believe also in thee.*

In this chapter our Lord prays, 1. For himself, **#Joh 17:1-5** 2. For the apostles, **#Joh 17:6-19** and again, **#Joh 17:24-26** 3. For all believers, **#Joh 17:20-23** And 4. For the world, **#Joh 17:21-23**

In his prayer he comprises all he had said from **#Joh 13:31**, and seals, as it were, all he had hitherto done, beholding things past, present, and to come. This chapter contains the easiest words, and the deepest sense of any in all the Scripture: yet is here no incoherent rhapsody, but the whole is closely and exactly connected.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XVII.

V. 1. **Father**-This simplicity of appellation highly became the only-begotten Son of God; to which a believer then makes the nearest approach, when he is fullest of love and humble confidence.

The hour is come-The appointed time for it;

glorify thy Son-The Son glorified the Father, both before and after his own glorification. When he speaks to the Father he does not style himself the Son of man.

V. 2. **As thou hast given him power over all flesh**-This answers to **glorify thy Son**.

That he may give eternal life, &c.-This answers to **that thy Son may glorify thee**.

To all whom thou hast given him-To all believers. This is a clear proof that Christ designed his sacrifice should avail for all: yea, that **all flesh**, every man, should partake of everlasting life. For as the Father had **given him power over all flesh**, so he *gave himself a ransom for all*.

V. 3. **To know**-By loving, holy faith, **thee the only true God**-The only cause and end of all things; not excluding the Son and the Holy Ghost, no more than the Father is excluded from being Lord, **#1Co 8:6**; but the false gods of the heathens;

and Jesus Christ-As their prophet, priest, and king:

this is life eternal-It is both the way to, and the essence of, everlasting happiness.

V. 4. **I have finished the work**-Thus have I glorified thee, laying the foundation of thy kingdom on earth.

V. 5. **The glory which I had**-He does not say *received*-He always *had* it, till he *emptied himself* of it in the days of his flesh.

V. 6. **I have manifested thy name**-All thy attributes; and in particular thy paternal relation to believers;

to the men whom thou hast given me-The apostles, and so **#Joh 17:12**.

They were thine-By creation, and by descent from Abraham.

And thou hast given them me-By giving them faith in what I have spoken. So **#Joh 17:9**.

V. 7. **Now they know that all things**-Which I have done and spoken,

are of thee-And consequently right and true.

V. 8. **They have received them**-By faith.

V. 9. **I pray not for the world**-Not in these petitions, which are adapted to the state of believers only. (He prays for the world at **#Joh 17:21, 23**,

that they may believe-*That they may know God hath sent him.*) This no more proves that our Lord did not pray for the *world*, both before and afterward, than his praying for the apostles alone, **#Joh 17:6-19**, proves that he did not pray for *them also which shall believe through their word*, **#Joh 17:20**.

V. 10. **All things that are mine are thine, and that are thine are mine**-These are very high and strong expressions, too grand for any mere creature to use; as implying that all things whatsoever, inclusive of the Divine nature, perfections, and operations, are the common property of the Father and the Son. And this is the original ground of that peculiar property, which both the Father and the Son have in the persons who were given to Christ as Mediator; according to what is said in the close of the verse, of his being **glorified by them**; namely, believing in him, and so acknowledging his glory.

V. 11. **Keep them through thy name**-Thy power, mercy, wisdom, **that they may be one**-with us and with each other; one body, separate from the world:

as we are-By resemblance to us, though not equality.

V. 12. **Those whom thou hast given me I have guarded, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition**-So one even of them whom God *had given him is lost*. So far was even that decree from being unchangeable!

That the Scripture might be fulfilled-That is, whereby the Scripture was fulfilled. **The son of perdition** signifies one that deservedly perishes; as *a son of death*, **#2Sa 12:5**; *children of hell*, **#Mt 23:15**, and *children of wrath*, **#Eph 2:3**, signify persons justly obnoxious to death, hell, wrath. **#Ps 109:8**.

V. 13. **In the world**-That is, before I leave the world.

My joy-The joy I feel at going to the Father.

V. 15. **That thou wouldest take them out of the world**-Not yet:

but that thou wouldest keep them from the evil one-Who reigns therein.

V. 17. **Sanctify**-Consecrate them by the anointing of thy Spirit to their office, and perfect them in holiness, by means of thy word.

V. 19. **I sanctify myself**-I devote myself as a victim, to be sacrificed.

V. 20. **For them who will believe**-In all ages.

V. 21. **As thou art in me**-This also is to be understood in a way of similitude, and not of sameness or equality.

That the world may believe-Here Christ prays for the world. Observe the sum of his whole prayer, 1. Receive me into thy own and my glory; 2. Let my apostles share therein; 3. And all other believers: 4. And let all the world believe.

V. 22. **The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them**-The glory of the only begotten shines in all the sons of God. How great is the majesty of Christians.

V. 24. Here he returns to the apostles. **I will**-He asks, as having a right to be heard, and prays, not as a servant, but a Son:

that they may behold my glory-Herein is the happiness of heaven, #1Jo 3:2.

V. 25. **Righteous Father**-The admission of believers to God through Christ, flows even from the justice of God.

V. 26. **I have declared to them thy name**-Thy new, best name of love;

that the love wherewith thou hast loved me-That thou and *thy love, and I* and my love,

may be in them-That they may love me with that love.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XVIII.

V. 1. **A garden**-Probably belonging to one of his friends. He might retire to this private place, not only for the advantage of secret devotion, but also that the people might not be alarmed at his apprehension, nor attempt, in the first sallies of their zeal, to rescue him in a tumultuous manner. Kedron was (as the name signifies) a dark shady valley, on the east side of Jerusalem, between the city and the mount of Olives, through which a little brook ran, which took its name from it. It was this brook, which David, a type of Christ, went over with the people, weeping in his flight from Absalom. #Mt 26:30; #Mr 14:26; #Lu 22:39.

V. 2. #Mr 14:43; #Lu 22:47.

V. 3. **A troop of soldiers**-A cohort of Roman foot.

V. 6. **As soon as he said, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground**-How amazing is it, that they should renew the assault, after so sensible an experience both of his power and mercy! But probably the priests among them might persuade themselves and their attendants, that this also was done by Beelzebub; and that it was through the providence of God, not the indulgence of Jesus, that they received no farther damage.

V. 8. **If ye seek me, let these (my disciples) go**-It was an eminent instance of his power over the spirits of men, that they so far obeyed this word, as not to seize even Peter, when he had cut off the ear of Malchus.

V. 9. #Joh 17:12.

V. 10. **Then Simon Peter**-No other evangelist names him. Nor could they safely. But St. John, writing after his death, might do it without any such inconvenience.

V. 13. Annas had been high priest before his son-in-law Caiaphas. And though he had for some time resigned that office, yet they paid so much regard to his age and experience, that they brought Christ to Annas first. But we do not read of any thing remarkable which passed at the house of Annas; for, which reason, his being carried thither is omitted by the other evangelists. #Mt 26:57; #Mr 14:53; #Lu 22:54.

V. 17. **Art thou also**-As well as the others, **one of this man's disciples**-She does not appear to have asked with any design to hurt him.

V. 20. **I spake openly**-As to the manner:

continually-As to the time:

in the synagogue and temple-As to the place.

In secret have I said nothing-No point of doctrine which I have not taught in public.

V. 21. **Why askest thou me**-Whom thou wilt not believe?

V. 22. **Answerest thou the high priest so?**-With so little reverence?

V. 24. **Now Annas had sent him to Caiaphas**-As is implied **#Joh 18:13**.

Bound-Being still bound, **#Joh 18:12**.

V. 28. **They went not into the palace themselves, lest they should be defiled**-By going into a house which was not purged from leaven, **#De 16:4. #Mt 27:2; #Mr 15:1; #Lu 23:1**.

V. 31. **It is not lawful for us to put any man to death**-The power of inflicting capital punishment had been taken from them that very year. So *the sceptre was departed from Judah*, and transferred to the Romans.

V. 32. **Signifying what death he should die**-For crucifixion was not a Jewish, but a Roman punishment. So that had he not been condemned by the Roman governor, he could not have been crucified. **#Joh 3:14**.

V. 36. **My kingdom is not of this world**-Is not an external, but a spiritual kingdom; **that I might not be delivered to the Jews**-Which Pilate had already attempted to do, **#Joh 18:31**, and afterward actually did, **#Joh 19:16**.

V. 37. **Thou sayest**-The truth.

To this end was I born-Speaking of his human origin: his Divine was above Pilate's comprehension. Yet it is intimated in the following words,

I came into the world, that I might witness to the truth-Which was both declared to the Jews, and in the process of his passion to the princes of the Gentiles also.

Every one that is of the truth-That is, a lover of it,

heareth my voice-A universal maxim. Every sincere lover of truth will hear him, so as to understand and practise what he saith.

V. 38. **What is truth?**-Said Pilate, a courtier; perhaps meaning what signifies truth? Is that a thing worth hazarding your life for? So he left him presently, to plead with the Jews for him, looking upon him as an innocent but weak man.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XIX.

V. 1. **#Mt 27:26; #Mr 15:15.**

V. 7. **By our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God**-Which they understood in the highest sense, and therefore accounted blasphemy.

V. 8. **He was the more afraid**-He seems to have been afraid before of shedding innocent blood.

V. 9. **Whence art thou?**-That is, whose son art thou?

V. 11. **Thou couldst have no power over me**-For I have done nothing to expose me to the power of any magistrate.

Therefore he that delivered me to thee, namely, Caiaphas, knowing this, is more blamable than thou.

V. 13. **Pilate sat down on the judgment seat**-Which was then without the palace,

in a place called, in Greek, **the pavement**, on account of a beautiful piece of Mosaic work, with which the floor was adorned:

but in Hebrew, Gabbatha-Or the high place, because it stood on an eminence, so that the judge sitting on his throne might be seen and heard by a considerable number of people.

V. 14. **It was the preparation of the passover**-For this reason both the Jews and Pilate were desirous to bring the matter to a conclusion. Every Friday was called the preparation, (namely, for the Sabbath.) And as often as the passover fell on a Friday, that day was called the preparation of the passover.

V. 17. **Bearing his cross**-Not the whole cross, (for that was too large and heavy,) but the transverse beam of it, to which his hands were afterward fastened. This they used to make the person to be executed carry. **#Mt 27:31; #Mr 15:20; #Lu 23:26.**

V. 19. **Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews**-Undoubtedly these were the very words, although the other evangelists do not express them at large.

V. 20. **It was written in Latin**-For the majesty of the Roman empire; in

Hebrew-Because it was the language of the nation;

and in Greek-For the information of the Hellenists, who spoke that language, and came in great numbers to the feast.

V. 22. **What I have written, I have written**-That shall stand.

V. 23. **The vesture**-The upper garment.

V. 24. **They parted my garments among them**-No circumstance of David's life bore any resemblance to this, or to several other passages in the 22d Psalm. So that in this scripture, as in some others, the prophet seems to have been thrown into a preternatural ecstasy, wherein, personating the Messiah, he spoke barely what the Spirit dictated, without any regard to himself. **#Ps 22:18.**

V. 25. **His mother's sister**-But we do not read she had any brother. She was her father's heir, and as such transmitted the right of the kingdom of David to Jesus:

Mary, the wife of Cleopas-Called likewise Alpheus, the father, as Mary was the mother of James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas.

V. 27. **Behold thy mother**-To whom thou art now to perform the part of a son in my place, a peculiar honour which Christ conferred on him.

From that hour-From the time of our Lord's death.

V. 29. **A stalk of hyssop**-Which in those countries grows exceeding large and strong. **#Ps 69:21.**

V. 30. **It is finished**-My suffering: the purchase of man's redemption.

He delivered up his spirit-To God, **#Mt 27:50.**

V. 31. **Lest the bodies should remain on the cross on the Sabbath**-Which they would have accounted a profanation of any Sabbath, but of that in particular.

For that Sabbath was a great day-Being not only a Sabbath, but the second day of the feast of unleavened bread (from whence they reckoned the weeks to pentecost:) and also the day for presenting and offering the sheaf of new corn: so that it was a treble solemnity.

V. 34. **Forthwith there came out blood and water**-It was strange, seeing he was dead, that blood should come out; more strange, that water also; and most strange of all, that both should come out immediately, at one time, and yet distinctly. It was pure and true water, as well as pure and true blood. The asseveration of the beholder and testifier of it, shows both the truth and greatness of the miracle and mystery.

V. 35. **His testimony is true**-Valid, unexceptionable.

And he knoweth-And his conscience beareth him witness, that he testifieth this for no other end, than **that ye may believe.**

V. 36. **A bone of it shall not be broken**-This was originally spoken of the paschal lamb, an eminent type of Christ. #Ex 12:46.

V. 37. **They shall look on him whom they have pierced**-He was pierced by the soldier's spear. They who have occasioned his sufferings by their sins (and who has not?) **shall** either **look upon him** in this world with penitential sorrow: or with terror, when he cometh in the clouds of heaven, #Re 1:7. #Zec 12:10.

V. 38. **Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate-And Nicodemus also came**-Acknowledging Christ, when even his chosen disciples forsook him. In that extremity Joseph was no longer afraid, Nicodemus no longer ashamed.

V. 41. **In the place where he was crucified**-There was a garden in the same tract of land: but the cross did not stand in the garden.

V. 42. **Because of the preparation**-That is, they chose the rather to lay him in that **sepulchre** which was **nigh**, because it was the day before the Sabbath, which also was drawing to an end, so that they had no time to carry him far.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XX.

V. 1. **#Mt 28:1; #Mr 16:1; #Lu 24:1.**

V. 3. **Peter went out**-Of the city.

V. 6. **Peter seeth the linen clothes lie-and the napkin folded up**-The angels who ministered to him when he rose, undoubtedly folded up the napkin and linen clothes.

V. 8. **He saw**-That the body was not there,

and believed-That they had taken it away as Mary said.

V. 9. **For as yet**-They had no thought of his rising again.

V. 10. **They went home**-Not seeing what they could do farther.

V. 11. **But Mary stood**-With more constancy. **#Mr 16:9.**

V. 16. **Jesus saith to her, Mary**-With his usual voice and accent.

V. 17. **Touch me not**-Or rather, *Do not cling to me* (for she held him by the feet,) **#Mt 28:9.** Detain me not now. You will have other opportunities of conversing with me. For

I am not ascended to my Father-I have not yet left the world.

But go immediately to my brethren-Thus does he intimate in the strongest manner the forgiveness of their fault, even without ever mentioning it. These exquisite touches, which every where abound in the evangelical writings, show how perfectly Christ knew our frame.

I ascend-He anticipates it in his thoughts, and so speaks of it as a thing already present. To

my Father and your Father, to my God and your God-This uncommon expression shows that the only-begotten Son has all kind of fellowship with God. And a fellowship with God the Father, some way resembling his own, he bestows upon his brethren. Yet he does not say, *Our God*: for no creature can be raised to an equality with him: but **my God and your God**: intimating that the Father is his in a singular and incommunicable manner; and ours through him, in such a kind as a creature is capable of.

V. 19. **#Mr 16:14; #Lu 24:36.**

V. 21. **Peace be unto you**-This is the foundation of the mission of a true Gospel minister, peace in his own soul, **#2Co 4:1.**

As the Father hath sent me, so send I you-Christ was the apostle of the Father, #**Heb 3:1**. Peter and the rest, the apostles of Christ.

V. 22. **He breathed on them**-New life and vigour, **and saith**, as ye receive this breath out of my mouth, so **receive ye** the Spirit out of my fulness: the **Holy Ghost** influencing you in a peculiar manner, to fit you for your great embassy. This was an earnest of pentecost.

V. 23. **Whose soever sins ye remit**-(According to the tenor of the Gospel, that is, supposing them to repent and believe) **they are remitted, and whose soever sins ye retain** (supposing them to remain impenitent) **they are retained**. So far is plain. But here arises a difficulty. Are not the sins of one who truly repents, and unfeignedly believes in Christ, *remitted*, without sacerdotal absolution? And are not the sins of one who does not repent or believe, *retained* even with it? What then does this commission imply? Can it imply any more than, 1. A power of *declaring* with authority the Christian terms of pardon; whose sins are *remitted* and whose *retained*? As in our daily form of absolution; and 2. A power of inflicting and remitting ecclesiastical censures? That is, of excluding from, and re-admitting into, a Christian congregation.

V. 26. **After eight days**-On the next Sunday.

V. 28. **And Thomas said, My Lord and my God**-The disciples had said, We have seen the Lord.

Thomas now not only acknowledges him to be the Lord, as he had done before, and to be risen, as his fellow disciples had affirmed, but also confesses his Godhead, and that more explicitly than any other had yet done. And all this he did without putting his hand upon his side.

V. 30. **Jesus wrought many miracles, which are not written in this book**-Of St. John, nor indeed of the other evangelists.

V. 31. **But these things are written that ye may believe**-That ye may be confirmed in believing. Faith cometh sometimes by reading; though ordinarily by *hearing*.

ST. JOHN

CHAP. XXI.

V. 2. **There were together**-At home, in one house.

V. 4. **They knew not that it was Jesus**-Probably their eyes were holden.

V. 6. **They were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes**-This was not only a demonstration of the power of our Lord, but a kind supply for them and their families, and such as might be of service to them, when they waited afterward in Jerusalem. It was likewise an emblem of the great success which should attend them as *fishers of men*.

V. 7. **Peter girt on his upper coat (for he was stript** of it before)-Reverencing the presence of his Lord:

and threw himself into the sea-To swim to him immediately. The love of Christ draws men through fire and water.

V. 12. **Come ye and dine**-Our Lord needed not food.

And none presumed-To ask a needless question.

V. 14. **The third time**-That he appeared to so many of the apostles together.

V. 15. **Simon, son of Jonah**-The appellation Christ had given him, when he made that glorious confession, #Mt 16:16, the remembrance of which might make him more deeply sensible of his late denial of him whom he had so confessed.

Lovest thou me?-Thrice our Lord asks him, who had denied him thrice:

more than these-Thy fellow disciples *do*?-Peter thought so once, #Mt 26:33, but he now answers only-

I love thee, without adding **more than these**.

Thou knowest-He had now learnt by sad experience that Jesus knew his heart.

My lambs-The weakest and tenderest of the flock.

V. 17. **Because he said the third time**-As if he did not believe him.

V. 18. **When thou art old**-He lived about thirty-six years after this:

another shall gird thee-They were tied to the cross till the nails were driven in;

and shall carry thee-With the cross:

whither thou wouldst not-According to nature; to the place where the cross was set up.

V. 19. **By what death he should glorify God**-It is not only by acting, but chiefly by suffering, that the saints glorify God.

Follow me-Showing hereby likewise what death he should die.

V. 20. **Peter turning**-As he was walking after Christ.

Seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following him-There is a peculiar spirit and tenderness in this plain passage. Christ orders St. Peter to follow him in token of his readiness to be crucified in his cause. St. John stays not for the call; he rises and follows him too; but says not one word of his own love or zeal. He chose that the action only should speak this; and even when he records the circumstance, he tells us not what that action meant, but with great simplicity relates the fact only. If here and there a generous heart sees and emulates it, be it so; but he is not solicitous that men should admire it. It was addressed to his beloved Master, and it was enough that he understood it.

V. 22. **If I will that he tarry**-Without dying,

till I come-To judgment. Certainly he did tarry, till Christ came to destroy Jerusalem. And who can tell, when or how he died?

What is that to thee?-Who art to follow me long before.

V. 23. **The brethren**-That is, the Christians. Our Lord himself taught them that appellation, **#Joh 20:17**.

Yet Jesus did not say to him, that he should not die-Not expressly. And St. John himself, at the time of writing his Gospel, seems not to have known clearly, whether he should die or not.

V. 24. **This is the disciple who testifieth**-Being still alive after he had **wrote**.

And we know that his testimony is true-The Church added these words to St. John's, Gospel, as Tertius did those to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, **#Ro 16:22**.

V. 25. **If they were to be written particularly**-Every fact, and all the circumstances of it.

I suppose-This expression, which softens the hyperbole, shows that St. John wrote this verse.

NOTES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THIS book, in which St. Luke records the actions of the apostles, particularly of St. Peter and St. Paul, (whose companion in travel he was,) is as it were the centre between the Gospel and the Epistles. It contains, after a very brief re-capitulation of the evangelical history, a continuation of the history of Christ, the event of his predictions, and a kind of supplement to what he had before spoken to his disciples, by the Holy Ghost now given unto them. It contains also the seeds, and first stamina of all those things, which are enlarged upon in the epistles.

The Gospels treat of Christ the head. The Acts show that the same things befell his body; which is animated by his Spirit, persecuted by the world, defended and exalted by God.

In this book is shown the Christian doctrine, and the method of applying it to Jews, heathens, and believers; that is, to those who are to be converted, and those who are converted: the hinderances of it in particular men, in several kinds of men, in different ranks and nations: the propagation of the Gospel, and that grand revolution among both Jews and heathens: the victory thereof, in Spite of all opposition, from all the power, malice, and wisdom of the whole world, spreading from one chamber into temples, houses, streets, markets, fields, inns, prisons, camps, courts, chariots, ships, villages, cities, islands: to Jews, heathens, magistrates, generals, soldiers, eunuchs, captives, slaves, women, children, sailors: to Athens, and at length to Rome.

THE PARTS OF IT ARE SEVEN

1. Pentecost, with its antecedents	Chap. i-ii
2. Transactions with the Jews, in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and in Samaria	iii-ix
3. Transactions at Cesarea, and the reception of the Gentiles	x-xi
4. The first course of Barnabas and Paul among the Gentiles	xii-xiv
5. The embassy to, and council at Jerusalem, concerning the liberty of the Gentiles	xv
6. The second course of St. Paul	xvi-xix
7. His third, as far as Rome	xix-xxviii

THE ACTS.

CHAP. I.

V. 1. **The former treatise**-In that important season which reached from the resurrection of Christ to his ascension, **the former treatise** ends, and this begins: this describing the Acts of the Holy Ghost, (by the apostles,) as that does the acts of Jesus Christ.

Of all things-In a summary manner:

which Jesus began to do-until the day-That is, of all things which Jesus did from the beginning till that day.

V. 2. **After having given commandment**-In the 3d verse #Ac 1:3 St. Luke expresses in general terms what Christ said to his apostles during those forty days. But in the 4th #Ac 1:4 and following verses he declares what he said on the day of his ascension. He had brought his former account down to that day; and from that day begins the Acts of the Apostles.

V. 3. **Being seen by them forty days**-That is, many times during that space.

And speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God-Which was the sum of all his discourses with them before his passion also.

V. 4. **Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard from me**-When he was with them a little before, as it is recorded, #Lu 24:49.

V. 5. **Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost**-And so are all true believers to the end of the world. But the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost also are here promised.

V. 6. **Dost thou at this time**-At the time thou now speakest of?

not many days hence? restore the kingdom to Israel?-They still seemed to dream of an outward, temporal kingdom, in which the Jews should have dominion over all nations. It seems they came in a body, having before concerted the design, to ask when this kingdom would come.

V. 7. **The times or the seasons**-Times, in the language of the Scriptures, denote a longer;

seasons, a shorter space.

Which the Father hath put in his own power-To be revealed when and to whom it pleaseth him.

V. 8. **But ye shall receive power-and shall be witnesses to me**-That is, ye shall be empowered to witness my Gospel, both by your preaching and suffering.

V. 12. **A Sabbath-day's journey**-The Jews generally fix this to two thousand cubits, which is not a mile.

V. 13. **They went up into the upper room**-The upper rooms, so frequently mentioned in Scripture, were chambers in the highest part of the house, set apart by the Jews for private prayer. These, on account of their being so retired and convenient, the apostles now used for all the offices of religion. #Mt 10:2; #Mr 3:14; #Lu 6:13.

V. 14. **His brethren**-His near kinsmen, who for some time did not believe; it seems not till near his death.

V. 15. **The number of persons together**-Who were together in the upper room.

were a hundred and twenty-But he had undoubtedly many more in other places; of whom more than five hundred saw him at once after his resurrection, #1Co 15:6.

V. 16. #Ps 41:9.

V. 18. **This man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity**-That is, a field was purchased with the reward of his iniquity; though very possibly Judas might design the purchase.

And falling down on his face-It seems the rope broke before, or as he died.

V. 19. **In their own tongue**-This expression, **That is, the field of blood**, St. Luke seems to have added to the words of St. Peter, for the use of Theophilus and other readers who did not understand Hebrew.

V. 20. **His bishopric**-That is, his apostleship. #Ps 69:25.

V. 21. **All the time that the Lord Jesus was going in and out**-That is, conversing familiarly: **over us**-as our Master. #Ps 109:8.

V. 22. **To be a witness with us of his resurrection**-And of the circumstances which preceded and followed it.

V. 23. **And they appointed two**-So far the faithful could go by consulting together, but no further. Therefore here commenced the proper use of the lot, whereby a matter of importance, which cannot be determined by any ordinary method, is committed to the Divine decision.

V. 25. **Fell**-By his **transgression**-Some time before his death:

to go to his own place-That which his crimes had deserved, and which he had chosen for himself, far from the other apostles, in the region of death.

THE ACTS

CHAP. II.

V. 1. At the pentecost of Sinai, in the Old Testament, and the pentecost of Jerusalem, in the New, where the two grand manifestations of God, the legal and the evangelical; the one from the mountain, and the other from heaven; the terrible, and the merciful one.

They were all with one accord in one place-So here was a conjunction of company, minds, and place; the whole hundred and twenty being present.

V. 2. **And suddenly there came a sound from heaven**-So will the Son of man come to judgment.

And it filled all the house-That is, all that part of the temple **where they were sitting**.

V. 3. **And there appeared distinct tongues, as of fire**-That is, small flames of fire. This is all which the phrase, **tongues of fire**, means in the language of the seventy. Yet it might intimate God's touching their tongues as it were (together with their hearts) with Divine fire: his giving them such words as were active and penetrating, even as flaming fire.

V. 4. **And they began to speak with other tongues**-The miracle was not in the ears of the hearers, (as some have unaccountably supposed,) but in the mouth of the speakers. And this family praising God together, with the tongues of all the world, was an earnest that the whole world should in due time praise God in their various tongues.

As the Spirit gave them utterance-Moses, the type of the law, was of a slow tongue; but the Gospel speaks with a fiery and flaming one.

V. 5. **And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews**-Gathered from all parts by the peculiar providence of God.

V. 6. **The multitude came together, and were confounded**-The motions of their minds were swift and various.

V. 9. **Judea**-The dialect of which greatly differed from that of Galilee.

Asia-The country strictly so called.

V. 10. **Roman sojourners**-Born at Rome, but now living at Jerusalem. These seem to have come to Jerusalem after those who are above mentioned. All of them were partly Jews by birth, and partly proselytes.

V. 11. **Cretans**-One island seems to be mentioned for all.

The wonderful works of God-Probably those which related to the miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, together with the effusion of his Spirit, as a fulfilment of his promises, and the glorious dispensations of Gospel grace.

V. 12. **They were all amazed**-All the devout men.

V. 13. **But others mocking**-The world begins with mocking, thence proceeds to cavilling, #Ac 4:7; to threats, #Ac 4:17; to imprisoning, #Ac 5:18; blows, #Ac 5:40; to slaughter, #Ac 7:58. These mockers appear to have been some of the natives of Judea, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, (who understood only the dialect of the country,) by the apostle's immediately directing his discourse to them in the next verse.

They are full of sweet wine-So the Greek word properly signifies. There was no new wine so early in the year as pentecost. Thus natural men are wont to ascribe supernatural things to mere natural causes; and many times as impudently and unskilfully as in the present case.

V. 14. **Then Peter standing up**-All the gestures, all the words of Peter, show the utmost sobriety;

lifted up his voice-With cheerfulness and boldness;

and said to them-This discourse has three parts; each of which, #Ac 2:14, 22, 29, begins with the same appellation, **men**: only to the last part he prefixes with more familiarity the additional word *brethren*.

Men of Judea-That is, ye that are born in Judea. St. Peter spoke in Hebrew, which they all understood.

V. 15. **It is but the third hour of the day**-That is, nine in the morning. And on the solemn festivals the Jews rarely ate or drank any thing till noon.

V. 16. **But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet**-But there is another and better way of accounting for this. #Joe 2:28

V. 17. The times of the Messiah are frequently called the last days, the Gospel being the last dispensation of Divine grace.

I will pour out of my Spirit-Not on the day of pentecost only, **upon all flesh**-On persons of every age, sex, and rank.

And your young men shall see visions-In young men the outward sense, are most vigorous, and the bodily strength is entire, whereby they are best qualified to sustain the shock which usually attends the visions of God. In old men the internal senses are most vigorous, suited to divine dreams. Not that the old are wholly excluded from the former, nor the young from the latter.

V. 18. **And upon my servants**-On those who are literally in a state of servitude.

V. 19. **And I will show prodigies in heaven above, and signs on earth beneath**-Great revelations of grace are usually attended with great judgments on those who reject it.

In heaven-Treated of, **#Ac 2:20**.

On earth-Described in this verse. Such signs were those mentioned, **#Ac 2:22**, before the passion of Christ; which are so mentioned as to include also those at the very time of the passion and resurrection, at the destruction of Jerusalem, and at the end of the world.

Terrible indeed were those prodigies in particular which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem: such as the flaming sword hanging over the city, and the fiery comet pointing down upon it for a year; the light that shone upon the temple and the altar in the night, as if it had been noon-day; the opening of the great and heavy gate of the temple without hands; the voice heard from the most holy place, *Let us depart hence*; the admonition of Jesus the son of Ananus, crying for seven years together, *Wo, wo, wo*; the vision of contending armies in the air, and of entrenchments thrown up against a city there represented; the terrible thunders and lightnings, and dreadful earthquakes, which every one considered as portending some great evil: all which, through the singular providence of God, are particularly recorded by Josephus.

Blood-War and slaughter.

Fire-Burnings of houses and towns, involving all in clouds of **smoke**.

V. 20. **The moon shall be turned into blood**-A bloody colour:

before the day of the Lord-Eminently the last day; though not excluding any other day or season, wherein the Lord shall manifest his glory, in taking vengeance of his adversaries.

V. 21. **But-whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord**-This expression implies the whole of religion, and particularly prayer uttered in faith;

shall be saved-From all those plagues; from sin and hell.

V. 23. **Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God**-The apostle here anticipates an objection, Why did God suffer such a person to be so treated? Did he not know what wicked men intended to do? And had he not power to prevent it? Yea. He knew all that those wicked men intended to do. And he had power to blast all their designs in a moment. But he did not exert that power, because he *so loved the world!* Because it was the determined counsel of his love, to redeem mankind from eternal death, by the death of his only-begotten Son.

V. 24. **Having loosed the pains of death**-The word properly means, the pains of a woman in travail.

As it was not possible that he should be held under it-Because the Scripture must needs be fulfilled.

V. 25. **#Ps 16:8.**

V. 27. **Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades**-The invisible world. But it does not appear, that ever our Lord went into hell. His soul, when it was separated from the body, did not go thither, but to paradise, **#Lu 23:43**. The meaning is, Thou wilt not leave my soul in its separate state, nor suffer my body to be corrupted.

V. 28. **Thou hast made known to me the ways of life**-That is, Thou hast raised me from the dead.

Thou wilt fill me with joy by thy countenance-When I ascend to thy right hand.

V. 29. **The patriarch**-A more honourable title than king.

V. 30. **#Ps 89:4**, &c.

V. 32. **He foreseeing this, spake of the resurrection Of Christ**-St. Peter argues thus: It is plain, David did not speak this of himself. Therefore he spake of Christ's rising. But how does that promise of a kingdom imply his resurrection? Because he did not receive it before he died, and because his kingdom was to endure for ever, **#2Sa 7:13**.

V. 33. **Being exalted by the right hand of God-By the right hand**; that is, the mighty power of God. Our Lord was exalted at his ascension to God's right hand in heaven.

V. 34. **Sit thou on my right hand**-In this and the following verse is an allusion to two ancient customs; one, to the highest honour that used to be paid to persons by placing them on the right hand, as Solomon did Bathsheba, when sitting on his throne, **#1Ki 2:19**; and the other, to the custom of conquerors, who used to tread on the necks of their vanquished enemies, as a token of their entire victory and triumph over them.

V. 35. **Until I make thine enemies thy footstool**-This text is here quoted with the greatest address, as suggesting in the words of David, their great prophetic monarch, how certain their own ruin must be, if they went on to oppose Christ. **#Ps 110:1**.

V. 36. **Lord**-Jesus, after his exaltation, is constantly meant by this word in the New Testament, unless sometimes where it occurs, in a text quoted from the Old Testament.

V. 37. **They said to the apostles, Brethren**-They did not style them so before.

V. 38. **Repent**-And hereby return to God:

be baptized-Believing in the name of Jesus-And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost-See the three-one God clearly proved. See **#Ac 26:20**. *The gift of the Holy Ghost* does not mean in this place the power of speaking with tongues. For the promise of this was not given **to all**

that were afar off, in distant ages and nations. But rather the constant fruits of faith, even righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Whomsoever the Lord our God shall call-(Whether they are Jews or Gentiles) by his word and by his Spirit: and who are not disobedient to the heavenly calling. But it is observable St. Peter did not yet understand the very words he spoke.

V. 40. **And with many other words did he testify and exhort**-In such an accepted time we should add line upon line, and not leave off, till the thing is done.

Save yourselves from this perverse generation-Many of whom were probably mocking still.

V. 41. **And there were added**-To the hundred and twenty.

V. 42. **And they continued steadfast**-So their daily Church communion consisted in these four particulars:

1. Hearing the word; 2. Having all things common; 3. Receiving the Lord's Supper; 4. Prayer.

Ye diff'rent sects, who all declare,
Lo here is Christ, and Christ is there;
Your stronger proofs divinely give,
And *show* me where *the Christians* live!

V. 43. **And fear came upon every soul**-Of those who did not join with them: whereby persecution was prevented, till it was needful for them.

V. 45. **And sold their possessions**-Their lands and houses; **and goods**-Their movables.

And parted them to all as any one had need-To say the Christians did this only till the destruction of Jerusalem, is not true; for many did it long after. Not that there was any positive command for so doing: it needed not; for love constrained them. It was a natural fruit of that love wherewith each member of the community loved every other as his own soul. And if the whole Christian Church had continued in this spirit, this usage must have continued through all ages. To affirm therefore that Christ did not *design it should continue*, is neither more nor less than to affirm, that Christ did not design this measure of *love should continue*. I see no proof of this.

V. 46. **Continuing daily-breaking the bread**-in the Lord's Supper, as did many Churches for some ages.

They partook of their food with gladness and singleness of heart-They carried the same happy and holy temper through all their common actions: eating and working with the same spirit wherewith they prayed and received the Lord's Supper.

V. 47. **The Lord added daily such as were saved**-From their sins: from the guilt and power of them.

THE ACTS

CHAP. III.

V. 1. **The ninth hour**-The Jews divided the time from sunrise to sunset into twelve hours; which were consequently of unequal length at different times of the year, as the days were longer or shorter. The third hour therefore was nine in the morning; the ninth, three in the afternoon; but not exactly. For the third hour was the middle space between sunrise and noon; which, if the sun rose at five, (the earliest hour of its rising in that climate,) was half an hour after eight: if at seven (the latest hour of its rising there) was half an hour after nine. The chief hours of prayer were the third and ninth; at which seasons the morning and evening sacrifices were offered, and incense (a kind of emblem representing prayer) burnt on the golden altar.

V. 2. **At the gate of the temple, called Beautiful**-This gate was added by Herod the Great, between the court of the Gentiles and that of Israel. It was thirty cubits high, and fifteen broad, and made of Corinthian brass, more pompous in its workmanship and splendour than those that were covered with silver and gold.

V. 6. **Then said Peter, Silver and gold have I none**-How unlike his supposed successor! Can the bishop of **Rome** either say or do the same?

V. 12. **Peter answered the people**-Who were running together, and inquiring into the circumstances of the fact.

V. 13. **The God of our fathers**-This was wisely introduced in the beginning of his discourse, that it might appear they taught no new religion, inconsistent with that of Moses, and were far from having the least design to divert their regards from the God of *Israel*.

Hath glorified his Son-By this miracle, **whom ye delivered up**-When God had given him to you, and when ye ought to have received him as a most precious treasure, and to have preserved him with all your power.

V. 14. **Ye renounced the Holy One**-Whom God had marked out as such;

and the Just One-Even in the judgment of Pilate.

V. 16. **His name**-Himself: his power and love.

The faith which is by him-Of which he is the giver, as well as the object.

V. 17. **And now, brethren**-A word full of courtesy and compassion,

I know-He speaks to their heart, **that through ignorance ye did it**-which lessened, though it could not take away, the guilt.

As did also your rulers-The prejudice lying from the authority of the chief priests and elders, he here removes, but with great tenderness. He does not call them our, but your rulers. For as the Jewish dispensation ceased at the death of Christ, consequently so did the authority of its rulers.

V. 18. **But God**-Who was not ignorant, permitted this which he had foretold, to bring good out of it.

V. 19. **Be converted**-Be turned from sin and Satan unto God. See **#Ac 26:20**. But this term, so common in modern writings, very rarely occurs in Scripture: perhaps not once in the sense we now use it, for an entire change from vice to holiness.

That the times of refreshing-Wherein God largely bestows his refreshing grace, **may come**-To you also. To others they will assuredly come, whether ye repent or no.

V. 20. **And he may send**-The apostles generally speak of our Lord's second coming, as being just at hand.

Who was before appointed-Before the foundation of the world.

V. 21. **Till the times of the restitution of all things**-The apostle here comprises at once the whole course of the times of the New Testament, between our Lord's ascension and his coming in glory. The most eminent of these are the apostolic age, and that of the spotless Church, which will consist of all the Jews and Gentiles united, after all persecutions and apostacies are at an end.

V. 22. **The Lord shall raise you up a prophet like unto me**-And that in many particulars. Moses instituted the Jewish Church: Christ instituted the Christian. With the prophesying of Moses was soon joined the effect, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt: with the prophesying of Christ that grand effect, the deliverance of his people from sin and death. Those who could not bear the voice of God, yet desired to hear that of Moses. Much more do those who are wearied with the law, desire to hear the voice of Christ. Moses spake to the people all, and only those things, which God had commanded him: so did Christ. But though he was like Moses, yet he was infinitely superior to him, in person, as well as in office. **#De 18:15**.

V. 23. **Every soul who will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people**-One cannot imagine a more masterly address than this, to warn the Jews of the dreadful consequence of their infidelity, in the very words of their favourite prophet, out of a pretended zeal for whom they rejected Christ.

V. 24. **These days**-The days of the Messiah.

V. 25. **Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant**-That in, heirs of the prophecies. To you properly, as the first heirs, belong the prophecies and the covenant. **#Ge 12:3**.

V. 26. **To bless you, by turning you from your iniquities**-Which is the great Gospel blessing.

THE ACTS

CHAP. IV.

V. 1. **And as they were speaking to the people, the priests-came upon them**-So wisely did God order, that they should first bear a full testimony to the truth in the temple, and then in the great council; to which they could have had no access, had they not been brought before it as criminals.

V. 2. **The priests being grieved**-That the name of Jesus was preached to the people; especially they were offended at the doctrine of his resurrection; for as they had put him to death, his rising again proved him to be the Just One, and so brought *his blood upon their heads*. The priests were grieved, lest their office and temple services should decline, and Christianity take root, through the preaching of the apostles, and their power of working miracles:

the captain of the temple-Being concerned to prevent all sedition and disorder,

the Sadducees-Being displeased at the overturning of all their doctrines, particularly with regard to the resurrection.

V. 4. **The number of the men**-Beside women and children, **were about five thousand**-So many did our Lord now feed at once with the bread from heaven!

V. 5. **Rulers, and elders, and scribes**-Who were eminent for power, for wisdom, and for learning.

V. 6. **Annas**, who had been **the high priest, and Caiaphas**, who was so then.

V. 7. **By what name**-By what authority,

have ye done this?-They seem to speak ambiguously on purpose.

V. 8. **Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost**-That moment. God moves his instruments, not when they please, but just when he sees it needful.

Ye rulers-He gives them the honour due to their office.

V. 10. **Be it known to you all**-Probably the herald of God proclaimed this with a loud voice.

Whom God hath raised from the dead-They knew in their own consciences that it was so. And though they had hired the soldiers to tell a most senseless and incredible tale to the contrary, **#Mt 28:12, 15**, yet it is observable, they did not, so far as we can learn, dare to plead it before Peter and John.

V. 11. **#Ps 118:22**.

V. 12. **There is no other name whereby we must be saved**-The apostle uses a beautiful gradation, from the temporal deliverance which had been wrought for the poor cripple, by the power of Christ, to that of a much nobler and more important kind, which is wrought by Christ for impotent and sinful souls. He therein follows the admirable custom of his great Lord and Master, who continually took occasion from earthly to speak of spiritual things.

V. 13. **Illiterate and uneducated men**-Even by such men (though not by such only) hath God in all ages caused his word to be preached before the world.

V. 17. **Yet that it spread no farther**-For they look upon it as a mere gangrene. So do all the world upon genuine Christianity.

Let us severely threaten them-Great men, ye do nothing. They have a greater than you to flee to.

V. 18. **They charged them not to speak**-Privately; **nor teach**-Publicly.

V. 19. **Whether it be just to obey you rather than God, judge ye**-Was it not by the same spirit, that Socrates, when they were condemning him to death, for teaching the people, said, "O ye Athenians, I embrace and love you; but I will *obey God rather than you*. And if you would spare my life on condition I should cease to teach my fellow citizens, I would die a thousand times rather than accept the proposal."

V. 21. **They all glorified God**-So much wiser were the people than those who were over them.

V. 24. The sense is, Lord, thou hast all power. And thy word is fulfilled. Men do rage against thee: but it is in vain.

V. 25. **#Ps 2:1**.

V. 27. **Whom thou hast anointed**-To be king of Israel.

V. 28. The sense is, but they could do no more than thou wast pleased to permit, according to thy *determinate counsel*, to save mankind by the sufferings of thy Son. And what was needful for this end, thou didst **before determine** to permit **to be done**.

V. 30. **Thou stretchest forth thy hand**-Exertest thy power.

V. 31. **They were all filled**-Afresh;

and spake the word with boldness-So their petition was granted.

V. 32. **And the multitude of them that believed**-Every individual person

were of one heart and one soul-Their love, their hopes, their passions joined:

and not so much as one-In so great a multitude: this was a necessary consequence of that union of heart;

said that aught of the things which he had was his own-It is impossible any one should, while all *were of one soul*. So long as that truly Christian love continued, they could not but *have all things common*.

V. 33. **And great grace**-A large measure of the inward power of the Holy Ghost,

was upon them all-Directing all their thoughts, words, and actions.

V. 34. **For neither was there any one among them that wanted**-We may observe, this is added as the proof that **great grace was upon them all**. And it was the immediate, necessary consequence of it: yea, and must be to the end of the world. In all ages and nations, the same cause, the same degree of grace, could not but in like circumstances produce the same effect.

For whosoever were possessors of houses and lands sold them-Not that there was any particular command for this; but there was great grace and great love: of which this was the natural fruit.

V. 35. **And distribution was made**-At first by the apostles themselves, afterward by them whom they appointed.

V. 36. **A son of consolation**-Not only on account of his so largely assisting the poor with his fortune; but also of those peculiar gifts of the Spirit, whereby he was so well qualified both to comfort and to exhort.

V. 37. **Having an estate**-Probably of considerable value. It is not unlikely that it was in Cyprus. Being a Levite, he had no portion, no distinct inheritance in Israel.

THE ACTS

CHAP. V.

V. 1. **But a certain man named Ananias**-It is certain, not a believer, for all that believed *were of one heart and of one soul*: probably not baptized; but intending now to offer himself for baptism.

V. 2. **And bringing a certain part**-As if it had been the whole: perhaps saying it was so.

V. 3. **To lie to the Holy Ghost**-Who is in us.

And to keep back-Here was the first instance of it. This was the first attempt to bring propriety of goods into the Christian Church.

V. 4. **While it remained, did it not remain thine?**-It is true, whosoever among the Christians (not one excepted) had houses or lands, sold them, and laid the price at the feet of the apostles. But it was in his own choice to be a Christian or not: and consequently either to sell his land, or keep it.

And when it was sold, was it not in thy power?-For it does not appear that he professed himself a Christian when he sold it.

Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart?-So profanely to dissemble on so solemn an occasion?

Thou hast not lied to men only, but to God also. Hence the Godhead of the Holy Ghost evidently appears: since lying to him, #Ac 5:3, is lying to God.

V. 5. **And Ananias fell down and expired**-And this severity was not only just, considering that complication of vain glory, covetousness, fraud, and impiety, which this action contained: but it was also wise and gracious, as it would effectually deter any others from following his example. It was likewise a convincing proof of the upright conduct of the apostles, in managing the sums with which they were intrusted; and in general of their Divine mission. For none can imagine that Peter would have had the assurance to pronounce, and much less the power to execute such a sentence, if he had been guilty himself of a fraud of the same kind; or had been belying the Holy Ghost in the whole of his pretensions to be under his immediate direction.

V. 7. **About the space of three hours**-How precious a space! The woman had a longer time for repentance.

V. 8. **If ye sold the land for so much**-Naming the sum.

V. 10. **The Church**-This is the first time it is mentioned: and here is a native specimen of a New Testament Church; which is a company of men, called by the Gospel, grafted into Christ by baptism, animated by love, united by all kind of fellowship, and disciplined by the death of Ananias and Sapphira.

V. 12. **And they were all**-All the believers.

V. 13. **None of the rest**-No formalists or hypocrites,

durst join themselves-In an outward show only, like Ananias and Sapphira.

V. 14. But so much **the more were** true believers **added**, because unbelievers kept at a distance.

V. 17. **The high priest-and the sect of the Sadducees**-A goodly company for the priest! He, and these deniers of any angel or resurrection, **were filled with zeal**-Angry, bitter, persecuting zeal.

V. 20. **The words of this**-That is, these words of life: words which show the way to life everlasting.

V. 23. **We found the prison shut**-The angel probably had shut the doors again.

V. 24. **They doubted what this should be**-They were even at their wits' end. The world, in persecuting the children of God, entangle themselves in numberless difficulties.

V. 28. **Did not we strictly command you, not to teach?**-See the poor cunning of the enemies of the Gospel. They make laws and interdicts at their pleasure, which those who obey God cannot but break; and then take occasion thereby to censure and punish the innocent, as guilty.

Ye would bring the blood of this man upon us-An artful and invidious word. The apostles did not desire to accuse any man. They simply declared the naked truth.

V. 29. **Then Peter**-In the name of all the apostles, **said**-He does not now give them the titles of honour, which he did before, **#Ac 4:8**; but enters directly upon the subject, and justifies what he had done. This is, as it were, a continuation of that discourse, but with an increase of severity.

V. 30. **Hath raised up Jesus**-Of the seed of David, according to the promises made to our fathers.

V. 31. **Him hath God exalted**-From the grave to heaven;

to give repentance-Whereby Jesus is received as a Prince;

and forgiveness of sins-Whereby he is received as a Saviour. Hence some infer, that repentance and faith are as mere gifts as remission of sins. Not so: for man co-operates in the former, but not in the latter. God alone forgives sins.

V. 32. **And also the Holy Ghost**-A much greater witness.

V. 34. **But a certain Pharisee**-And as such believing the resurrection of the dead;

a doctor, or teacher of the law-That is, a scribe, and indeed one of the highest rank;

had in honour by all the people-Except the Sadducees;

rising up in the council-So God can raise defenders of his servants, whensoever and wheresoever he pleases.

V. 36. **Before these days**-He prudently mentions the facts first, and then makes the inference.

V. 38. **Let them alone**-In a cause which is manifestly good, we should immediately join. In a cause, on the other hand, which is manifestly evil, we should immediately oppose. But in a sudden, new, doubtful occurrence, this advice is eminently useful.

If this counsel or this work-He seems to correct himself, as if it were some sudden *work*, rather than a *counsel* or design. And so it was. For the apostles had no counsel, plan, or design of their own; but were mere instruments in the hand of God, working just as he led them from day to day.

V. 41. **Rejoicing-to suffer shame**-This is a sure mark of the truth, joy in affliction, such is true, deep, pure.

THE ACTS

CHAP. VI.

V. 1. There arose a murmuring-Here was the first breach made on those who were before *of one heart and of one soul*. Partiality crept in unawares on some; and murmuring on others. Ah Lord! how short a time did pure, genuine, undefiled Christianity remain in the world! O the depth! How unsearchable are thy counsels! Marvellous are thy ways, O King of saints! The Hellenists were Jews born out of Palestine. They were so called, because they used the Greek as their in other tongue.

In this partiality of the Hebrews, and murmuring of the Hellenists, were the needs of a general persecution sown. Did God ever, in any age or country, withdraw his restraining providence, and let loose the world upon the Christians, till there was a cause among themselves? Is not an open, general persecution, always both penal and medicinal? A punishment of those that will not accept of milder reproofs, as well as a medicine to heal their sickness? And at the same time a means both of purifying and strengthening those whose heart is still right with God.

V. 2. It is not right that we should leave the word of God and serve tables-In the first Church, the primary business of apostles, evangelists, and bishops, was to preach the word of God; the secondary, to take a kind of paternal care (the Church being then like a family,) for the food, especially of the poor, the strangers, and the widows. Afterward, the deacons of both sexes were constituted for this latter business. And whatever time they had to spare from this, they employed in works of spiritual mercy. But their proper office was, to take care of the poor. And when some of them afterward preached the Gospel, they did this not by virtue of their deaconship, but of another commission, that of evangelists, which they probably received, not before, but after they were appointed deacons. And it is not unlikely that others were chosen deacons, or stewards, in their room, when any of these commenced evangelists.

V. 3. Of good report-That there may be no room to suspect them of partiality or injustice.

Full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom-For it is not a light matter to dispense even the temporal goods of the Church. To do even this well, a large measure both of the gifts and grace of God is requisite.

Whom we will set over this business-It would have been happy for the Church, had its ordinary ministers in every age taken the same care to act in concert with the people committed to their charge, which the apostles themselves, extraordinary as their office was, did on this and other occasions.

V. 4. We will constantly attend to prayer, and to the ministry of the word-This is doubtless the proper business of a Christian bishop: to speak to God in prayer; to men in preaching his word, as an ambassador for Christ.

V. 5. And they chose-It seems seven Hellenists, as their names show.

And Nicholas a proselyte-To whom the proselytes would the more readily apply.

V. 7. And the word of God grew-The hinderances being removed.

V. 9. There arose certain of the synagogue which is called-It was one and the same synagogue which consisted of these several nations. Saul of Cilicia was doubtless a member of it; whence it is not at all improbable, that Gamaliel presided over it.

Libertines-So they were styled, whose fathers were once slaves, and afterward made free. This was the ease of many Jews who had been taken captive by the Romans.

V. 14. We have heard him say-So they might. But yet the consequence they drew would not follow.

V. 15. As the face of an angel-Covered with supernatural lustre. They reckoned his preaching of Jesus to be the Christ was destroying Moses and the law; and God bears witness to him, with the same glory as he did to Moses, when he gave the law by him.

THE ACTS

CHAP. VII.

V. 2. **And he said**-St. Stephen had been accused of blasphemy against Moses, and even against God; and of speaking against the temple and the law, threatening that Jesus would destroy the one, and change the other. In answer to this accusation, rehearsing as it were the articles of his historical creed, he speaks of God with high reverence, and a grateful sense of a long series of acts of goodness to the Israelites, and of Moses with great respect, on account of his important and honourable employments under God: of the temple with regard, as being built to the honour of God; yet not with such superstition as the Jews; putting them in mind, that no temple could comprehend God. And he was going on, no doubt, when he was interrupted by their clamour, to speak to the last point, the destruction of the temple, and the change of the law by Christ.

Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken-The sum of his discourse is this: I acknowledge the glory of God revealed to the fathers, #Ac 7:2; the calling of Moses, #Ac 7:34, &c; the dignity of the law, #Ac 7:8, 38, 44; the holiness of this place, #Ac 7:7, 45, 47. And indeed the law is more ancient than the temple; the promise more ancient than the law. For God showed himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their children freely, #Ac 7:2, 9, 17, 32, 34, 35 and they showed faith and obedience to God, #Ac 7:4, 20, 23, particularly by their regard for the law, #Ac 7:8, and the promised land, #Ac 7:16. Meantime, God never confined his presence to this one place or to the observers of the law. For he hath been acceptably worshipped before the law was given, or the temple built, and out of this land, #Ac 7:2, 9, 33, 44. And that our fathers and their posterity were not tied down to this land, their various sojournings, #Ac 7:4, 14, 29, 44, and exile, #Ac 7:43, show. But you and your fathers have always been evil, #Ac 7:9; have withstood Moses, #Ac 7:25, 39; have despised the land, #Ac 7:39, forsaken God, #Ac 7:40 &c., superstitiously honoured the temple, #Ac 7:48, resisted God and his Spirit, #Ac 7:50, killed the prophets and the Messiah himself, #Ac 7:51, and kept not the law for which ye contend, #Ac 7:53. Therefore God is not bound to you; much less to you alone. And truly this solemn testimony of Stephen is most worthy of his character, *as a man full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith and power*: in which, though he does not advance so many regular propositions, contradictory to those of his adversaries, yet he closely and nervously answers them all. Nor can we doubt but he would, from these premises, have drawn inferences touching the destruction of the temple, the abrogation of the Mosaic law, the punishment of that rebellious people; and above all, touching Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, had not his discourse been interrupted by the clamours of the multitude, stopping their ears, and rushing upon him.

Men, brethren, and fathers-All who are here present, whether ye are my equals in years, or of more advanced age. The word which in this and in many other places is rendered *men* is a mere expletive.

The God of glory-The glorious God, **appeared to Abraham—before he dwelt in Haran**-Therefore Abraham knew God, long before he was in this land. #Ge 12:1.

V. 3. **Which I will show thee**-Abraham knew not where he went.

V. 4. **After his father was dead**-While Terah lived, Abraham lived partly with him, partly in Canaan: but after he died, altogether in Canaan.

V. 5. **No, not to set his foot on**-For the field mentioned, **#Ac 7:16**, he did not receive by a Divine donation, but bought it; even thereby showing that he was a stranger in the land.

V. 6. **#Ge 15:13**.

V. 7. **They shall serve me**-Not the Egyptians.

V. 8. **And so he begat Isaac**-After the covenant was given, of which circumcision was the seal. **#Ge 17:10**.

V. 9. **But God was with him**-Though he was not in this land. **#Ge 37:28**.

V. 12. **Sent our fathers first**-Without Benjamin.

V. 14. **Seventy-five souls**-So the seventy interpreters, (whom St. Stephen follows,) one son and a grandson of Manasseh, and three children of Ephraim, being added to the seventy persons mentioned **#Ge 46:27**.

V. 16. **And were carried over to Shechem**-It seems that St. Stephen, rapidly running over so many circumstances of history, has not leisure (nor was it needful where they were so well known) to recite them all distinctly. Therefore he here contracts into one, two different sepulchres, places, and purchases, so as in the former history, to name the buyer, omitting the seller, in the latter, to name the seller, omitting the buyer. Abraham bought a burying place of the children of Heth, Gen. xxiii. **#Ge 23:1-20** There Jacob was buried. Jacob bought a field of the children of Hamor. There Joseph was buried. You see here, how St. Stephen contracts these two purchases into one. This concise manner of speaking, strange as it seems to us, was common among the Hebrews; particularly, when in a case notoriously known, the speaker mentioned but part of the story, and left the rest, which would have interrupted the current of his discourse, to be supplied in the mind of the hearer.

And laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought-The first land which these strangers bought was for a sepulchre. They sought for a country in heaven. Perhaps the whole sentence might be rendered thus:

So Jacob went down into Egypt and died, he and our fathers, and were carried over to Shechem, and laid by the sons (that is, decendants) of Hamor, the father of Shechem, in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money.

V. 17. **#Ex 1:7**.

V. 18. **Another king**-Probably of another family.

V. 19. **Exposed**-Cast out to perish by hunger or wild beasts.

V. 20. **In which time**-A sad but a seasonable time. #Ex 2:2.

V. 21. **Pharaoh's daughter took him up**-By which means, being designed for a kingdom, he had all those advantages of education, which he could not have had, if he had not been exposed.

V. 22. **In all the wisdom of the Egyptians**-Which was then celebrated in all the world, and for many ages after.

And mighty in words-Deep, solid, weighty, though not of a ready utterance.

V. 23. **It came into his heart**-Probably by an impulse from God.

V. 24. **Seeing one wronged**-Probably by one of the task masters.

V. 25. **They understood it not**-Such was their stupidity and sloth; which made him afterward unwilling to go to them.

V. 26. **He showed himself**-Of his own accord, unexpectedly.

V. 27. **Who appointed thee**-"Under the presence of the want of a call by man, the instruments of God are often rejected."

V. 30. **The angel**-The Son of God; as appears from his styling himself Jehovah.

In a flame of fire-Signifying the majesty of God then present. #Ex 3:2.

V. 33. **Then said the Lord, Loose thy shoes**-An ancient token of reverence;

for the place is holy ground-The holiness of places depends on the peculiar presence of God there.

V. 35. **This Moses whom they refused**-Namely, forty years before. Probably, not they, but their fathers did it, and God imputes it to them. So God frequently imputes the sins of the fathers to those of their children who are of the same spirit.

Him did God send to be a deliverer-Which is much more than a judge;

by the hand of-That is, by means of **the angel**-This angel who spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai expressly called himself Jehovah, a name which cannot, without the highest presumption, be assumed by any created angel, since *he whose name alone is Jehovah, is the Most High over all the earth*, #Ps 83:18. It was therefore the Son of God who delivered the law to Moses, under the character of Jehovah, and who is here spoken of as the angel of the covenant, in respect of his mediatorial office.

V. 37. **The Lord will raise you up a prophet**-St. Stephen here shows that there is no opposition between Moses and Christ. **#De 18:15**

V. 38. **This is he**-Moses.

With the angel, and with our fathers-As a mediator between them.

Who received the living oracles-Every period beginning with, *And the Lord said unto Moses*, is properly an oracle. But the oracles here intended are chiefly the ten commandments. These are termed living, because all the word of God, applied by his Spirit, is living and powerful, **#Heb 4:12**, enlightening the eyes, rejoicing the heart, converting the soul, raising the dead. **#Ex 19:3**.

V. 40. **Make us gods to go before us**-Back into Egypt. **#Ex 32:1**.

V. 41. **And they made a calf**-In imitation of Apis, the Egyptian god:

and rejoiced in the works of their hands-In the god they had made.

V. 42. **God turned**-From them in anger;

and gave them up-Frequently from the time of the golden calf, to the time of Amos, and afterward.

The host of heaven-The stars are called an army or host, because of their number, order, and powerful influence.

In the book of the prophets-Of the twelve prophets, which the Jews always wrote together in one book.

Have ye offered-The passage of Amos referred to, **#Am 5:25** &c., consists of two parts; of which the former confirms **#Ac 7:41** of the sin of the people; the latter the beginning of **#Ac 7:42**, concerning their punishment.

Have ye offered to me-They had offered many sacrifices; but God did not accept them as offered to him, because they sacrificed to idols also; and did not sacrifice to him with an upright heart. **#Am 5:25**.

V. 43. **Ye took up**-Probably not long after the golden calf: but secretly; else Moses would have mentioned it.

The shrine-A small, portable chapel, in which was the image of their god. Moloch was the planet Mars, which they worshipped under a human shape. Remphan, that is, Saturn, they represented by a star.

And I will carry you beyond Babylon-That is, beyond Damascus (which is the word in Amos) and Babylon. This was fulfilled by the king of Assyria, **#2Ki 17:6**.

V. 44. **Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony-**The testimony was properly the two tables of stone, on which the ten commandments were written. Hence the ark which contained them is frequently called the ark of the testimony; and the whole tabernacle in this place.

The tabernacle of the testimony-according to the model which he had seen-When he was caught up in the visions of God on the mount.

V. 45. **Which our fathers having received-**From their ancestors;
brought into the possession of the Gentiles-Into the land which the Gentiles possessed before. So that God's favour is not a necessary consequence of inhabiting this land. All along St. Stephen intimates two things: 1. That God always loved good men in every land: 2. That he never loved bad men even in this. **#Jos 3:14**.

V. 46. **Who petitioned to find a habitation for the God of Jacob-**But he did not obtain his petition: for God remained without any temple till Solomon built him a house. Observe how wisely the word is chosen with respect to what follows.

V. 48. **Yet the Most High inhabiteth not temples made with hands-**As Solomon declared at the very dedication of the temple, **#1Ki 8:27**.

The Most High-Whom as such no building can contain. **#Isa 66:1**.

V. 49. **What is the place of my rest?-**Have I need to rest?

V. 51. **Ye stiff necked-**Not bowing the neck to God's yoke;

and uncircumcised in heart-So they showed themselves, **#Ac 7:54**;

and ears-As they showed, **#Ac 7:57** So far were they from receiving the word of God into their hearts, that they would not hear it even with their ears.

Ye-And your fathers, **always-**As often as ever ye are called,

resist the Holy Ghost-Testifying by the prophets of Jesus, and the whole truth. This is the sum of what he had shown at large.

V. 53. **Who have received the law by the administration of angels-**God, when he gave the law on Mount Sinai, was attended with thousands of his angels, **#Ga 3:19**; **#Ps 68:17**.

V. 55. **But he looking steadfastly up to heaven, saw the glory of God-**Doubtless he saw such a glorious representation, God miraculously operating on his imagination, as on Ezekiel's, when he

sat in his house at Babylon, and saw Jerusalem, and seemed to himself transported thither, **#Eze 8:1-4**. And probably other martyrs, when called to suffer the last extremity, have had extraordinary assistance of some similar kind.

V. 56. **I see the Son of man standing**-As if it were just ready to receive him. Otherwise he is said to sit at the right hand of God.

V. 57. **They rushed upon him**-Before any sentence passed.

V. 58. **The witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul**-*O Saul*, couldst thou have believed, if one had told thee, that thou thyself shouldst be stoned in the same cause? and shouldst triumph in committing thy soul likewise to that Jesus whom thou art now blaspheming? His dying prayer reached thee, as well as many others. And the martyr Stephen, and Saul the persecutor, (afterward his brother both in faith and martyrdom,) are now joined in everlasting friendship, and dwell together in the happy company of those who *have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb*.

V. 59. **And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit**-This is the literal translation of the words, the name of God not being in the original. Nevertheless such a solemn prayer to Christ, in which a departing soul is thus committed into his hands, is such an act of worship, as no good man could have paid to a mere creature; Stephen here worshipping Christ in the very same manner in which Christ worshipped the Father on the cross.

THE ACTS

CHAP. VIII.

V. 1. **At that time there was great persecution against the Church**-Their adversaries having tasted blood, were the more eager.

And they were all dispersed-Not all the Church: if so, who would have remained for the apostles to teach, or Saul to persecute? But *all* the teachers *except the apostles*, who, though in the most danger, stayed with the flock.

V. 2. **Devout men**-Who feared God more than persecution. And yet were they not of little faith? Else they would not have **made so great lamentation**.

V. 3. **Saul made havoc of the Church**-Like some furious beast of prey. So the Greek word properly signifies.

Men and women-Regarding neither age nor sex.

V. 4. **Therefore they that were dispersed went every where**-These very words are reassumed, after as it were a long parenthesis, **#Ac 11:19** and the thread of the story continued.

V. 5. **Stephen**-Being taken away, Philip, his next colleague, (not the apostle,) rises in his place.

V. 9. **A certain man-using magic**-So there was such a thing as witchcraft once! In Asia at least, if not in Europe or America.

V. 12. **But when they believed**-What Philip preached, then they saw and felt the real power of God, and submitted thereto.

V. 13. **And Simon believed**-That is, was convinced of the truth.

V. 14. **And the apostles hearing that Samaria**-The inhabitants of that country,

had received the word of God-By faith,

sent Peter and John-He that sends must be either superior, or at least equal, to him that is sent. It follows that the college of the apostles was equal if not superior to Peter.

V. 15. **The Holy Ghost**-In his miraculous gifts? Or his sanctifying graces? Probably in both.

V. 18. **Simon offered them money**-And hence the procuring any ministerial function, or ecclesiastical benefice by money, is termed Simony.

V. 21. **Thou hast neither part-By purchase, nor lot-Given gratis, in this matter-**This gift of God.

For thy heart is not right before God-Probably St. Peter discerned this long before he had declared it; although it does not appear that God gave to any of the apostles a universal power of discerning the hearts of all they conversed with; any more than a universal power of healing all the sick they came near. This we are sure St. Paul had not; though he was not inferior to the chief of the apostles. Otherwise he would not have suffered the illness of Epaphroditus to have brought him so near to death, **#Php 2:25-27**; nor have left so useful a fellow labourer as *Trophimus sick at Miletus*, **#2Ti 4:20**.

V. 22. **Repent-if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee-**Without all doubt if he had repented, he would have been forgiven. The doubt was, whether he would repent.

Thou art in the gall of bitterness-In the highest degree of wickedness, which is bitterness, that is, misery to the soul;

and in the bond of iniquity-Fast bound therewith.

V. 26. **The way which is desert-**There were two ways from Jerusalem to Gaza, one desert, the other through a more populous country.

V. 27. **An eunuch-**Chief officers were anciently called eunuchs, though not always literally such; because such used to be chief ministers in the eastern courts.

Candace, queen of the Ethiopians-So all the queens of Ethiopia were called.

V. 28. **Sitting in his chariot, he read the Prophet Isaiah-**God meeteth those that remember him in his ways. It is good to read, hear, seek information even in a journey. Why should we not redeem all our time?

V. 30. **And Philip running to him, said, Understandest thou what thou readest?-**He did not begin about the weather, news, or the like. In speaking for God, we may frequently come to the point at once, without circumlocution.

V. 31. **He desired Philip to come up and sit with him-**Such was his modesty, and thirst after instruction.

V. 32. **The portion of Scripture-**By reading that very chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, many Jews, yea, and atheists, have been converted. Some of them history records. God knoweth them all. **#Isa 53:7**

V. 33. **In his humiliation his judgment was taken away-**That is, when he was a man, he had no justice shown him. *To take away a person's judgment*, is a proverbial phrase for oppressing him.

And who shall declare, or count his generation-That is, who can number *his seed*, #Isa 53:10; which he hath purchased by laying down his life?

V. 36. **And as they went on the way they came to a certain water**-Thus, even the circumstances of the journey were under the direction of God. The kingdom of God suits itself to external circumstances, without any violence, as air yields to all bodies, and yet pervades all.

What hindereth me to be baptized?-Probably he had been circumcised: otherwise Cornelius would not have been the first fruits of the Gentiles.

V. 38. **And they both went down**-Out of the chariot. It does not follow that he was baptized by immersion. The text neither affirms nor intimates any thing concerning it.

V. 39. **The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip**-Carried him away with a miraculous swiftness, without any action or labour of his own. This had befallen several of the prophets.

V. 40. **But Philip was found at Azotus**-Probably none saw him, from his leaving the eunuch, till he was there.

THE ACTS

CHAP. IX.

V. 1. **#Ac 22:3, &c; #Ac 26:9, &c.**

V. 2. **Bound**-By the connivance, if not authority, of the governor, under Aretas the king. See **#Ac 9:14, 24.**

V. 3. **And suddenly**-When God suddenly and vehemently attacks a sinner, it is the highest act of mercy. So Saul, when his rage was come to the height, is taught not to *breathe slaughter*. And what was wanting in time to confirm him in his discipleship, is compensated by the inexpressible terror he sustained. By his also the suddenly constituted apostle was guarded against the grand snare into which novices are apt to fall.

V. 4. **He heard a voice**-Severe, yet full of grace.

V. 5. **To kick against the goads**-is a Syriac proverb, expressing an attempt that brings nothing but pain.

V. 6. **It shall be told thee**-So God himself sends Saul to be taught by a man, as the angel does Cornelius, **#Ac 10:5.** Admirable condescension! that the Lord deals with us by men, like ourselves.

V. 7. **The men-stood**-Having risen before Saul; for they also fell to the ground, **#Ac 26:14.** It is probable they all journeyed on foot.

Hearing the noise-But not an articulate voice. And seeing the light, but not Jesus himself, **#Ac 26:13, &c.**

V. 9. **And he was three days**-An important season! So long he seems to have been in the pangs of the new birth.

Without sight-By scales growing over his eyes, to intimate to him the blindness of the state he had been in, to impress him with a deeper sense of the almighty power of Christ, and to turn his thoughts inward, while he was less capable of conversing with outward objects. This was likewise a manifest token to others, of what had happened to him in his journey, and ought to have humbled and convinced those bigoted Jews, to whom he had been sent from the sanhedrim.

V. 11. **Behold he is praying**-He was shown thus to Ananias.

V. 12. **A man called Ananias**-His name also was revealed to Saul.

V. 13. **But he answered**-How natural it is to *reason* against God.

V. 14. **All that call on thy name**-That is, all Christians.

V. 15. **He is a chosen vessel to bear my name**-That is, to testify of me. It is undeniable, that some men are unconditionally chosen or elected, to do some works for God

V. 16. **For I**-Do thou as thou art commanded. I will take care of the rest;

will show him-In fact, through the whole course of his ministry.

How great things he must suffer-So far will he be now from persecuting others.

V. 17. **The Lord hath sent me**-Ananias does not tell Saul all which Christ had said concerning him. It was not expedient that he should know yet to how great a dignity he was called.

V. 24. **They guarded the gates day and night**-That is, the governor did, at their request, **#2Co 11:32**.

V. 26. **And coming to Jerusalem**-Three years after, **#Ga 1:18**. These three years St. Paul passes over, **#Ac 22:17**, likewise.

V. 27. **To the apostles**-Peter and James, **#Ga 1:18,19**

And declared-He who has been an enemy to the truth ought not to be trusted till he gives proof that he is changed.

V. 31. **Then the Church**-The whole body of Christian believers,

had peace-Their bitterest persecutor being converted.

And being built up-In holy, loving faith, continually increasing,

and walking in-That is, speaking and acting only from this principle,

the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Ghost-An excellent mixture of inward and outward peace, tempered with filial fear.

V. 35. **Lydda** was a large town, one day's journey from Jerusalem. It stood in the plain or valley of Sharon, which extended from Cesarea to Joppa, and was noted for its fruitfulness.

V. 36. **Tabitha, which is by interpretation Dorcas**-She was probably a Hellenist Jew, known among the Hebrews by the Syriac name Tabitha, while the Greeks called her in their own language, Dorcas. They are both words of the same import, and signify a roe or fawn.

V. 38. **The disciples sent to him**-Probably none of those at Joppa had the gift of miracles. Nor is it certain that they expected a miracle from him.

V. 39. **While she was with them**-That is, before she died.

V. 40. **Peter having put them all out**-That he might have the better opportunity of wrestling with God in prayer, **said, Tabitha, arise.**

And she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, sat up-Who can imagine the surprise of Dorcas, when called back to life? Or of her friends, when they saw her alive? For the sake of themselves, and of the poor, there was cause of rejoicing, and much more, for such a confirmation of the Gospel. Yet to herself it was matter of resignation, not joy, to be called back to these scenes of vanity: but doubtless, her remaining days were still more zealously spent in the service of her Saviour and her God. Thus was a richer treasure laid up for her in heaven, and she afterward returned to a more exceeding weight of glory, than that from which so astonishing a providence had recalled her for a season.

THE ACTS

CHAP. X.

V. 1. **And there was a certain man**-The first fruits of the *Gentiles, in Cesarea*-Where Philip had been before, #Ac 8:40; so that the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus was not unknown there. Cesarea was the seat of the civil government, as Jerusalem was of the ecclesiastical. It is observable, that the Gospel made its way first through the metropolitan cities. So it first seized Jerusalem and Cesarea: afterward *Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome* itself.

A centurion, or captain, **of that called the Italian band**-That is, troop or company.

V. 2. **Who gave much alms to the people**-That is, to the Jews, many of whom were at that time extremely poor.

V. 3. **He saw in a vision**-Not in a trance, like Peter:

plainly, so as to leave one not accustomed to things of this kind no room to suspect any imposition.

V. 4. **Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God**-Dare any man say, These were only *splendid sins*? Or that they were an abomination before God? And yet it is certain, in the Christian sense Cornelius was then an unbeliever. He had not then faith in Christ. So certain it is, that every one who seeks faith in Christ, should seek it in prayer, and doing good to all men: though in strictness what is not exactly according to the Divine rule must stand in need of Divine favour and indulgence.

V. 8. **A devout soldier**-How many such attendants have our modern officers? *A devout soldier* would now be looked upon as little better than a deserter from his colours.

V. 10. **And he became very hungry**-At the usual meal time. The symbols in visions and trances, it is easy to observe, are generally suited to the state of the natural faculties.

V. 11. **Tied at the corners**-Not all in one knot, but each fastened as it were up to heaven.

V. 14. **But Peter said, In nowise, Lord**-When God commands a strange or seemingly improper thing, the first objection frequently finds pardon. But it ought not to be repeated. This doubt and delay of St. Peter had several good effects. Hereby the will of God in this important point was made more evident and incontestable. And Peter also, having been so slow of belief himself, could the more easily bear the doubting of his brethren, #Ac 11:2, &c.

V. 15. **What God hath purified**-Hath made and declared clean. Nothing but what is clean can come down from heaven. St. Peter well remembered this saying in the council at Jerusalem, #Ac 15:9.

V. 16. **This was done thrice**-To make the deeper impression.

V. 17. **While Peter doubted in himself, behold the men**-Frequently the things which befall us *within* and from *without* at the same time, are a key to each other. The things which thus concur and agree together, ought to be diligently attended to.

V. 19. **Behold three men seek thee, arise therefore and go down, and go with them, doubting nothing**-How gradually was St. Peter prepared to receive this new admonition of the Spirit! Thus God is went to lead on his children by degrees, always giving them light for the present hour.

V. 24. **Cornelius was waiting for them**-Not engaging himself in any secular business during that solemn time, but being altogether intent on this one thing.

V. 26. **I myself also am a man**-And not God, who alone ought to be worshipped, #Mt 4:10. Have all his pretended successors attended to this?

V. 28. **But God hath showed me**-He speaks sparingly to them of his former doubt, and his late vision.

V. 29. **I ask for what intent ye have sent for me?**-St. Peter knew this already. But he puts Cornelius on telling the story, both that the rest might be informed, and Cornelius himself more impressed by the narration: the repetition of which, even as we read it, gives a new dignity and spirit to Peter's succeeding discourse.

V. 30. **Four days ago I was fasting**-The first of these days he had the vision; the second his messengers came to Joppa; on the third, St. Peter set out; and on the fourth, came to Cesarea.

V. 31. **Thy prayer is heard**-Doubtless he had been praying for instruction, how to worship God in the most acceptable manner.

V. 33. **Now therefore we are all present before God**-The language of every truly Christian congregation.

V. 34. **I perceive of a truth**-More clearly than ever, from such a concurrence of circumstances.

That God is not a respecter of persons-Is not partial in his love. The words mean, in a particular sense, that he does not confine his love to one nation; in a general, that he is loving to every man, and willeth all men should be saved.

V. 35. **But in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness**-He that, first, reverences God, as great, wise, good, the cause, end, and governor of all things; and secondly, from this awful regard to him, not only avoids all known evil, but endeavours, according to the best light he has, to do all things well;

is accepted of him-Through Christ, though he knows him not. The assertion is express, and admits of no exception. He is in the favour of God, whether enjoying his written word and ordinances or not. Nevertheless the addition of these is an unspeakable blessing to those who were before in some measure accepted. Otherwise God would never have sent an angel from heaven to direct Cornelius to St. Peter.

V. 36. **This is the word which God sent**-When he sent his Son into the world,

preaching-Proclaiming by him—

peace between God and man, whether Jew or Gentile, by the God-man.

He is Lord of both; yea, Lord of and over all.

V. 37. **Ye know the word which was published**-You know the facts in general, the meaning of which I shall now more particularly explain and confirm to you.

The baptism which John preached-To which he invited them by his preaching, in token of their repentance. This began in Galilee, which is near Cesarea.

V. 38. **How God anointed Jesus**-Particularly at his baptism, thereby inaugurating him to his office:

with the Holy Ghost and with power-It is worthy our remark, that frequently when the Holy Ghost is mentioned there is added a word particularly adapted to the present circumstance. So the deacons were to be full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, **#Ac 6:3**. Barnabas was full of the Holy Ghost and faith, **#Ac 11:24**. The disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost, **#Ac 13:52**. And here, where his mighty works are mentioned, Christ himself is said to be anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. For God was with him-He speaks sparingly here of the majesty of Christ, as considering the state of his hearers.

V. 41. **Not now to all the people**-As before his death;

to us who did eat and drink with him-That is, conversed familiarly and continually with him, in the time of his ministry.

V. 42. **It is he who is ordained by God the Judge of the living and the dead**-Of all men, whether they are alive at his coming, or had died before it. This was declaring to them, in the strongest terms, how entirely their happiness depended on a timely and humble subjection to him who was to be their final Judge.

V. 43. **To him give all the prophets witness**-Speaking to heathens he does not quote any in particular;

that every one who believeth in him-Whether he be Jew or Gentile;

receiveth remission of sins-Though he had not before either feared God, or worked righteousness.

V. 44. **The Holy Ghost fell on all that were hearing the word**-Thus were they consecrated to God, as the first fruits of the Gentiles. And thus did God give a clear and satisfactory evidence, that he had accepted them as well as the Jews.

V. 45. **The believers of the circumcision**-The believing Jews.

V. 47. **Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost?**-He does not say they have the baptism of the Spirit; therefore they do not need baptism with water. But just the contrary: if they have received the Spirit, then baptize them with water.

How easily is this question decided, if we will take the word of God for our rule! Either men have received the Holy Ghost or not. If they have not, *Repent, saith God, and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* If they have, if they are already baptized with the *Holy Ghost, then who can forbid water?*

V. 48. **In the name of the Lord**-Which implies the Father who anointed him, and the Spirit with which he was anointed to his office. But as the Gentiles had before believed in God the Father, and could not but now believe in the Holy Ghost, under whose powerful influence they were at this very time, there was the less need of taking notice, that they were baptized into the belief and profession of the sacred Three: though doubtless the apostle administered the ordinances in that very form which Christ himself had prescribed.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XI.

V. 4. **Peter laid all things before them**-So he did not take it ill to be questioned, nor desire to be treated as infallible. And he answers the more mildly because it related to a point which he had not readily believed himself.

V. 5. **Being in a trance**-Which suspends the use of the outward senses.

V. 14. **Saved**-With the full Christian salvation, in this world and the world to come.

V. 17. **To us, when we believed**-The sense is, because we believed, not because we were circumcised, was the Holy Ghost given to us.

What was I-A mere instrument in God's hand. They had inquired only concerning his *eating with the Gentiles*. He satisfies them likewise concerning his baptizing them, and shows that he had done right in going to Cornelius, not only by the command of God, but also by the event, the descent of the Holy Ghost.

And *who are we that we should withstand God?* Particularly by laying down rules of Christian communion which exclude any whom he has admitted into the Church of the first born, from worshipping God together. O that all Church governors would consider how bold an usurpation this is on the authority of the supreme Lord of the Church! O that the sin of thus withstanding God may not be laid to the charge of those, who perhaps with a good intention, but in an over fondness for their own forms, have done it, and are continually doing it.

V. 18. **They glorified God**-Being thoroughly satisfied.

Repentance unto life-True repentance is a change from spiritual death to spiritual life, and leads to life everlasting.

V. 19. **They who had been dispersed**-St. Luke here resumes the thread of his narration, in the very words wherewith he broke it off, #Ac 8:6. As far as Phenicia to the north, Cyprus to the west, and Antioch to the east.

V. 20. **Some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene**-Who were more accustomed to converse with the Gentiles.

Who coming into Antioch-Then the capital of Syria, and, next to Rome and Alexandria, the most considerable city of the empire.

Spake to the Greeks-As the Greeks were the most celebrated of the Gentile nations near Judea, the Jews called all the Gentiles by that name. Here we have the first account of the preaching the

Gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles. All those to whom it had been preached before, did at least worship one God, the God of Israel.

V. 21. **And the hand of the Lord**-That is, the power of his Spirit.

V. 26. **And the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch**-Here it was that they first received this standing appellation. They were before termed Nazarenes and Galileans.

V. 28. **Agabus rising up**-In the congregation.

All the world-The word frequently signifies all the Roman empire. And so it is doubtless to be taken here.

V. 29. **Then**-Understanding the distress they would otherwise be in on that account,

the disciples determined to send relief to the brethren in Judea-Who herein received a manifest proof of the reality of their conversion.

V. 30. **Sending it to the elders**-Who gave it to the deacons, to be distributed by them, as every one had need.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XII.

V. 1. **About that time**-So wisely did God mix rest and persecution in due time and measure succeeding each other.

Herod-Agrippa; the latter was his Roman, the former his Syrian name. He was the grandson of Herod the Great, nephew to Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist; brother to Herodias, and father to that Agrippa before whom St. Paul afterward made his defence. Caligula made him king of the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, to which he afterward added the territories of Antipas. Claudius made him also king of Judea, and added thereto the dominions of Lysanias.

V. 2. **James the brother of John**-So one of the brothers went to God the first, the other the last of the apostles.

V. 3. **Then were the days of unleavened bread**-At which the Jews came together from all parts.

V. 4. **Four quaternions**-Sixteen men, who watched by turns day and night.

V. 5. **Continual prayer was made for him**-Yet when their prayer was answered, they could scarce believe it, #Ac 12:15. But why had they not prayed for St. James also? Because he was put to death as soon as apprehended.

V. 6. **Peter was sleeping**-Easy and void of fear;

between two soldiers-Sufficiently secured to human appearance.

V. 7. **His chains**-With which his right arm was bound to one of the soldiers, and his left arm to the other.

V. 8. **Gird thyself**-Probably he had put off his girdle, sandals, and upper garment, before he lay down to sleep.

V. 10. **The first and second ward**-At each of which doubtless was a guard of soldiers.

The gate opened of its own accord-Without either Peter or the angel touching it.

And they went on through one street-That Peter might know which way to go.

And the angel departed from him-Being himself sufficient for what remained to be done.

V. 11. **Now I know of a truth**-That this is not a vision, #Ac 12:9.

V. 12. **And having considered**-What was best to be done.

Many were gathered together-At midnight.

V. 13. **The gate**-At some distance from the house;

to hearken-If any knocked.

V. 14. **And knowing Peter's voice**-Bidding her open the door.

V. 15. **They said, Thou art mad**-As we say, Sure you are not in your senses to talk so.

It is his angel-It was a common opinion among the Jews, that every man had his particular guardian angel, who frequently assumed both his shape and voice. But this is a point on which the Scriptures are silent.

V. 17. **Beckoning to them**-Many of whom being amazed, were talking together.

And he said, Show these things to James-The brother or kinsman of our Lord, and author of the epistle which bears his name. He appears to have been a person of considerable weight and importance, probably the chief overseer of that province, and of the Church in Jerusalem in particular.

He went into another place-Where he might be better concealed till the storm was over.

V. 19. **Herod commanded them to be put to death**-And thus the wicked suffered in the room of the righteous.

And going down from Judea-With shame, for not having brought forth Peter, according to his promise.

V. 20. **Having gained Blastus**-To their side, *they sued for*, and obtained **peace**-Reconciliation with Herod. And so the Christians of those parts were, by the providence of God, delivered from scarcity.

Their country was nourished-Was provided with, corn,

by the king's country-Thus Hiram also, king of Tyre, desired of Solomon food or corn for his household, #1Ki 5:9.

V. 21. **And on a set day**-Which was solemnized yearly, in honour of Claudius Cesar;

Herod, arrayed in royal apparel-In a garment so wrought with silver, that the rays of the rising sun striking upon, and being reflected from it, dazzled the eyes of the beholders.

The people shouted, It is the voice of a god-Such profane flattery they frequently paid to princes. But the commonness of a wicked custom rather increases than lessens the guilt of it.

V. 23. **And immediately**-God does not delay to vindicate his injured honour;

an angel of the Lord smote him-Of this other historians say nothing: so wide a difference there is between Divine and human history! An angel of the Lord brought out Peter; an angel smote Herod. Men did not see the instruments in either case. These were only known to the people of God.

Because he gave not glory to God-He willingly received it to himself, and by this sacrilege filled up the measure of his iniquities. So then vengeance tarried not.

And he was eaten by worms, or vermin-How changed! And on the fifth day expired in exquisite torture. Such was the event! The persecutor perished, and the Gospel *grew and multiplied*.

V. 25. **Saul returned**-To Antioch;

taking John, surnamed Mark-The son of Mary, (at whose house the disciples met, to pray for Peter,) who was sister to Barnabas.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XIII.

V. 1. **Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod**-His foster brother, now freed from the temptations of a court.

V. 2. **Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them**-This was not ordaining them. St. Paul was ordained long before, and that *not of men, neither by man*: it was only inducting him to the province for which our Lord had appointed him from the beginning, and which was now revealed to the prophets and teachers. In consequence of this they fasted, prayed, and laid their hands on them, a rite which was used not in ordination only, but in blessing, and on many other occasions.

V. 3. **Then having fasted**-Again. Thus they did also, #Ac 14:23.

V. 5. **In the synagogues**-Using all opportunities that offered.

V. 6. **Paphos** was on the western, **Salamis** on the eastern part of the island.

V. 7. **The proconsul**-The Roman governor of Cyprus,

a prudent man-And therefore not overruled by Elymas, but desirous to inquire farther.

V. 9. **Then Saul, who was also called Paul**-It is not improbable, that coming now among the Romans, they would naturally adapt his name to their own language, and so called him Paul instead of Saul. Perhaps the family of the proconsul might be the first who addressed to or spoke of him by this name. And from this time, being the apostle of the Gentiles, he himself used the name which was more familiar to them.

V. 10. **O full of all guile**-As a false prophet,

and all mischief-As a magician.

Thou son of the devil-A title well suited to a magician; and one who not only was himself unrighteous, but laboured to keep others from all goodness.

Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?-Even now thou hast heard the truth of the Gospel.

V. 11. **And immediately a mist**-Or dimness within, **and darkness** without, **fell upon him**.

V. 12. **Being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord**-Confirmed by such a miracle.

V. 13. **John withdrawing from them returned**-Tired with the fatigue, or shrinking from danger.

V. 14. **Antioch in Pisidia**-Different from the Antioch mentioned #Ac 13:1.

V. 15. **And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the chief of the synagogue sent to them**-The law was read over once every year, a portion of it every Sabbath: to which was added a lesson taken out of the prophets. After this was over, any one might speak to the people, on any subject he thought convenient. Yet it was a circumstance of decency which Paul and Barnabas would hardly omit, to acquaint the rulers with their desire of doing it: probably by some message before the service began.

V. 16. **Ye that fear God**-Whether proselytes or heathens.

V. 17. **The God**-By such a commemoration of God's favours to their fathers, at once their minds were conciliated to the speaker, they were convinced of their duty to God, and invited to believe his promise, and the accomplishment of it. The six verses, #Ac 13:17-22, contain the whole sum of the Old Testament.

Of this people-Paul here chiefly addresses himself to those whom he styles, **Ye that fear God**: he speaks of Israel first; and #Ac 13:26, speaks more directly to the Israelites themselves.

Chose-And this exalted the people; not any merit or goodness of their own, #Eze 20:5.

Our fathers-Abraham and his posterity. #Isa 1:2.

V. 18. #De 1:31.

V. 19. **Seven nations**-Enumerated #De 7:1;

about four hundred and fifty years-That is, from the choice of the fathers to the dividing of the land; it was about four hundred and fifty years.

V. 21. **He gave them Saul forty years**-Including the time wherein *Samuel* judged *Israel*.

V. 22. **Having removed him**-Hence they might understand that the dispensations of God admit of various changes.

I have found David, a man after my own heart-This expression is to be taken in a limited sense. David was such at that time, but not at all times. And he was so, in that respect, as he performed all God's will, in the particulars there mentioned: But he was not a *man after God's own heart*, in other respects, wherein he performed his own will. In the matter of Uriah, for instance, he was as far from being a *man after God's own heart* as Saul himself was. It is therefore a very gross, as well as dangerous mistake, to suppose this is the character of David in every part of his behaviour. We must beware of this, unless we would recommend adultery and murder as *things after God's own heart*. #1Sa 16:12, 13.

V. 24. **John having first preached**-He mentions this, as a thing already known to them. And so doubtless it was. For it gave so loud an alarm to the whole Jewish nation, as could not but be heard of in foreign countries, at least as remote as Pisidia.

V. 25. **His course**-His work was quickly finished, and might therefore well be termed a course or race. #Lu 3:16.

V. 27. **For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers**-He here anticipates a strong objection, "Why did not they at Jerusalem, and especially their rulers, believe?" They know not him, because they understood not those very prophets whom they read or heard continually. Their very condemning him, innocent as he was, proves that they understood not the prophecies concerning him.

V. 29. **They fulfilled all things that were written of him**-So far could they go, but no farther.

V. 31. **He was seen many days by them who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem**-This last journey both presupposes all the rest, and was the most important of all.

V. 33. **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee**-It is true, he was the Son of God from eternity. The meaning therefore is, I have this day declared thee to be my Son. As St. Paul elsewhere, *declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead*, #Ro 1:4. And it is with peculiar propriety and beauty that God is said to *have begotten him*, on the day when he raised him from the dead, as he seemed then to be born out of the earth anew. #Ps 2:7.

V. 34. **No more to return to corruption**-That is, to die no more.

I will give you the sure mercies of David-The blessings promised to David in Christ. These are sure, certain, firm, solid, to every true believer in him. And hence the resurrection of Christ necessarily follows; for without this, those blessings could not be given. #Isa 55:3.

V. 35. **He saith**-David in the name of the Messiah. #Ps 16:10.

V. 36. **David, having served the will of God in his generation, fell asleep**-So his service extended not itself beyond the bounds of the common age of man: but the service of the Messiah to all generations, as his kingdom to all ages.

Served the will of God-Why art thou here thou who art yet in the world? Is it not that thou also mayest *serve the will of God*? Art thou serving it now? Doing *all his will*?

And was added to his fathers-Not only in body. This expression refers to the soul also, and supposes the immortality of it.

V. 39. **Every one that believeth is justified from all things**-Has the actual forgiveness of all his sins, at the very time of his believing;

from which ye could not be justified-Not only ye cannot now; but ye never could. For it afforded no expiation for presumptuous sins.

By the law of Moses-The whole Mosaic institution! The division of the law into moral and ceremonial was not so common among the Jews, as it is among us. Nor does the apostle here consider it at all: but Moses and Christ are opposed to each other.

V. 40. **Beware**-A weighty and seasonable admonition. No reproof is as yet added to it.

V. 41. **I work a work which ye will in nowise believe**-This was originally spoken to those, who would not believe that God would ever deliver them from the power of the Chaldeans. But it is applicable to any who will not believe the promises, or the works of God. #**Hab 1:5**.

V. 42. **When the Jews were going out**-Probably many of them, not bearing to hear him, went out before he had done.

The Sabbath between-So the Jews call to this day the Sabbath between the first day of the month Tisri (on which the civil year begins) and the tenth of the same month, which is the solemn day of expiation.

V. 43. **Who speaking to them**-More familiarly,

persuaded them to continue-For trials were at hand,

in the grace of God-That is, to adhere to the Gospel or Christian faith.

V. 46. **Then Paul and Barnabas speaking boldly, said**-Those who hinder others must be publicly reproved.

It was necessary-Though ye are not worthy: he shows that he had not preached to them, from any confidence of their believing,

but seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life-They indeed judged none but themselves worthy of it. Yet their rejecting of the Gospel was the same as saying, "We are unworthy of eternal life."

Behold!-A thing now present! An astonishing revolution!

We turn to the Gentiles-Not that they left off preaching to the Jews in other places. But they now determined to lose no more time at Antioch on their ungrateful countrymen, but to employ themselves wholly in doing what they could for the conversion of the Gentiles there.

V. 47. **For so hath the Lord commanded us**-By sending us forth, and giving us an opportunity of fulfilling what he had foretold.

I have set thee-The Father speaks to Christ. **#Isa 49:6.**

V. 48. **As many as were ordained to eternal life**-St. Luke does not say fore-ordained. He is not speaking of what was done from eternity, but of what was then done, through the preaching of the Gospel. He is describing that ordination, and that only, which was at the very time of hearing it. During this sermon those believed, says the apostle, to whom God then gave power to believe. It is as if he had said, "They believed, whose *hearts the Lord opened*;" as he expresses it in a clearly parallel place, speaking of the same kind of ordination, **#Ac 16:14**, &c. It is observable, the original word is not once used in Scripture to express eternal predestination of any kind. The sum is, all those and those only, who were now ordained, now believed. Not that God rejected the rest: it was his will that they also should have been saved: but they thrust salvation from them. Nor were they who then believed constrained to believe. But grace was then first copiously offered them. And they did not thrust it away, so that a great multitude even of Gentiles were converted. In a word, the expression properly implies, a present operation of Divine grace working faith in the hearers.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XIV.

V. 1. **They so spake**-Persecution having increased their strength.

V. 9. **He had faith to be healed**-He felt the power of God in his soul; and thence knew it was sufficient to heal his body also.

V. 11. **The gods are come down**-Which the heathens supposed they frequently did; Jupiter especially. But how amazingly does the prince of darkness blind the minds of them that believe not! The Jews would not own Christ's Godhead, though they saw him work numberless miracles. On the other hand, the heathens seeing mere men work one miracle, were for deifying them immediately.

V. 13. **The priest of Jupiter**-Whose temple and image were just without the gate of the city,

brought garlands-To put on the victims,

and bulls-The usual offerings to Jupiter.

V. 14. **They sprang in among the people, crying out**-As in a fire, or other sudden and great danger.

V. 15. **To turn from these vanities**-From worshipping any but the true God. He does not deign to call them gods;

unto the living God-Not like these dead idols;

who made the heaven and the earth, the sea-Each of which they supposed to have its own gods.

V. 16. **Who in times past**-He prevents their objection, "But if these things are so, we should have heard them from our fathers."

Suffered-An awful judgment,

all nations-The multitude of them that err does not turn error into truth,

to walk in their own ways-The idolatries which they had chosen.

V. 17. **He left not himself without witness**-For the heathens had always from God himself a testimony both of his existence and of his providence;

in that he did good-Even by punishments he testifies of himself; but more peculiarly by benefits;

giving rain-By which air, earth, and sea, are, as it were, all joined together;

from heaven-The seat of God; to which St. Paul probably pointed while he spoke, filling the body with food, the soul with gladness.

V. 19. **Who persuaded the multitude**-Moved with equal ease either to adore or murder him.

V. 20. **But as the disciples stood round**-Probably after sunset. The enraged multitude would scarce have suffered it in the day time:

he rose and went into the city-That he should be able to do this, just after he had been left for dead, was a miracle little less than a resurrection from the dead. Especially considering the manner wherein the Jewish malefactors were stoned. The witnesses first threw as large a stone as they could lift, with all possible violence upon his head, which alone was sufficient to dash the skull in pieces. All the people then joined, as long as any motion or token of life remained.

V. 23. **When they had ordained them presbyters in every Church**-Out of those who were themselves but newly converted. So soon can God enable even a babe in Christ to build up others in the common faith:

they commended them to the Lord-An expression implying faith in Christ, as well as love to the brethren.

V. 25. Perga and Attalia were cities of Pamphylia.

V. 26. **Recommended to the grace**-Or favour, **of God, for the work which they had fulfilled**-This shows the nature and design of that laying on of hands, which was mentioned #Ac 13:3.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XV.

V. 1. **Coming down from Judea**-Perhaps to supply what they thought Paul and Barnabas had omitted.

V. 2. **They** (the brethren) **determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others should go up to Jerusalem about this question**-This is the journey to which St. Paul refers, #Ga 2:1, 2, when he says he went up by revelation: which is very consistent with this; for the Church in sending them might be directed by a revelation made either immediately to St. Paul, or to some other person, relating to so important an affair. Important indeed it was, that these Jewish impositions should be solemnly opposed in time; because multitudes of converts were still zealous for the law, and ready to contend for the observance of it. Indeed many of the Christians of Antioch would have acquiesced in the determination of Paul alone. But as many others might have prejudices against him, for his having been so much concerned for the Gentiles, it was highly expedient to take the concurrent judgment of all the apostles on this occasion.

V. 4. **They were received**-That is solemnly welcomed.

V. 5. **But certain Pharisees**-For even believers are apt to retain their former turn of mind, and prejudices derived therefrom.

The law of Moses-The whole law, both moral and ritual.

V. 7. **After much debate**-It does not appear that this was among the apostles themselves. But if it had, if they themselves had debated at first, yet might their final decision be from an unerring direction. For how really soever they were inspired, we need not suppose their inspiration was always so instantaneous and express, as to supersede any deliberation in their own minds, or any consultation with each other.

Peter rose up-This is the last time he is mentioned in the Acts.

V. 8. **God bare them witness**-That he had accepted them, by giving them the Holy Ghost.

V. 9. **Purifying**-This word is repeated from #Ac 10:15;

their hearts-The heart is the proper seat of purity;

by faith-Without concerning themselves with the Mosaic law.

V. 10. **Now therefore**-Seeing these things are so:

why tempt ye God?-Why do ye provoke him to anger, by putting so heavy a yoke on their neck?

V. 11. **The Lord Jesus**-He does not here say our Lord; because in this solemn place he means the Lord of all,

we-Jews, shall be saved even as they-Gentiles, namely, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, not by our observance of the ceremonial law.

V. 12. **Miracles and wonders**-By which also what St. Peter had said was confirmed.

V. 14. **Simon hath declared**-James, the apostle of the Hebrews, calls Peter by his Hebrew name.

To take out of them a people for his name-That is to believe in him, to be called by his name.

V. 15. **To this agree**-St. Peter had urged the plain fact, which St. James confirms by Scripture prophecy.

The words of the prophets-One of whom is immediately cited.

V. 16. **After this**-After the Jewish dispensation expires.

I will build again the fallen tabernacle of David-By raising from his seed the Christ, who shall build on the ruins of his fallen tabernacle a spiritual and eternal kingdom. #Am 9:11.

V. 17. **The Gentiles on whom my name is called**-That is, who are called by my name; who are my people.

V. 18. **Known unto God are all his works from eternity**-Which the apostle infers from the prophecy itself, and the accomplishment of it. And this conversion of the Gentiles being known to him from eternity, we ought not to think a new or strange thing.

It is observable, he does not speak of God's works in the natural world, (which had been nothing to his present purpose,) but of his dealing with the children of men. Now he could not know these, without knowing the characters and actions of particular persons, on a correspondence with which the wisdom and goodness of his providential dispensations is founded. For instance, he could not know how he would deal with heathen idolaters (whom he was now calling into his Church) without knowing there would be heathen idolaters: and yet this was a thing purely contingent, a thing as dependent on the freedom of the human mind, as any we can imagine. This text, therefore, among a thousand more, is an unanswerable proof, that God foreknows future contingencies, though there are difficulties relating hereto which men cannot solve.

V. 20. **To abstain from fornication**-Which even the philosophers among the heathens did not account any fault. It was particularly frequent in the worship of their idols, on which account they are here named together.

And from things strangled-That is, from whatever had been killed, without pouring out the blood. When God first permitted man to eat flesh, he commanded Noah, and in him all his posterity,

whenever they killed any creature for food, to abstain from the blood thereof. It was to be poured upon the ground as water: doubtless in honour of that blood which was in due time poured out for the sin of the world.

V. 21. Perhaps the connection is, To the Jews we need write nothing on these heads; for they hear the law continually.

V. 22. **With the whole Church**-Which therefore had a part therein;

to send chosen men-Who might put it beyond all dispute, that this was the judgment of the apostles and all the brethren.

V. 23. **Writing thus, and sending it by their hand**-The whole conduct of this affair plainly shows that the Church in those days had no conception of St. Peter's primacy, or of his being the chief judge in controversies. For the decree is drawn up, not according to his, but the Apostle James's proposal and direction: and that in the name, not of St. Peter, but of all the apostles and elders, and of the whole Church. Nay, St. Peter's name is not mentioned at all, either in the order for sending to Jerusalem on the question, **#Ac 15:2**, or in the address of the messengers concerning it, **#Ac 15:4**, or in the letter which was written in answer.

V. 24. **Forasmuch as, &c.**-The simplicity, weightiness, and conciseness of this letter are highly observable.

V. 26. **Men that have hazarded their lives**-This is spoken of Paul and Barnabas.

V. 27. **Who will tell you the same things**-Which we have written.

V. 28. **These necessary things**-All of these were necessary for that time. But the first of them was not necessary long; and the direction concerning it was therefore repealed by the same Spirit, as we read in the former Epistle to the Corinthians.

V. 29. **Blood**-The eating which was never permitted the children of God from the beginning of the world. Nothing can be clearer than this. For, 1. From Adam to Noah no man ate flesh at all; consequently no man then ate blood. 2. When God allowed Noah and his posterity to eat flesh, he absolutely forbade them to eat blood; and accordingly this, with the other six precepts of Noah, was delivered down from Noah to Moses. 3. God renewed this prohibition by Moses, which was not repealed from the time of Moses till Christ came. 4. Neither after his coming did any presume to repeal this decree of the Holy Ghost, till it seemed good to the bishop of Rome so to do, about the middle of the eighth century. 5. From that time those Churches which acknowledged his authority held the eating of blood to be an indifferent thing. But, 6. In all those Churches which never did acknowledge the bishop of Rome's authority, it never was allowed to eat blood; nor is it allowed at this day. This is the plain fact; let men reason as plausibly as they please on one side or the other.

From which keeping yourselves ye will do well-That is, ye will find a blessing. This gentle manner of concluding was worthy the apostolical wisdom and goodness. But how soon did

succeeding councils of inferior authority change it into the style of anathemas! Forms which have proved an occasion of consecrating some of the most devilish passions under the most sacred names; and like some ill-adjusted weapons of war, are most likely to hurt the hand from which they are thrown.

V. 35. Paul and Barnabas abode in Antioch-And it was during this time that Peter came down from Jerusalem, and that St. Paul withstood him to the face, for separating himself from the Gentiles, **#Ga 2:11**, &c.

V. 36. Let us go and visit the brethren in every city where we have preached-This was all that St. Paul designed at first; but it was not all that God designed by his journey, whose providence carried him much farther than he intended.

And see how they do-How their souls prosper: how they grow in faith, hope love: what else ought to be the grand and constant inquiry in every ecclesiastical visitation? Reader, how dost thou do?

V. 37. Barnabas counselled to take John-His kinsman.

V. 38. But Paul thought it not right-To trust him again, who had deserted them before: who had shrunk from the labour and danger of converting those they were now going to confirm.

V. 39. And there was a sharp contention-Literally, a paroxysm, or fit of a fever. But nothing in the text implies that the sharpness was on both sides. It is far more probable that it was not; that St. Paul, who had the right on his side, as he undoubtedly had,) maintained it with love.

And Barnabas taking Mark with him, sailed away to Cyprus-Forsaking the work in which he was engaged, he went away to his own country.

V. 40. But Paul departed-Held on his intended course:

being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God-We do not find that Barnabas stayed for this. O how mighty is the grace of God! which in the midst of the world, in the midst of sin, among so many snares of Satan, and in spite of the incredible weakness and depravity of nature, yet overcomes all opposition, sanctifies, sustains, and preserves us to the end!

It appears not only that Paul and Barnabas were afterward thoroughly reconciled, **#1Co 9:6**; **#Ga 2:9**; but also that John was again admitted by St. Paul as a companion in his labours, **#Col 4:10**; **#Phm 1:24**; **#2Ti 4:11**.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XVI.

V. 3. **He took and circumcised him because of the Jews**-The unbelieving Jews, to whom he designed he should preach. For they would not have conversed with him at all, so long as he was uncircumcised.

V. 6. **And having gone through Phrygia**-And spoken there what was sufficient, as well as in **the region of Galatia,**

being forbid by the Spirit (probably by an inward dictate) to speak as yet in the proconsular Asia, the time for it not being come.

V. 7. **Coming to Mysia, and passing it by,** as being a part of **Asia, they attempted to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not**-Forbidding them as before. Sometimes a strong impression, for which we are not able to give any account, is not altogether to be despised.

V. 9. **A vision appeared to Paul by night**-It was not a dream, though it was by night. No other dream is mentioned in the New Testament than that of Joseph and of Pilate's wife.

A man of Macedonia-Probably an angel clothed in the Macedonian habit, or using the language of the country, and representing the inhabitants of it.

Help us-Against Satan, ignorance, and sin.

V. 10. **We sought to go into Macedonia**-This is the first place in which St. Luke intimates his attendance on the apostle. And here he does it only in an oblique manner. Nor does he throughout the history once mention his own name, or any one thing which he did or said for the service of Christianity; though Paul speaks of him in the most honourable terms, **#Col 4:14; #2Ti 4:11;** and probably as the brother whose praise in the Gospel went through all the Churches, **#2Co 8:18.** The same remark may be made on the rest of the sacred historians, who every one of them show the like amiable modesty.

V. 11. **We ran with a straight course**-Which increased their confidence that God had called them.

V. 12. **The first city-Neapolis** was the first city they came to in that part of Macedonia which was nearest to Asia: in that part which was farthest from it, Philippi. The river Strymon ran between them. Philippi was a Roman colony.

V. 13. **We went out of the gate**-The Jews usually held their religious assemblies (either by choice or constraint) at a distance from the heathens:

by a river side-Which was also convenient for purifying themselves.

Where prayer was wont to be made-Though it does not appear there was any house built there.

We spake-At first in a familiar manner. Paul did not immediately begin to preach.

V. 14. **A worshipper of God**-Probably acquainted with the prophetic writings

whose heart the Lord opened-The Greek word properly refers to the opening of the eyes: and the heart has its eyes, #Eph 1:18. These are closed by nature and to open them is the peculiar work of God.

V. 15. **She was baptized and her family**-Who can believe that in so many families there was no infant? Or that the Jews, who were so long accustomed to circumcise their children, would not now devote them to God by baptism?

She entreated us-The souls of the faithful cleave to those by whom they were gained to God.

She constrained us-By her importunity. They did not immediately comply, lest any should imagine they sought their own profit by coming into Macedonia.

V. 17. **These men are**-A great truth: but St. Paul did not need, nor would accept, of such testimony.

V. 19. **The magistrates**-The supreme magistrates of the city. In the next verse they are called by a title which often signifies pretors. These officers exercised both the military and civil authority.

V. 20. **Being Jews**-A nation peculiarly despised by the Romans.

V. 21. **And teach customs which it is not lawful for us to receive**-The world has received all the rules and doctrines of all the philosophers that ever were. But this is a property of Gospel truth: it has something in it peculiarly intolerable to the world.

V. 23. **They laid many stripes upon them**-Either they did not immediately say they were Romans, or in the tumult it was not regarded.

Charging the jailer-Perhaps rather to quiet the people than because they thought them criminal.

V. 24. **Secured their feet in the stocks**-These were probably those large pieces of wood, in use among the Romans, which not only loaded the legs of the prisoner, but also kept them extended in a very painful manner.

V. 25. **Paul and Silas sung a hymn to God**-Notwithstanding weariness, hunger stripes, and blood.

And the prisoners heard-A song to which they were not accustomed.

V. 28. **But Paul cried**-As they were all then in the dark, it is not easy to say, how Paul knew of the jailer's purpose; unless it were by some immediate notice from God, which is by no means incredible.

With a loud voice-Through earnestness, and because he was at some distance.

Do thyself no harm-Although the Christian faith opens the prospect into another life, yet it absolutely forbids and effectually prevents a man's discharging himself from this.

V. 30. **Sirs**-He did not style them so the day before.

What must I do to be saved?-From the guilt I feel and the vengeance I fear? Undoubtedly God then set his sins in array before him, and convinced him in the clearest and strongest manner that the wrath of God abode upon him.

V. 31. **Thou shalt be saved and thy household**-If ye believe. They did so, and were saved.

V. 33. **He washed their stripes**-It should not be forgot, that the apostles had not the power of working miraculous cures when they pleased, either on themselves, or their dearest friends. Nor was it expedient they should, since it would have frustrated many wise designs of God, which were answered by their sufferings.

V. 34. **He set a table before them and rejoiced**-Faith makes a man joyful, prudent, liberal.

V. 35. **The pretors sent**-Being probably terrified by the earthquake;

saying, Let those men go-How different from the charge given a few hours before! And how great an ease of mind to the jailer!

V. 37. **They have beaten us publicly, being Romans**-St. Paul does not always plead this privilege. But in a country where they were entire strangers, such treatment might have brought upon them a suspicion of having been guilty of some uncommon crime, and so have hindered the course of the Gospel.

V. 40. **When they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed**-Though many circumstances now invited their stay, yet they wisely complied with the request of the magistrates, that they might not seem to express any degree of obstinacy or revenge, or give any suspicion of a design to stir up the people.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XVII.

V. 1. **And taking their journey through Amphipolis and Apollonia**-St. Luke seems to have been left at Philippi; and to have continued in those parts, travelling from place to place among the Churches, till St. Paul returned thither. For here he leaves off speaking of himself as one of St. Paul's company; neither does he resume that style, till we find them together there, #Ac 20:5,6. After this he constantly uses it to the end of the history. Amphipolis and Apollonia were cities of Macedonia.

V. 2. **And Paul, according to his custom**-Of doing all things, as far as might be, in a regular manner,

went in to them three Sabbath days-Not excluding the days between.

V. 4. **Of the principal women, not a few**-Our free thinkers pique themselves upon observing, that women are more religious than men; and this, in compliment both to religion and good manners, they impute to the weakness of their understandings. And indeed as far as nature can go, in imitating religion by performing the outward acts of it, this picture of religion may make a fairer show in women than in men, both by reason of their more tender passions, and their modesty, which will make those actions appear to more advantage. But in the case of true religion, which always implies taking up the cross, especially in time of persecution, women lie naturally under a great disadvantage, as having less courage than men. So that their embracing the Gospel was a stronger evidence of the power of him whose strength is perfected in weakness, as a stronger assistance of the Holy Spirit was needful for them to overcome their natural fearfulness.

V. 11. **These were more ingenuous**-Or generous. To be teachable in the things of God is true generosity of soul. The **receiving the word with all readiness of mind**, and the most accurate search into the truth, are well consistent.

V. 12. **Many of the**-Of the Jews.

And of the Grecian women-Who were followed by their husbands.

V. 16. **While Paul was waiting for the**-Having no design, as it seems, to preach at Athens, but his zeal for God drew him into it unawares, without staying till his companions came.

V. 18. **Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers**-The Epicureans entirely denied a providence, and held the world to be the effect of mere chance; asserting sensual pleasure to be man's chief good, and that the soul and body died together. The Stoics held, that matter was eternal; that all things were governed by irresistible fate; that virtue was its own sufficient reward, and vice its own sufficient punishment. It is easy to see, how happily the apostle levels his discourse at some of the most important errors of each, while, without expressly attacking either, he gives a plain summary of his own religious principles.

What would this babbler say?-Such is the language of natural reason, full of, and satisfied with itself. Yet even here St. Paul had some fruit; though nowhere less than at Athens. And no wonder, since this city was a seminary of philosophers, who have ever been the pest of true religion.

He seemeth to be a proclaimer-This he returns upon them at the 23d verse; **#Ac 17:23**

of strange gods-Such as are not known even at Athens.

Because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection-A god and a goddess. And as stupid as this mistake was, it is the less to be wondered at, since the Athenians might as well count the resurrection a deity, as shame, famine, and many others.

V. 19. **The Areopagus**, or hill of Mars, (dedicated to Mars, the heathen god of war,) was the place where the Athenians held their supreme court of judicature. But it does not appear he was carried thither as a criminal. The original number of its judges was twelve; but afterward it increased to three hundred. These were generally men of the greatest families in Athens, and were famed for justice and integrity.

V. 21. **And the strangers sojourning there**-And catching the distemper of them.

Some new thing-The Greek word signifies some newer thing. New things quickly grew cheap, and they wanted those that were newer still.

V. 22. **Then Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus**-An ample theatre;

said-Giving them a lecture of natural divinity, with admirable wisdom, acuteness, fulness, and courtesy. They inquire after new things: *Paul* in his divinely philosophical discourse, begins with the first, and goes on to the last things, both which were new things to them. He points out the origin and the end of all things, concerning which they had so many disputes, and equally refutes both the Epicurean and Stoic.

I perceive-With what clearness and freedom does he speak! Paul against Athens!

V. 23. **I found an altar**-Some suppose this was set up by Socrates, to express in a covert way his devotion to the only true God, while he derided the plurality of the heathen gods, for which he was condemned to death: and others, that whoever erected this altar, did it in honour to the God of Israel, of whom there was no image, and whose name Jehovah was never made known to the idolatrous Gentiles.

Him proclaim I unto you-Thus he fixes the wandering attention of these blind philosophers; proclaiming to them an unknown, and yet not a new God.

V. 24. **God who made the world**-Thus is demonstrated even to reason, the one true, good God; absolutely different from the creatures, from every part of the visible creation.

V. 25. **Neither is he served as though he needed any thing**-or person-The Greek word equally takes in both.

To all-That live and breathe;-in him we live;

and breathe-In him we move. By breathing life is continued. I breathe this moment: the next is not in my power:

and all things-For in him we are. So exactly do the parts of this discourse answer each other.

V. 26. **He hath made of one blood the whole nation of men**-By this expression the apostle showed them in the most unaffected manner, that though he was a Jew, he was not enslaved to any narrow views, but looked on all mankind as his brethren:

having determined the times-That it is God who gave men the earth to inhabit, Paul proves from the order of times and places, showing the highest wisdom of the Disposer, superior to all human counsels.

And the bounds of their habitation-By mountains, seas, rivers, and the like.

V. 27. **If haply**-The way is open; God is ready to be found. But he will lay no force upon man;

they might feel after him-This is in the midst between seeking and finding. Feeling being the lowest and grossest of all our senses, is fitly applied to the low knowledge of God;

though he be not far from every one of us-We need not go far to seek or find him. He is very near us; in us. It is only perverse reason which thinks he is afar off.

V. 28. **In him**-Not in ourselves, **we live, and move, and have our being**-This denotes his necessary, intimate, and most efficacious presence. No words can better express the continual and necessary dependence of all created beings, in their existence and all their operations, on the first and almighty cause, which the truest philosophy as well as divinity teaches.

As certain also of your own poets have said-Aratus, whose words these are, was an Athenian, who lived almost three hundred years before this time. They are likewise to be found, with the alteration of one letter only, in the hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter or the supreme being, one of the purest and finest pieces of natural religion in the whole world of Pagan antiquity.

V. 29. **We ought not to think**-A tender expression especially in the first per son plural. As if he had said, Can God himself be a less noble being than we who are his offspring? Nor does he only here deny, that these are like God, but that they have any analogy to him at all, so as to be capable of representing him.

V. 30. **The times of ignorance**-What! does he object ignorance to the knowing Athenians? Yes, and they acknowledge it by this very altar.

God overlooked-As one paraphrases, "The beams of his eye did in a manner shoot over it." He did not appear to take notice of them, by sending express messages to them as he did to the Jews.

But now-This day, this hour, saith Paul, puts an end to the Divine forbearance, and brings either greater mercy or punishment. Now

he commandeth all men every where to repent-There is a dignity and grandeur in this expression, becoming an ambassador from the King of heaven. And this universal demand of repentance declared universal guilt in the strongest manner, and admirably confronted the pride of the haughtiest Stoic of them all. At the same time it bore down the idle plea of fatality. For how could any one repent of doing what he could not but have done?

V. 31. **He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world**-How fitly does he speak this, in their supreme court of justice?

By the man-So he speaks, suiting himself to the capacity of his hearers.

Whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead-God raising Jesus demonstrated hereby, that he was to be the glorious Judge of all. We are by no means to imagine that this was all which the apostle intended to have said, but the indolence of some of his hearers and the petulancy of others cut him short.

V. 32. **Some mocked**-Interrupting him thereby. They took offence at that which is the principal motive of faith, from the pride of reason. And having once stumbled at this, they rejected all the rest.

V. 33. **So Paul departed**-Leaving his hearers divided in their judgment.

V. 34. **Among whom was even Dionysius the Areopagite**-One of the judges of that court: on whom some spurious writings have been fathered in later ages, by those who are fond of high sounding nonsense.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XVIII.

V. 1. **Paul departing from Athens**-He did not stay there long. The philosophers there were too easy, too indolent, and too wise in their own eyes to receive the Gospel.

V. 2. **Claudius**, the Roman emperor, **had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome**-All who were Jews by birth. Whether they were Jews or Christians by religion, the Romans were too stately to regard.

V. 3. **They were tent makers by trade**-For it was a rule among the Jews (and why is it not among the Christians?) to bring up all their children to some trade, were they ever so rich or noble.

V. 5. **And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia**-Silas seems to have stayed a considerable time at Berea: but Timotheus had come to the apostle while he was at Athens, and been sent by him to comfort and confirm the Church at Thessalonica, #1Th 3:1-5. But now at length both Silas and Timotheus came to the apostle at Corinth.

Paul was pressed in spirit-The more probably from what Silas and Timotheus related. Every Christian ought diligently to observe any such pressure in his own spirit, and if it agree with Scripture, to follow it: if he does not he will feel great heaviness.

V. 6. **He shook his raiment**-To signify he would from that time refrain from them: and to intimate, that God would soon shake them off as unworthy to be numbered among his people.

I am pure-None can say this but he that has borne a full testimony against sin.

From henceforth I will go to the Gentiles-But not to them altogether. He did not break off all intercourse with the Jews even at Corinth. Only he preached no more in their synagogue.

V. 7. **He went into the house of one named Justus**-A Gentile, and preached there, though probably he still lodged with Aquila.

V. 8. **And many hearing**-The conversation of Crispus, and the preaching of Paul.

V. 10. **I am with thee:** therefore *fear not* all the learning, politeness, grandeur, or power of the inhabitants of this city.

Speak and hold not thy peace-For thy labour shall not be in vain.

For I have much people in this city-So he prophetically calls them that afterward believed.

V. 11. **He continued there a year and six months**-A long time! But how few souls are now gained in a longer time than this? Who is in the fault? Generally both teachers and hearers.

V. 12. **When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia**-Of which Corinth was the chief city. This Gallio, the brother of the famous Seneca, is much commended both by him and by other writers, for the sweetness and generosity of his temper, and easiness of his behaviour. Yet one thing he lacked! But he knew it not and had no concern about it.

V. 15. **But if it be**-He speaks with the utmost coolness and contempt,

a question of names-The names of the heathen gods were fables and shadows. But the question concerning the name of Jesus is of more importance than all things else under heaven. Yet there is this singularity (among a thousand others) in the Christian religion, that human reason, curious as it is in all other things, abhors to inquire into it.

V. 17. **Then they all took Sosthenes**-The successor of Crispus, and probably Paul's chief accuser, **and beat him**-It seems because he had occasioned them so much trouble to no purpose, **before the judgment seat**-One can hardly think in the sight of Gallio, though at no great distance from him. And it seems to have had a happy effect. For Sosthenes himself was afterward a Christian, **#1Co 1:1**.

V. 18. **Paul continued many days**-After the year and six months, to confirm the brethren.

Aquila having shaved his head-As was the custom in a vow, **#Ac 21:24; #Nu 6:18**.

At Cenchrea-A seaport town, at a small distance from Corinth.

V. 21. **I must by all means keep the feast at Jerusalem**-This was not from any apprehension that he was obliged in conscience to keep the Jewish feasts; but to take the opportunity of meeting a great number of his countrymen to whom he might preach Christ, or whom he might farther instruct, or free from the prejudices they had imbibed against him.

But I will return to you-So he did, **#Ac 19:1**.

V. 22. **And landing at Cesarea, he went up**-Immediately to Jerusalem; **and saluted the Church**-Eminently so called, being the mother Church of Christian believers: and having kept the feast there, he went down from thence to Antioch.

V. 23. **He went over the country of Galatia and Phrygia**-It is supposed, spending about four years therein, including the time he stayed at Ephesus.

V. 24. **An eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures**-Of the Old Testament. Every talent may be of use in the kingdom of God, if joined with the knowledge of the Scriptures and fervour of spirit.

V. 25. **This man had been instructed**-Though not perfectly,

in the way of the Lord-In the doctrine of Christ.

Knowing only the baptism of John-Only what John taught those whom he baptized, namely, to repent and believe in a Messiah shortly to appear.

V. 26. **He spake**-Privately; and taught publicly. Probably he returned to live at Alexandria, soon after he had been baptized by John; and so had no opportunity of being fully acquainted with the doctrines of the Gospel, as delivered by Christ and his apostles.

And explained to him the way of God more perfectly-He who knows Christ, is able to instruct even those that are mighty in the Scriptures.

V. 27. **Who greatly helped through grace**-It is through grace only that any gift of any one is profitable to another.

Them that had believed-Apollos did not plant, but water. This was the peculiar gift which he had received. And he was better able to convince the Jews, than to convert the heathens.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XIX.

V. 1. **Having passed through**-Galatia and Phrygia, which were termed **the upper parts of Asia Minor**.

Certain disciples-Who had been formerly baptized by John the Baptist, and since imperfectly instructed in Christianity.

V. 2. **Have ye received the Holy Ghost?**-The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, as well as his sanctifying graces?

We have not so much as heard-Whether there be any such gifts.

V. 3. **Into what were ye baptized**-Into what dispensation? To the sealing of what doctrine?

Into John's baptism-We were baptized by John and believe what he taught.

V. 4. **John baptized**-That is, the whole baptism and preaching of John pointed at Christ. After this John is mentioned no more in the New Testament. Here he gives way to Christ altogether.

V. 5. **And hearing this, they were baptized**-By some other. Paul only **laid his hands upon them**.

They were baptized-They were baptized twice; but not with the same baptism. John did not administer that baptism which Christ afterward commanded, that is, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

V. 9. **The way**-The Christian way of worshipping God.

He departed-Leaving them their synagogue to themselves.

Discoursing daily-Not on the Sabbath only,

in the school of one Tyrannus-Which we do not find was any otherwise consecrated, than by preaching the Gospel there.

V. 10. **All** who desired it among **the inhabitants of** the proconsular **Asia**, now **heard the word**: St. Paul had been forbidden to preach it in Asia before, **#Ac 16:6**. But now the time was come.

V. 11. **Special miracles**-Wrought in a very uncommon manner.

V. 12. **Evil spirits**-Who also occasioned many of those diseases, which yet might appear to be purely natural.

V. 13. **Exorcists**-Several of the Jews about this time pretended to a power of casting out devils, particularly by certain arts or charms, supposed to be derived from Solomon.

Undertook to name-Vain undertaking! Satan laughs at all those who attempt to expel him either out of the bodies or the souls of men but by Divine faith. All the light of reason is nothing to the craft or strength of that subtle spirit. His craft cannot be known but by the Spirit of God nor can his strength be conquered but by the power of faith.

V. 17. **And the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified**-So that even the malice of the devil wrought for the furtherance of the Gospel.

V. 18. **Many came confessing**-Of their own accord,

and openly declaring their deeds-The efficacy of God's word, penetrating the inmost recesses of their soul, wrought that free and open confession to which perhaps even torments would not have compelled them.

V. 19. **Curious arts**-Magical arts, to which that soft appellation was given by those who practised them. Ephesus was peculiarly famous for these. And as these practices were of so much reputation there, it is no wonder the books which taught them should bear a great price.

Bringing their books together-As it were by common consent,

burnt them-Which was far better than selling them, even though the money had been given to the poor.

Fifty thousand pieces of silver-If these pieces of silver be taken for Jewish shekels, the sum will amount to six thousand two hundred and fifty pounds.

V. 20. **So powerfully did the word of God grow**-In extent,

and prevail-In power and efficacy.

V. 21. **After these things were ended**-Paul sought not to rest, but pressed on, as if he had yet done nothing. He is already possessed of Ephesus and Asia. He purposes for Macedonia and Achaia. He has his eye upon Jerusalem, then upon Rome; afterward on Spain, **#Ro 15:28**. No Cesar, no Alexander the Great, no other hero, comes up to the magnanimity of this little Benjamite. Faith and love to God and man had enlarged his heart, even as the sand of the sea.

V. 24. **Silver shrines**-Silver models of that famous temple, which were bought not only by the citizens, but by strangers from all parts.

The artificers-The other silversmiths.

V. 25. **The workmen**-Employed by him and them.

V. 26. **Saying, that they are not gods which are made with hands**-This manifestly shows, that the contrary opinion did then generally prevail, namely, that there was a real Divinity in their sacred images. Though some of the later heathens spoke of them just as the Romanists do now.

V. 27. **There is danger, not only that this our craft [trade] should come into disgrace, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised**-No wonder a discourse should make so deep an impression, which was edged both by interest and superstition. The great goddess was one of the standing titles of Diana.

Her majesty destroyed-Miserable majesty, which was capable of being thus destroyed!

Whom all Asia and the world-That is, the Roman empire,

worshippeth-Although under a great variety of titles and characters. But the multitude of those that err does not turn error into truth.

V. 29. **They rushed with one accord**-Demetrius and his company, **into the theatre**-Where criminals were wont to be thrown to the wild beasts,

dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus-When they could not find Paul. Probably they hoped to oblige them to fight with the wild beasts, as some think St. Paul had done before.

V. 30. **When Paul would have gone in to the people**-Being above all fear, to plead the cause of his companions, and prove they are not gods which are made with hands.

V. 31. **The principal officers of Asia**-The Asian priests, who presided over the public games, which they were then celebrating in honour of Diana.

V. 32. **The greater part did not know for what they were come together**-Which is commonly the case in such an assembly.

V. 33. **And they thrust forward**-Namely, the artificers and workmen,

Alexander-Probably some well-known Christian whom they saw in the crowd:

the Jews pushing him on-To expose him to the more danger.

And Alexander waving with his hand-In token of desiring silence,

would have made a defence-For himself and his brethren.

V. 34. **But when they knew that he was a Jew**-And consequently an enemy to their worship of images; they prevented him, by **crying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians**.

V. 35. **The register**-Probably the chief governor of the public games.

The image which fell down from Jupiter-They believed that very image of Diana, which stood in her temple, fell down from Jupiter in heaven. Perhaps he designed to insinuate, as if falling down from Jupiter, it was not made with hands, and so was not that sort of idols which Paul had said were no gods.

V. 37. Nor blasphemers of your goddess-They simply declared the one God, and the vanity of idols in general.

V. 38. There are proconsuls-One in every province. There was one at Ephesus.

V. 39. In a lawful assembly-In such a regular assembly as has authority to judge of religious and political affairs.

V. 40. This concourse-He wisely calls it by an inoffensive name.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XX.

V. 1. **After the tumult was ceased**-So Demetrius gained nothing. Paul remained there till all was quiet.

V. 2. **He came into Greece**-That part of it which lay between Macedonia and Achaia.

V. 3. **An ambush being laid for him**-In his way to the ship.

V. 4. **To Asia**-There some of them left him. But Trophimus went with him to Jerusalem, #Ac 21:29. Aristarchus, even to Rome, #Ac 27:2.

V. 6. **We set sail**-St. Luke was now with St. Paul again, as we learn from his manner of expressing himself.

V. 7. **To break bread**-That is, to celebrate the Lord's Supper;

continued his discourse-Through uncommon fervour of spirit.

V. 8. **There were many lamps in the room where they were assembled**-To prevent any possible scandal.

V. 9. **In the window**-Doubtless kept open, to prevent heat, both from the lamps and the number of people.

V. 10. **Paul fell on him**-It is observable, our Lord never used this gesture. But Elijah and Elisha did as well as Paul.

His life is in him-He is alive again.

V. 11. **So departed**-Without taking any rest at all.

V. 12. **And they brought the young man alive**-But alas! How many of those who have allowed themselves to sleep under sermons, or as it were to dream awake, have slept the sleep of eternal death, and fallen to rise no more!

V. 13. **Being himself to go on foot**-That he might enjoy the company of his Christian brethren a little longer, although he had passed the night without sleep, and though Assos was of difficult and dangerous access by land.

V. 14. **Mitylene**-Was a city and part of the isle of Lesbos, about seven miles distant from the Asiatic coast.

V. 16. **For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus**-Which lay on the other side of the bay.

He hasted to be at Jerusalem on the day of pentecost-Because then was the greatest concourse of people.

V. 17. **Sending to Ephesus, he called the elders of the Church**-These are called bishops in **#Ac 20:28**, (rendered overseers in our translation.) Perhaps elders and bishops were then the same; or no otherwise different than are the rector of a parish and his curates.

V. 18. **Ye know**-Happy is he who can thus appeal to the conscience of his hearers.

V. 19. **Serving**-See the picture of a faithful servant!

The Lord-Whose the church is,

with all humility, and with tears, and trials-These are the concomitants of it. The service itself is described more particularly in the following verse. This humility he recommends to the Ephesians themselves, **#Eph 4:2**. His tears are mentioned again, **#Ac 20:31**, as also **#2Co 2:4**; **#Php 3:18**. These passages laid together supply us with the genuine character of St. Paul. Holy tears, from those who seldom weep on account of natural occurrences, are no mean specimen of the efficacy and proof of the truth of Christianity. Yet joy is well consistent therewith, **#Ac 20:24**. The same person may be *sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*.

V. 20. **I have preached**-Publicly;

and taught-From house to house. Else he had not been pure from their blood. For even an apostle could not discharge his duty by public preaching only. How much less can an ordinary pastor!

V. 21. **Repentance toward God**-The very first motion of the soul toward God is a kind of repentance.

V. 22. **Bound by the Spirit**-Strongly impelled by him.

V. 23. **Save that**-Only this I know in general;

the Holy Ghost witnesseth-By other persons. Such was God's good pleasure to reveal these things to him, not immediately, but by the ministry of others.

V. 24. **Nor do I count my life precious**-It adds great force to this and all the other passages of Scripture, in which the apostles express their contempt of the world, that they were not uttered by persons like Seneca and Antoninus, who talked elegantly of despising the world in the full affluence of all its enjoyments; but by men who daily underwent the greatest calamities, and exposed their lives in proof of their assertions.

V. 25. **Ye shall see my face no more**-He wisely inserts this, that what follows might make the deeper impression.

V. 27. **For I have not shunned**-Otherwise if any had perished, their blood would have been on his head.

V. 28. **Take heed therefore**-I now devolve my care upon you; first

to yourselves; then to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers-For no man, or number of men upon earth, can constitute an *overseer*, bishop, or any other Christian minister. To do this is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost:

to feed the Church of God-That is, the believing, loving, holy children of God;

which he hath purchased-How precious is it then in his sight!

with his own blood-For it is the blood of the only begotten Son of God, #1Jo 1:7.

V. 29. **Grievous wolves**-From without, namely, false apostles. They had, not yet broke in on the Church at Ephesus.

V. 30. **Yea, from among yourselves men will arise**-Such were the Nicolaitans, of whom Christ complains, #Re 2:6;

to draw away disciples-From the purity of the Gospel and the unity of the body.

V. 31. **I ceased not to warn every one night and day**-This was watching indeed! Who copies after this example?

V. 32. **The word of his grace**-It is the grand channel of it, to believers as well as unbelievers.

Who is able to build you up-To confirm and increase your faith, love, holiness. God can thus build us up, without any instrument. But he does build us up by them. O beware of dreaming that you have less need of human teachers after you know Christ than before!

And to give you an inheritance-Of eternal glory,

among them that are sanctified-And so made meet for it. A large number of these Paul doubtless knew, and remembered before God.

V. 33. **I have coveted**-Here the apostle begins the other branch of his farewell discourse, like old Samuel, #1Sa 12:3, taking his leave of the children of Israel.

V. 34. **These hands**-Callous, as you see, with labour. Who is he that envies such a bishop or archbishop as this?

V. 35. **I have showed you**-Bishops, by my example,

all things-And this among the rest;

that thus labouring-So far as the labours of your office allow you time;

ye ought to help the weak-Those who are disabled by sickness, or any bodily infirmity, from maintaining themselves by their own labour.

And to remember-Effectually, so as to follow it;

the word which he himself said-Without doubt his disciples remembered many of his words which are not recorded.

It is happier to give-To imitate God, and have him, as it were, indebted to us.

V. 37. **They all wept**-Of old, men, yea, the best and bravest of men, were easily melted into tears; a thousand instances of which might be produced from profane as well as sacred writers. But now, notwithstanding the effeminacy which almost universally prevails, we leave those tears to women and children.

V. 38. **Sorrowing most for that word which he spake, that they should see his face no more**-What sorrow will be in the great day, when God shall speak that word to all who are found on the left hand, that they shall see his face no more!

THE ACTS

CHAP. XXI.

V. 1. **And when we were torn away from the in-**Not without doing violence both to ourselves and them.

V. 3. **We landed at Tyre-**That there should be Christians there was foretold, **#Ps 87:4**. What we read in that psalm of the Philistines and Ethiopians also may be compared with **#Ac 8:40; 27:4**.

V. 4. **And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days-**In order to spend a Sabbath with them.

Who told Paul by the Spirit-That afflictions awaited him at Jerusalem. This was properly what they said by the Spirit. They themselves advised him not to go up. The disciples seemed to understand their prophetic impulse to be an intimation from the Spirit, that Paul, if he were so minded, might avoid the danger, by not going to Jerusalem.

V. 7. **Having finished our voyage-**From Macedonia, **#Ac 20:6**,

we came to Ptolemais-A celebrated city on the sea coast, anciently called Accos. It is now, like many other once noble cities, only a heap of ruins.

V. 8. **We came to Cesarea-**So called from a stately temple which Herod the Great dedicated there to Augustus Cesar. It was the place where the Roman governor of Judea generally resided and kept his court.

The evangelist, who was one of the seven deacons-An evangelist is a preacher of the Gospel to those who had never heard it, as Philip had done to the Samaritans, to the Ethiopian eunuch, and to all the towns from Azotus to Cesarea, **#Ac 8:5, 26, 40**. It is not unlikely he spent the following years preaching in Tyre and Sidon, and the other heathen cities in the neighbourhood of Galilee, his house being at Cesarea, a convenient situation for that purpose.

We abode with him-We lodged at his house during our stay at Cesarea.

V. 10. **A certain prophet came-**The nearer the event was, the more express were the predictions which prepared Paul for it.

V. 11. **Binding his own feet and hands-**In the manner that malefactors were wont to be bound when apprehended.

So shall the Jews bind the man whose girdle this is-St. Paul's bonds were first particularly foretold at Cesarea, to which he afterward came in bonds, **#Ac 23:33**.

V. 12. **Both we, (his fellow travellers,) and they of the place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem-**St. Paul knew that this prediction had the force of a command. They did not know this.

V. 13. **Breaking my heart**-For the apostles themselves were not void of human affections.

I am ready not only to be bound, but to die-And to him that is ready for it, the burden is light.

V. 14. **And when he would not be persuaded**-This was not obstinacy, but true Christian resolution. We should never be persuaded, either to do evil, or to omit doing any good which is in our power; saying,

the will of the Lord be done-Which they were satisfied Paul knew.

V. 15. **We took up our carriages**-Our baggage; which probably went by sea before. What they took with them now in particular was the alms they were carrying to Jerusalem, #Ac 24:17.

V. 16. **The disciples brought us to one Mnason, a Cyprian, an old disciple**-He was a native of Cyprus, but an inhabitant of Jerusalem, and probably one of the first converts there.

V. 18. **Paul went in with us**-That it might appear we are all of one mind,

to James-Commonly called the Lord's brother; the only apostle then presiding over the Churches in Judea.

V. 20. **They are all zealous for the law**-For the whole Mosaic dispensation. How astonishing is this! Did none of the apostles, beside St. Paul, know that this dispensation was now abolished? And if they did both know and testify this, how came their hearers not to believe them?

V. 21. **They have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest the Jews-not to circumcise their children,**

nor to walk after the customs-Of the Mosaic law. And so undoubtedly he did. And so he wrote to all the Churches in Galatia, among whom were many Jews. Yea, and James himself had long before assented to Peter, affirming before all the apostles and all the brethren, #Ac 15:10, That this very law was a yoke which (said he)

neither our fathers nor we were able to bear-Amazing! that they did not know this! Or, that if they did, they did not openly testify it at all hazards, to every Jewish convert in Jerusalem!

V. 22. **What is it therefore**-What is to be done?

The multitude must needs come together-They will certainly gather together in a tumultuous manner, unless they be some way pacified.

V. 23. **Therefore**-To obviate their prejudice against thee:

do this that we say to thee-Doubtless they meant this advice well: but could Paul follow it in godly sincerity? Was not the yielding so far to the judgment of others too great a deference to be paid to any mere men?

V. 24. **And all will know-that thou thyself walkest orderly, keeping the law**-Ought he not, without any reverence to man, where the truth of God was so deeply concerned, to have answered plainly, I do not keep the Mosaic law; neither need any of you. Yea, Peter doth not keep the law. And God himself expressly commanded him not to keep it; ordering him to *go in to men uncircumcised, and to eat with them*, #Ac 11:3, which the law utterly forbids.

V. 26. **Then Paul took the men**-Yielding his own judgment to their advice, which seemed to flow not out of spiritual but carnal wisdom; *seeming* to be what he really was *not*: making *as if* he believed the law still in force.

Declaring-Giving notice to the priests in waiting, that he designed to accomplish **the days of purification**, till all the sacrifice should be offered, as the Mosaic law required, #Nu 6:13.

V. 27. **And when the seven days were about to be accomplished**-When after giving notice to the priests, they were entering upon the accomplishment of those days. It was toward the beginning of them that Paul was seized.

The Jews that were from Asia-Some of those Jews who came from Asia to the feast.

V. 28. **Against the people**-The Jewish nation;

and the law-Of Moses;

and this place-The temple.

Yea, and hath even brought Greeks into the temple-They might come into the outer court. But they imagined Paul had brought them into the inner temple, and had thereby polluted it.

V. 30. **And immediately the gates were shut**-Both to prevent any farther violation of the temple; and to prevent Paul's taking sanctuary at the horns of the altar.

V. 31. **And as they went about to kill him**-It was a rule among the Jews, that any uncircumcised person who came into the inner temple, might be stoned without farther process. And they seemed to think Paul, who brought such in thither, deserved no better treatment.

Word came to the tribune-A cohort or detachment of soldiers, belonging to the Roman legion, which lodged in the adjacent castle of Antonia, were stationed on feast days near the temple, to prevent disorders. It is evident, Lysias himself was not present, when the tumult began. Probably he was the oldest Roman tribune (or colonel) then at Jerusalem. And as such he was the commanding officer of the legion quartered at the castle.

V. 33. **Then the tribune**-Having made his way through the multitude,

came near and took him-And how many great ends of providence were answered by this imprisonment? This was not only a means of preserving his life, (after he had suffered severely for worldly prudence,) but gave him an opportunity of preaching the Gospel safely, in spite of all tumult, #Ac 22:22, yea, and that in those places to which otherwise he could have had no access, #Ac 21:40.

And commanded him to be bound with two chains-Taking it for granted he was some notorious offender. And thus the prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled, though by the hands of a Roman.

V. 35. **When he came upon the stairs**-The castle of Antonia was situate on a rock fifty cubits high, at that corner of the outward temple, where the western and northern porticos joined, to each of which there were stairs descending from it.

V. 37. **As Paul was about to be brought into the castle**-The wisdom of God taught to make use of that very time and place.

V. 38. **Art not thou that Egyptian**-Who came into Judea when Felix had been some years governor there! Calling himself a prophet, he drew much people after him; and having brought them through the wilderness, led them to Mount Olivet, promising that the walls of the city should fall down before them. But Felix marching out of Jerusalem against him, his followers quickly dispersed, many of whom were taken or slain; but he himself made his escape.

V. 40. **In the Hebrew tongue**-That dialect of it, which was then commonly spoken at Jerusalem.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XXII.

V. 1. **Hear ye now my defence**-Which they could not hear before for the tumult.

V. 3. **I am verily**-This defence answers all that is objected, #Ac 21:28. As there, so here also mention is made of the person of Paul, #Ac 22:3, of *the people* and *the law*, #Ac 22:3, 5, 12; of *the temple*, #Ac 22:17; of *teaching all men*, #Ac 22:15-17, 21; and of the truth of his doctrine, #Ac 22:6. But he speaks closely and nervously, in few words, because the time was short.

But brought up at the feet of Gamaliel-The scholars usually sat on low seats, or upon mats on the floor, at the feet of their masters, whose seats were raised to a considerable height.

Accurately instructed-The learned education which Paul had received was once no doubt the matter of his boasting and confidence. Unsanctified learning *made his bonds strong*, and furnished him with numerous arguments against the Gospel. Yet when the grace of God had changed his heart, and turned his accomplishments into another channel, he was the fitter instrument to serve God's wise and merciful purposes, in the defence and propagation of Christianity.

V. 4. **And persecuted this way**-With the same zeal that you do now.

Binding both men and women-How much better was his condition, now he was bound himself.

V. 5. **The high priest is my witness**-Is able to testify.

The brethren-Jews: so this title was not peculiar to the Christians.

V. 6. **About noon**-All was done in the face of the sun.

A great light shone-By whatever method God reveals himself to us, we shall have everlasting cause to recollect it with pleasure. Especially when he has gone in any remarkable manner out of his common way for this gracious purpose. If so, we should often dwell on the particular circumstances, and be ready, on every proper occasion, to recount those wonders of power and love, for the encouragement and instruction of others.

V. 9. **They did not hear the voice**-Distinctly; but only a confused noise.

V. 12. **A devout man according to the law**-A truly religious person, and though a believer in Christ, yet a strict observer of the law of Moses.

V. 16. **Be baptized, and wash away thy sins**-Baptism administered to real penitents, is both a means and seal of pardon. Nor did God ordinarily in the primitive Church bestow this on any, unless through this means.

V. 17. **When I was returned to Jerusalem-From Damascus,**

and was praying in the temple-Whereby he shows that he still paid the temple its due honour, as the house of prayer.

I was in a trance-Perhaps he might continue standing all the while, so that any who were near him would hardly discern it.

V. 18. **And I saw him-Jesus, saying to me,**

Depart quickly out of Jerusalem-Because of the snares laid for thee: and in order to preach where they will hear.

V. 19. **And I said**-It is not easy for a servant of Christ, who is himself deeply impressed with Divine truths, to imagine to what a degree men are capable of hardening their hearts against thee. He is often ready to think with Paul, It is impossible for any to resist such evidence. But experience makes him wiser and shows that wilful unbelief is proof against all truth and reason.

V. 20. **When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by**-A real convert still retains the remembrance of his former sins. He confesses them and is humbled for them, all the days of his life.

V. 22. **And they heard him to this word**-Till he began to speak of his mission to the Gentiles, and this too in such a manner as implied that the Jews were in danger of being cast off.

V. 23. **They rent their garments**-In token of indignation and horror at this pretended blasphemy,

and cast dust into the air-Through vehemence of rage, which they knew not how to vent.

V. 25. **And as they**-The soldiers ordered by the tribune,

were binding him with thongs-A freeman of Rome might be bound with a chain and beaten with a staff: but he might not be bound with thongs, neither scourged, or beaten with rods:

Paul said to the centurion-The captain, who stood by to see the orders of the tribune executed.

V. 26. **Consider what thou art about to do; for this man is a Roman**-Yea, there was a stronger reason to consider. For this man was a servant of God.

V. 28. **But I was free born**-Not barely as being born at Tarsus; for this was not Roman colony. But probably either his father, or some of his ancestors, had been made free of Rome, for some military service.

We learn hence, that we are under no obligation as Christians to give up our civil privileges (which we are to receive and prize as the gift of God) to every insolent invader. In a thousand

circumstances, gratitude to God, and duty to men, will oblige us to insist upon them; and engage us to strive to transmit them improved, rather than impaired to posterity.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XXIII.

V. 1. **And Paul earnestly beholding the council**-Professing a clear conscience by his very countenance; and likewise waiting to see whether any of them was minded to ask him any question, **said,**

I have lived in all good conscience before God till this day-He speaks chiefly of the time since he became a Christian. For none questioned him concerning what he had been before. And yet even in his unconverted state, although he was in an error, yet he had acted from conscience, **before God**-Whatever men may think or say of me.

V. 3. **Then said Paul**-Being carried away by a sudden and prophetic impulse.

God is about to smite thee, thou whited wall-Fair without; full of dirt and rubbish within. And he might well be so termed, not only as he committed this outrage, while gravely sitting on the tribunal of justice but also as, at the same time that he stood high in the esteem of the citizens, he cruelly defrauded the priests of their legal subsistence, so that some of them even perished for want. And God did remarkably smite him; for about five years after this, his house being reduced to ashes, in a tumult begun by his own son, he was besieged in the royal palace; where having hid himself in an old aqueduct, he was dragged out and miserably slain.

V. 5. **I was not aware, brethren, that it was the high priest**-He seems to mean, I did not advert to it, in the prophetic transport of my mind: but he does not add, that his not adverting to it proceeded from the power of the Spirit coming upon him; as knowing they were not able to bear it. This answer admirably shows the situation of mind he was then in, partly with regard to the bystanders, whom he thus softens, adding also the title of brethren, and justifying their reproof by the prohibition of Moses; partly with regard to himself, who, after that singular transport subsided, was again under the direction of the general command. #Ex 22:28.

V. 6. **I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: for the hope of the resurrection of the dead am I called in question**-So he was in effect; although not formally, or explicitly.

V. 8. **The Pharisees confess both**-Both the resurrection, and the existence of angels and separate spirits.

V. 9. **And the scribes of the Pharisees' side arising**-Every sect contains both learned and unlearned. The former used to be the mouth of the party.

If a spirit-St. Paul in his speech from the stairs had affirmed, that Jesus, whom they knew to have been dead, was alive, and that he had spoken to him from heaven, and again in a vision. So they add nothing, only they construe it in their own way, putting an angel or spirit for Jesus.

V. 11. **And the night following, the Lord Jesus**-What Paul had before purposed in spirit, #Ac 19:21, God now in due time confirms. Another declaration to the same effect is made by an angel of God, #Ac 27:23. And from the 23d chapter the sum of this book turns on the testimony of Paul to the Romans. How would the defenders of St. Peter's supremacy triumph, could they find out half as much ascribed to him!

Be of good courage, Paul-As he laboured under singular distresses and persecutions, so he was favoured with extraordinary assurances of the Divine assistance.

Thou must testify-Particular promises are usually given when all things appear desperate.

At Rome also-Danger is nothing in the eyes of God: all hinderances farther his work. A promise of what is afar off, implies all that necessarily lies between. Paul shall testify at Rome: therefore he shall come to Rome; therefore he shall escape the Jews, the sea, the viper.

V. 12. **Some of the Jews bound themselves**-Such execrable vows were not uncommon among the Jews. And if they were prevented from accomplishing what they had vowed, it was an easy matter to obtain absolution from their rabbis.

V. 15. **Now therefore ye**-Which they never scrupled at all, as not doubting but they were doing God service.

V. 17. **And Paul**-Though he had an express promise of it from Christ, was not to neglect any proper means of safety.

V. 19. **And the tribune taking him by the hand**-In a mild, condescending way. Lysias seems to have conducted this whole affair with great integrity, humanity, and prudence.

V. 24. **Provide beasts**-If a change should be necessary,

to set Paul on-So we read of his riding once; but not by choice.

V. 27. **Having learned that he was a Roman**-True; but not before he rescued him. Here he uses art.

V. 31. **The soldiers brought him by night to Antipatris**-But not the same night they set out. For Antipatris was about thirty-eight of our miles northwest of Jerusalem. Herod the Great rebuilt it, and gave it this name in honour of his father Antipater: Cesarea was near seventy miles from Jerusalem, and about thirty from Antipatris.

V. 35. **In Herod's palace**-This was a palace and a court built by Herod the Great. Probably some tower belonging to it might be used for a kind of state prison.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XXIV.

V. 1. **Ananias**-Who would spare no trouble on the occasion, with several of the elders, members of the sanhedrim.

V. 2. **Tertullus began**-A speech how different from St. Paul's; which is true, modest, solid, and without paint. Felix was a man of the most infamous character, and a plague to all the provinces over which he presided.

V. 4. **But that I may not trouble thee any farther**-By trespassing either on thy patience or modesty. The eloquence of Tertullus was as bad as his cause: a lame introduction, a lame transition, and a lame conclusion. Did not God confound the orator's language?

V. 10. **Knowing-for several years thou hast been a judge over this nation**-And so not unacquainted with our religious rites and customs, and consequently more capable of understanding and deciding a cause of this nature. There was no flattery in this. It was a plain fact. He governed Judea six or seven years.

I answer for myself-As it may be observed, his answer exactly corresponds with the three articles of Tertullus's charge: sedition, heresy, and profanation of the temple. As to the first, he suggests, that he had not been long enough at Jerusalem to form a party and attempt an insurrection: (for it was about twelve days since he came up thither; five of which he had been at Cesarea, #Ac 24:1; one or two were spent in his journey thither, and most of the rest he had been confined at Jerusalem.) And he challenges them, in fact, to produce any evidence of such practices, #Ac 24:11-13. As to the second, he confesses himself to be a Christian; but maintains this to be a religion perfectly agreeable to the law and the prophets, and therefore deserving a fair reception, #Ac 24:14,16. And as for profaning the temple, he observes that he behaved there in a most peaceful and regular manner, so that his innocence had been manifest even before the sanhedrim, where the authors of the tumult did not dare to appear against him.

V. 14. **After the way which they call heresy**-This appellation St. Paul corrects. Not that it was then an odious word; but it was not honourable enough. A party or sect (so that word signifies) is formed by men. This way was prescribed by God. The apostle had now said what was sufficient for his defence; but having a fair occasion, he makes an ingenuous confession of his faith in this verse, his hope in the next, his love in the 17th. #Ac 24:14, 15, 17.

So worship I the God of my fathers-This was a very proper plea before a Roman magistrate; as it proved that he was under the protection of the Roman laws, since the Jews were so: whereas had he introduced the worship of new gods he would have forfeited that protection.

Believing all things which are written-Concerning the Messiah.

V. 15. **Both of the just and of the unjust**-In a public court this was peculiarly proper to be observed.

V. 16. **For this cause**-With a view to this,

I also exercise myself-As well as they.

V. 19. **Who ought to have been present before thee**-But the world never commit greater blunders, even against its own laws, than when it is persecuting the children of God.

V. 21. **Unless they think me blamable for this one word**-Which nevertheless was the real truth.
#Ac 23:6.

V. 22. **After I have been more accurately informed**-Which he afterward was; and he doubtless (as well as Festus and Agrippa) transmitted a full account of these things to Rome.

V. 23. **He commanded the centurion to let him have liberty**-To be only a prisoner at large. Hereby the Gospel was spread more and more; not to the satisfaction of the Jews. But they could not hinder it.

V. 24. **And after Paul** had been kept **some days** in this gentle confinement at Cesarea, Felix, who had been absent for a short time, coming thither again, **with Drusilla, his wife**-The daughter of Herod Agrippa, one of the finest women of that age. Felix persuaded her to forsake her husband, Azizus, king of Emessa, and to be married to himself, though a heathen. She was afterward, with a son she had by Felix, consumed in an eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

Concerning the faith in Christ-That is, the doctrine of Christ.

V. 25. **And as he reasoned of justice, temperance, and judgment to come**-This was the only effectual way of preaching Christ to an unjust, lewd judge.

Felix being terrified-How happily might this conviction have ended, had he been careful to pursue the views which were then opening upon his mind! But, like thousands, he deferred the consideration of these things to a more convenient season. A season which, alas! never came. For though he heard again, he was terrified no more.

In the meantime we do not find Drusilla, though a Jewess, was thus alarmed. She had been used to hear of a future judgment: perhaps too she trusted to the being a daughter of Abraham, or to the expiation of the law, and so was proof against the convictions which seized on her husband, though a heathen. Let this teach us to guard against all such false dependencies as tend to elude those convictions that might otherwise be produced in us by the faithful preaching of the word of God. Let us stop our ears against those messengers of Satan, who appear as angels of light; who would teach us to reconcile the hope of salvation with a corrupt heart or an unholy life.

Go thy way for this time-O how will every damned soul one day lament his having neglected such a time as this!

V. 26. **He hoped also**-An evil hope: so when he heard his eye was not single. No marvel then that he profited nothing by all St. Paul's discourses:

that money would be given-By the Christians for the liberty of so able a minister. And waiting for this, unhappy Felix fell short of the treasure of the Gospel.

V. 27. **But after two years**-After St. Paul had been two years a prisoner,

Felix desiring to gratify the Jews, left Paul bound-Thus men of the world, to gratify one another, stretch forth their hands to the things of God! Yet the wisdom of Felix did not profit him, did not satisfy the Jews at all. Their accusations followed him to Rome, and had utterly ruined him, but for the interest which his brother Pallas had with Nero.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XXV.

V. 2. **Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews appeared against Paul**-In so long a time their rage was not cooled. So much louder a call had Paul to the Gentiles.

V. 4. **But Festus answered**-So Festus's care to preserve the imperial privileges was the means of preserving Paul's life. By what invisible springs does God govern the world! With what silence, and yet with what wisdom and energy!

V. 5. **Let those of you who are able**-Who are best able to undertake the journey, and to manage the cause.

If there be any wickedness in him-So he does not pass sentence before he hears the cause.

V. 6. **Not more than ten days**-A short space for a new governor to stay at such a city as Jerusalem. He could not with any convenience have heard and decided the cause of Paul within that time.

V. 7. **Bringing many accusations**-When many accusations are heaped together, frequently not one of them is true.

V. 8. **While he answered**-To a general charge a general answer was sufficient.

V. 9. **Art thou willing to go up to Jerusalem**-Festus could have ordered this without asking Paul. But God secretly overruled the whole, that he might have an occasion of appealing to Rome.

V. 10. **I am standing at Cesar's judgment seat**-For all the courts of the Roman governors were held in the name of the emperor, and by commission from him.

No man can give me up-He expresses it modestly: the meaning is, Thou canst not.

I appeal to Cesar-Which any Roman citizen might do before sentence was passed.

V. 12. **The council**-It was customary for a considerable number of persons of distinction to attend the Roman governors. These constituted a kind of council, with whom they frequently advised.

V. 13. **Agrippa**-The son of Herod Agrippa, #Ac 12:1;

and Bernice-His sister, with whom he lived in a scandalous familiarity. This was the person whom Titus Vespasian so passionately loved, that he would have made her empress, had not the clamours of the Romans prevented it.

V. 15. **Desiring judgment against him**-As upon a previous conviction, which they falsely pretended.

V. 16. **It is not the custom of the Romans**-How excellent a rule, to condemn no one unheard! A rule, which as it is common to all nations, (courts of inquisition only excepted,) so it ought to direct our proceedings in all affairs, not only in public, but private life.

V. 18. **Such things as I supposed**-From their passion and vehemence.

V. 19. **But had certain questions**-How coldly does he mention the things of the last importance!

And about one Jesus-Thus does Festus speak of Him, to whom every knee shall bow!

Whom Paul affirmed to be alive-And was this a doubtful question? But why, O Festus, didst thou doubt concerning it? Only because thou didst not search into the evidence of it. Otherwise that evidence might have opened to thee, till it had grown up into full conviction; and thy illustrious prisoner have led thee into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

V. 23. **With the tribunes and principal men of the city**-The chief officers, both military and civil.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XXVI.

V. 1. **And Paul stretching forth his hand**-Chained as it was: a decent expression of his own earnestness, and proper to engage the attention of his hearers;

answered for himself-Not only refuting the accusations of the Jews, but enlarging upon the faith of the Gospel.

V. 2. **King Agrippa**-There is a peculiar force in thus addressing a person by name. Agrippa felt this.

V. 3. **Who art accurately acquainted**-Which Festus was not;

with the customs-In practical matters;

and questions-In speculative. This word Festus had used in the absence of Paul, **#Ac 25:19**, who, by the Divine leading, repeats and explains it. Agrippa had had peculiar advantages for an accurate knowledge of the Jewish customs and questions, from his education under his father Herod, and his long abode at Jerusalem.

Nothing can be imagined more suitable or more graceful, than this whole discourse of Paul before Agrippa; in which the seriousness of the Christian, the boldness of the apostle, and the politeness of the gentleman and the scholar, appear in a most beautiful contrast, or rather a most happy union.

V. 4. **From my youth, which was from the beginning**-That is, which was from the beginning of my youth.

V. 5. **If they would testify**-But they would not, for they well knew what weight his former life must add to his present testimony.

V. 6. **And now**-This and the two following verses are in a kind of **#Ac 26:6-8** parenthesis, and show that what the Pharisees rightly taught concerning the resurrection, Paul likewise asserted at this day. The ninth verse is connected with the fifth. For Pharisaism **#Ac 26:9, 5** impelled him to persecute.

I stand in judgment for the hope of the promise-Of the resurrection. So it was in effect. For unless Christ had risen, there could have been no resurrection of the dead. And it was chiefly for testifying the resurrection of Christ, that the Jews still persecuted him.

V. 7. **Our twelve tribes**-For a great part of the ten tribes also had at various times returned from the east to their own country, **#Jas 1:1; #1Pe 1:1**.

Worshipping continually night and day-That is, this is what they aim at in all their public and private worship.

V. 8. **Is it judged by you an incredible thing**-It was by Festus, #Ac 25:19, to whom Paul answers as if he had heard him discourse.

V. 9. **I thought**-When I was a Pharisee:

that I ought to do many things-Which he now enumerates.

V. 10. **I shut up many of the saints**-Men not only innocent, but good, just, holy.

I gave my vote against them-That is, I joined with those who condemned them. Perhaps the chief priests did also give him power to vote on these occasions.

V. 11. **I compelled them**-That is, some of them;

to blaspheme-This is the most dreadful of all! Repent, ye enemies of the Gospel. If Spira, who was compelled, suffered so terribly, what will become of those who compel, like Saul, but do not repent like him.

V. 12. #Ac 9:2.

V. 13. **O King**-Most seasonably, in the height of the narration, does he thus fix the king's attention.

Above the brightness of the sun-And no marvel. For what is the brightness of this created sun, to the Sun of righteousness, the brightness of the Father's glory?

V. 14. **In the Hebrew tongue**-St. Paul was not now speaking in Hebrew: when he was, #Ac 23:7, he did not add, *In the Hebrew tongue*. Christ used this tongue both on earth and from heaven.

V. 17. **Delivering thee from the people**-The Jews *and the Gentiles, to whom*, both Jews and Gentiles,

I now send thee-Paul gives them to know, that the liberty he enjoys even in bonds, was promised to him, as well as his preaching to the Gentiles. **I**, denotes the authority of the sender. **Now**, the time whence his mission was dated. For his apostleship, as well as his conversion, commenced at this moment.

V. 18. **To open**-He opens them, who sends Paul; and he does it by Paul who is sent;

their eyes-Both of the Jews and Gentiles:

that they may turn-Through the power of the Almighty, **from** the spiritual **darkness** wherein they were involved, **to the light** of Divine knowledge and holiness, **and from the power of Satan**, who now holds them in sin, guilt, and misery, to the love and happy service of God:

that they may receive through faith-(He seems to place the same blessings in a fuller light,) pardon, holiness, and glory.

V. 19. **From that time**-Having received power to obey,

I was not disobedient-I did obey, I used that power, **#Ga 1:16**. So that even this grace whereby St Paul was influenced was not irresistible.

V. 20. **I declared**-From that hour to this, both to Jew and Gentile,

that they should repent-This repentance, we may observe, is previous both to inward and outward holiness.

V. 21. **For these things**-The apostle now applies all that he had said.

V. 22. **Having obtained help from God**-When all other help failed, God sent the Romans from the castle, and so fulfilled the promise he had made, **#Ac 26:17**.

V. 24. **Festus said, Paul, thou art beside thyself**-To talk of men's rising from the dead! And of a Jew's enlightening not only his own nation, but tho polite and learned Greeks and Romans! Nay, Festus, it is thou that *art beside thyself*. That strikest quite wide of the mark. And no wonder: he saw that nature did not act in Paul; but the grace that acted in him he did not see. And therefore he took all this ardour which animated the apostle for a mere start of learned phrensy.

V. 25. **I am not mad, most excellent Festus**-The style properly belonging to a Roman propretor. How inexpressibly beautiful is this reply! How strong! yet how decent and respectful! Mad men seldom call men by their names, and titles of honour. Thus also St. Paul refutes the charge.

But utter the words of truth (confirmed in the next verse) **and sobriety**-The very reverse of madness. And both these remain, even when the men of God act with the utmost vehemence.

V. 26. **For the king knoweth of these things**-St. Paul having refuted Festus, pursues his purpose, returning naturally, and as it were, step by step, from Festus to Agrippa.

To whom I speak with freedom-This freedom was probably one circumstance which Festus accounted madness.

V. 27. **King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?**-He that believes these, believes Paul, yea, and Christ. The apostle now comes close to his heart. What did Agrippa feel when he heard this?

I know that thou believest!-Here Paul lays so fast hold on the king that he can scarce make any resistance.

V. 28. **Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!**-See here, Festus altogether a heathen, Paul altogether a Christian, Agrippa halting between both. Poor Agrippa! But almost persuaded! So near the mark, and yet fall short! Another step, and thou art within the vail. Reader, stop not with Agrippa; but go on with Paul.

V. 29. **I would to God**-Agrippa had spoke of being a Christian, as a thing wholly in his own power. Paul gently corrects this mistake; intimating, it is the gift and the work of God;

that all that hear me-It was modesty in St. Paul, not to apply directly to them all; yet he looks upon them and observes them;

were such as I am-Christians indeed; full of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He speaks from a full sense of his own happiness, and an overflowing love to all.

V. 30. **And as he said this, the king rose up**-An unspeakably precious moment to Agrippa. Whether he duly improved it or no, we shall see in that day.

V. 31. **This man doth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds**-They speak of his whole life, not of one action only. And could ye learn nothing more than this from that discourse? A favourable judgment of such a preacher, is not all that God requires.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XXVII.

V. 1. **As soon as it was determined to sail**-As being a shorter and less expensive passage to Rome.

V. 2. **Adramyttium**-was a sea port of Mysia. Aristarchus and Luke went with Paul by choice, not being ashamed of his bonds.

V. 3. **Julius treating Paul courteously**-Perhaps he had heard him make his defence.

V. 4. **We sailed under Cyprus**-Leaving it on the left hand.

V. 7. **Cnidus**-was a cape and city of Caria.

V. 8. **The Fair Havens** still retain the name. But the city of Lasea is now utterly lost, together with many more of the hundred cities for which Crete was once so renowned.

V. 9. **The fast**, or day of atonement, was kept on the tenth of Tisri, that is, the 25th of September. This was to them an ill time of sailing; not only because winter was approaching, but also because of the sudden storms, which are still common in the Mediterranean at that time of the year.

Paul exhorted them-Not to leave Crete. Even in external things, faith exerts itself with the greatest presence of mind, and readiness of advice.

V. 10. **Saying to them**-To the centurion and other officers.

V. 11. **The centurion regarded the master**-And indeed it is a general rule, believe an artificer in his own art. Yet when there is the greatest need, a real Christian will often advise even better than him.

V. 12. **Which is a haven**-Having a double opening, one to the southwest, the other to the northwest.

V. 14. **There arose against it**-The south wind; a tempestuous wind, called in those parts Euroclydon. This was a kind of hurricane, not carrying them any one way, but tossing them backward and forward. These furious winds are now called levanters, and blow in all directions from the northeast to the southeast.

V. 16. **We were hardly able to get masters of the boat**-To prevent its being staved.

V. 18. **They lightened the ship**-Casting the heavy goods into the sea.

V. 19. **We cast out the tackling of the ship**-Cutting away even those masts that were not absolutely necessary.

V. 20. **Neither sun nor stars appeared for many days**-Which they could the less spare, before the compass was found out.

V. 21. **This loss**-Which is before your eyes.

V. 23. **The God whose I am, and whom I serve**-How short a compendium of religion! Yet how full! Comprehending both faith, hope, and love.

V. 24. **God hath given**-Paul had prayed for them. And God gave him their lives; perhaps their souls also. And the centurion, subserving the providence of God, gave to Paul the lives of the prisoners. How wonderfully does his providence reign in the most contingent things! And rather will many bad men be preserved with a few good, (so it frequently happens,) than one good man perish with many bad. So it was in this ship: so it is in the world.

Thee-At such a time as this, there was not the same danger, which might otherwise have been, of St. Paul's seeming to speak out of vanity, what he really spoke out of necessity.

All the souls-Not only all the prisoners, as Julius afterward did, **#Ac 27:43**; ask for souls, they shall be given thee: yea, more than thou hopest for,

that sail with thee-So that Paul, in the sight of God, was the master and pilot of the ship.

V. 27. **The fourteenth night**-Since they left Crete, **#Ac 27:18, 19.**

In the Adriatic sea-So the ancients called all that part of the Mediterranean, which lay south of Italy.

V. 30. **The sailors were attempting to flee out of the ship**-Supposing the boat would go more safely over the shallows.

V. 31. **Unless these mariners abide in the ship**-Without them ye know not how to manage her, **ye cannot be saved**-He does not say *we*. That they would not have regarded. The soldiers were not careful for the lives of the prisoners: nor was Paul careful for his own. We may learn hence, to use the most proper means for security and success, even while we depend on Divine Providence, and wait for the accomplishment of God's own promise. He never designed any promise should encourage rational creatures to act in an irrational manner; or to remain inactive, when he has given them natural capacities of doing something, at least, for their own benefit. To expect the accomplishment of any promise, without exerting these, is at best vain and dangerous presumption, if all pretence of relying upon it be not profane hypocrisy.

V. 33. **Ye continue fasting, having taken nothing**-No regular meal, through a deep sense of their extreme danger. Let us not wonder then, if men who have a deep sense of their extreme danger of

everlasting death, for a time forget even to eat their bread, or to attend to their worldly affairs. Much less let us censure that as madness, which may be the beginning of true wisdom.

V. 34. **This is for your preservation**-That ye may be the better able to swim to shore.

V. 36. **Then they were all encouraged**-By his example, as well as words.

V. 38. **Casting out the wheat**-So firmly did they now depend on what St. Paul had said.

V. 39. **They did not know the land**-Which they saw near them: **having a level shore**.

V. 40. **Loosing the rudder bands**-Their ships had frequently two rudders, one on each side. were fastened while they let the ship drive; but were now loosened, when they had need of them to steer her into the creek.

V. 41. **A place where two seas met**-Probably by reason of a sand bank running parallel with the shore.

V. 42. **The counsel**-Cruel, unjust, ungrateful.

V. 44. **They all escaped safe to land**-And some of them doubtless received the apostle as a teacher sent from God. These would find their deliverance from the fury of the sea, but an earnest of an infinitely greater deliverance, and are long ere this lodged with him in a more peaceful harbour than Malta, or than the earth could afford.

THE ACTS

CHAP. XXVIII.

V. 1. **Melita** or Malta, is about twelve miles broad, twenty long, and sixty distant from Sicily to the south. It yields abundance of honey, (whence its name was taken,) with much cotton, and is very fruitful, though it has only three feet depth of earth above the solid rock. The Emperor Charles the Fifth gave it, in 1530, to the knights of Rhodes, driven out of Rhodes by the Turks. They are a thousand in number, of whom five hundred always reside on the island.

V. 2. **And the barbarians**-So the Romans and Greeks termed all nations but their own. But surely the generosity shown by these uncultivated inhabitants of Malta, was far more valuable than all the varnish which the politest education could give, where it taught not humanity and compassion.

V. 4. **And when the barbarians saw-they said**-Seeing also his chains,

Doubtless this man is a murderer-Such rarely go unpunished even in this life;

whom vengeance hath not suffered to live-They look upon him as a dead man already.

It is with pleasure that we trace among these barbarians the force of conscience, and the belief of a particular providence: which some people of more learning have stupidly thought it philosophy to despise. But they erred in imagining, that calamities must always be interpreted as judgments. Let us guard against this, lest, like them, we condemn not only the innocent, but the excellent of the earth.

V. 5. **Having shaken off the venomous animal, he suffered no harm**-The words of an eminent modern historian are, "No venomous kind of serpent now breeds in Malta, neither hurts if it be brought thither from another place. Children are seen there handling and playing even with scorpions; I have seen one eating them." If this be so, it seems to be fixed by the wisdom of God, as an eternal memorial of what he once wrought there.

V. 6. **They changed their minds, and said he was a god**-Such is the stability of human reason! A little before he was a murderer; and presently he is a god: (just as the people of Lystra; one hour sacrificing, and the next stoning:) nay, but there is a medium. He is neither a murderer nor a god, but a man of God. But natural men never run into greater mistakes, than in judging of the children of God.

V. 7. **The chief man of the island**-In wealth if not in power also.

Three days-The first three days of our stay on the island.

V. 11. **Whose sign was**-It was the custom of the ancients to have images on the head of their ships, from which they took their names.

Castor and Pollux-Two heathen gods who were thought favourable to mariners.

V. 15. **The brethren**-That is, the Christians,

came out thence to meet us-It is remarkable that there is no certain account by whom Christianity was planted at Rome. Probably some inhabitants of that city were at Jerusalem on the day of pentecost, #Ac 2:10; and being then converted themselves, carried the Gospel thither at their return. Appii-Forum was a town fifty-one miles from Rome; the Three Taverns about thirty.

He took courage-He saw Christ was at Rome also, and now forgot all the troubles of his journey.

V. 16. **With the soldier**-To whom he was chained, as the Roman custom was.

V. 17. **And after three days**-Given to rest and prayer,

Paul called the chief of the Jews together-He always sought the Jews first; but being now bound, he could not so conveniently go round to them.

Though I have done nothing-Seeing him chained, they might have suspected he had. Therefore he first obviates this suspicion.

V. 19. **When the Jews opposed it**-He speaks tenderly of them, not mentioning their repeated attempts to murder him.

Not that I had any thing to accuse my nation of-Not that I had any design to accuse others, but merely to defend myself.

V. 20. **The hope of Israel**-What Israel hopes for, namely, the Messiah and the resurrection.

V. 21. **We have neither received letters concerning thee**-There must have been a peculiar providence in this,

nor has any of the brethren-The Jews,

related-Professedly, in a set discourse,

or spoke-Occasionally, in conversation,

any evil of thee-How must the bridle then have been in their mouth!

V. 22. **This sect we know is every where spoken against**-This is no proof at all of a bad cause, but a very probable mark of a good one.

V. 23. **To whom he expounded, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus**-These were his two grand topics, 1. That the kingdom of the Messiah was of a

spiritual, not temporal nature: 2. That Jesus of Nazareth was the very person foretold, as the Lord of that kingdom. On this head he had as much need to persuade as to convince, their will making as strong a resistance as their understanding.

V. 24. **And some believed the things that were spoken**-With the heart, as well as understanding.

V. 25. **Well spake the Holy Ghost to your fathers**-Which is equally applicable to you.

V. 26. **Hearing ye shall hear**-That is, ye shall most surely hear,

and shall not understand-The words manifestly denote a judicial blindness, consequent upon a wilful and obstinate resistance of the truth. First they would not, afterward they could not, believe. **#Isa 6:9, &c; #Mt 13:14; #Joh 12:40.**

V. 28. **The salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles**-Namely, from this time. Before this no apostle had been at Rome. St. Paul was the first.

V. 30. **And Paul continued two whole years**-After which this book was written, long before St. Paul's death, and was undoubtedly published with his approbation by St. Luke, who continued with him to the last, **#2Ti 4:11.**

And received all that came to him-Whether they were Jews or Gentiles. These two years completed twenty-five years after our Saviour's passion. Such progress had the Gospel made by that time, in the parts of the world which lay west of Jerusalem, by the ministry of St. Paul among the Gentiles. How far eastward the other apostles had carried it in the same time, history does not inform us.

V. 31. **No man forbidding him**-Such was the victory of the word of God. While Paul was preaching at Rome, the Gospel shone with its highest lustre. Here therefore the Acts of the Apostles end; and end with great advantage. Otherwise St. Luke could easily have continued his narrative to the apostle's death.