



**A Commentary On  
Matthew's Gospel (KJV)**

**Part 2**

**Dr. John Gill D.D.**

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**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW**

The Gospel According to Matthew was the first written gospel and published sometime between (AD 31-38)<sup>1</sup>. It was written before Mark's (AD 38-44) and Luke's Gospel (AD-61).

Matthew was a Jew and one of the 12 Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and named Levi. He was a tax collector for the Romans<sup>2</sup>. There are two strong traditions that Matthew made a personal copy of his gospel and gave it to Barnabas, a companion of the Apostle Paul.

Matthew tells of the birth and lineage of Jesus. The life death, resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven.

This publication is presented knowing that Matthew penned his gospel that contains all those things the Lord Jesus wanted him to publish<sup>3</sup>.

Matthew records the Olivet prophesy of Jesus concerning those fearful things that were to come to pass within the period of that generation<sup>4</sup> and after his ascension.

It is the intention of the publisher that this will assist in making the gospel known to all people and is published in two parts PART 1 chapter 1 to 16.  
and PART 2 chapter 17 to 28.

**KING JAMES VERSION (KJV)**

This is the English bible and was published in 1611 and known as the Authorised Version (AV). It is the New Testament that was translated from Greek manuscripts known as the Textus Receptus into English.

By the first half of the 18C, the Authorised Version had become effectively unchallenged as the English translation of the scriptures and used in Anglican and English Protestant Churches. Since this time Christians have used the KJV and all their theological and devotional writings are based on the KJV. Christians have by

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1 See The Last Decade, by E. Stevens, "When the New Testament Books Were written". ISBN 1-932844-17-1 – First Electronic Edition (PDF) Published by: International Preterist Association, Inc. Bradford, Pennsylvania USA <https://www.preterist.org/>

2 Luke 5 verse 27.

3 Matt 28 verse 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nation, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of The Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you;"

4 Matthew 24 verse 34. This generation shall not oass, till all these things be fulfilled.

continued use of the KJV have learned to identify those words and phrases that need clarification. A revision is not necessary.

In 1881 Wescot and Hort published a different version of the greek new testament called, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, (1881). This differed from the textus receptus in over 5,700 places<sup>5</sup>. They claimed it to be the oldest and most reliable text of the New Testament.

All translations from this greek text and its eclectic sources have proved to be unreliable and for this reason the KJV is the preferred version of the bible.

treatment of the Olivet Prophecy in Matthew shows he noted the significance of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and it is believed by the publisher that had Dr. Gill known J.S. Russell the eschatology taught in his book *The Parousia*<sup>6</sup> he would have been enabled to further the cause of God and Truth and clearly teach a fulfilled view of prophecy know as Preterism. It is hoped this commentary will be of helped to those Preterist who have no knowledge of Calvinistic soteriology.

### COMMENTARY OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW by John Gill

This commentary written by John Gill (1697 - 14 October 1771) is a verse by verse comment on each verse of the gospel of Matthew. It is part of his 3 volume set of the New Testament (1735-38). He was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life.

John Gill was awarded in 1748, an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Aberdeen. He was a profound scholar and a prolific author.

His most important works are:

- The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated (London, 1731)
- The Cause of God and Truth (4 parts, 1735–38), a retort to Daniel Whitby's Five Points
- An Exposition of the New Testament (3 vols., 1746–48), which with his Exposition of the Old Testament (6 vols., 1748–63) forms his magnum opus
  - A Collection of Sermons and Tracts[1]
  - A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents (1767)[1]
  - A Body of Doctrinal Divinity (1767)
  - A Body of Practical Divinity (1770).

He taught and maintained the Doctrines of Grace and contended against the Arminianism of John Wesley and has been classified by some as a Hyper Calvinist.

His views on Eschatology were Historic however his

<sup>5</sup> [https://jesus-is-savior.com/Bible/all\\_corrupt.htm](https://jesus-is-savior.com/Bible/all_corrupt.htm)

<sup>6</sup> See Further Publications at the end of this book.

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## INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW

The subject of this book, and indeed of all the writings of the New Testament, is the Gospel. The Greek word εὐαγγέλιον signifies a joyful message, good news, glad tidings of good things; such as Christ was anointed to preach, the Angels brought to the shepherds, and the Evangelists, Apostles, and Ministers of Christ published to the world. Isa 61:1. And such is the account given by this inspired writer, of the incarnation, life, actions, ministry, miracles, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ; whereby peace and reconciliation, pardon and righteousness, atonement and redemption, life and salvation, are obtained for lost, perishing sinners. The Jews, to whom the message of grace was first sent, and among whom the Gospel was first preached, having despised and rejected it; they and their posterity, in allusion to the word “Evangelion”, most wickedly and blasphemously call the whole New Testament, אונ גליון ר אונ גליון “Aven Gilion”<sup>7</sup>, a “revelation”, or “volume of iniquity and vanity”; but “blessed are the people that know the joyful sound”, see Ps 89:15.

The writer of this Gospel, Matthew, who also was called Levi in Luke 5:27 was by occupation a publican, or tax-gatherer, and was in his employ when Christ called him by his grace. He was one of the twelve Apostles sent forth by Christ to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, Mt 10:3 and was honoured to be the first of the writers of the New Testament, and to be the first publisher therein of the good news of the incarnate Saviour; and was a wonderful instance of the rich and sovereign grace of God. Though he was employed in collecting the Roman tax, yet he was of Jewish extract; as appears from his being called the son of Alphaeus, Mark 2:14 and from his name Matthew Levi; for as the latter, so the former is an Hebrew name. The Jews say<sup>8</sup> one of the disciples of Jesus was called מתתאי, Matthai or Matthew: his name signifies a “gift” or “given”; he was one of those the Father had given to Christ, and was kept by him, when the son of perdition was lost, Joh 17:6.

It may not be improper to inquire in what language this Gospel was written. The ancient Christian writers were generally of opinion, that Matthew wrote it in Hebrew; Papias and<sup>9</sup> Pantaenus were of this mind, as

<sup>7</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 116. 1. Vet. Nizzachou. p. 15, 39, 87, 94, 137, 186. Ed. Wagenseil.

<sup>8</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39. p. 113. Vid. ib. l. 5. c. 8. p. 172. c 10. p. 175. & l. 6. c. 25. p. 226.

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEWS XVII

also Irenaeus <sup>10</sup>, Origen <sup>11</sup> Eusebius <sup>12</sup>, Athanasius <sup>13</sup>, Epiphanius <sup>14</sup>, and Jerom <sup>15</sup>; and it is asserted in the titles of the Arabic and Persic versions, and at the end of the Syriac version of this Gospel, that it was written in that language; and this opinion is espoused by Grotius and Hammond, though justly exploded by others; for what has been published by Munster, Mercer, Hutter, and Robertson, are translations, made by themselves or others, and of no antiquity: and since Hebrew and Syriac words are interpreted in this Gospel, see Mt 1:23 which would not have been done, had it been written in either language; and since Matthew generally follows the Septuagint version in the passages cited by him out of the Old Testament; and since the Hebrew language was not generally known at that time to the common people, only to the learned; for the law and the prophets, when read in the synagogues in that language, required an interpreter; and since the Greek tongue was the language more commonly spoken, and the rest of the Evangelists wrote in Greek, and the Gospel was designed for the Gentiles as well as the Jews; it is most reasonable to conclude that this Gospel also was wrote in Greek; whereby that ancient prophecy was fulfilled, at least in part, “God shall enlarge” or “persuade Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem”, Ge 9:27 the Gospel being published in the language of Japheth, the Greek language, which the Jews, the posterity of Shem, now understood; agreeably to which the Palmudic writers interpret the prophecy; says <sup>16</sup> Bar Kaphra, mentioning the above words, “They shall speak *יפה של* in the language of Japheth, in the tents of Shem;” or, “the words of the law shall be spoken in the language of Japheth, in the midst of the tents of Shem <sup>17</sup>.” R. Jochanan <sup>18</sup> explains them thus: “*רבריו של יפה* “the words of Japheth” shall be in the tents of Shem; and says R. Chiya ben Aba, the sense of it is, The beauty of Japheth shall be in the tents of Shem.” Which the gloss interprets thus: “The beauty of Japheth is the language of Javan, or the Greek language, which language is more beautiful than that of any other of the sons of Japheth.”

10 Adv. Haeres. l. 3. c 1.

11 In Matt. Tom. l. p. 203. Ed. Huet.

12 Eccl. Hist. l. 3. cap. 24. p. 95.

13 Synops. sacr. Script. p. 134. Vol. 2.

14 Contra Haeres. l. 1. Haer. 29. & 30.

15 Catalog. Script. Eccles fol. 90. Tom. 1. ad Hedib. fol. 46. Tom. 3.

16 T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 71. 2.

17 Bereshit. Rabba, sect. 36. fol. 32. 1.

18 T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 2.

The time when this Gospel was written is said <sup>19</sup> by some to be in the eighth or ninth, by others, in the fifteenth year after the ascension of Christ, when the Evangelist had received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, among which was the gift of tongues; and when the promise of Christ had been made good to him, John 14:26.

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

### CHAPTER XVII

King James Version (KJV)

*1 The Transfiguration of Christ. 14 He heareth the lunatick. Fortelleth His own passion. 24 Payeth tribute.*

Matthew 17

[1] And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

[2] And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

[3] And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

[4] Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

[5] While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

[6] And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

[7] And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

[8] And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

[9] And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

[10] And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

[11] And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

[12] But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of

<sup>19</sup> Vid. Fabricii Biblioth. Graec. l. 4. c. 5. sect. 2. p. 197. & Vales. not. in Euseb. Eccl. Hist. p. 52.

man suffer of them.

[13] Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

[14] And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

[15] Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

[16] And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

[17] Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

[18] And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

[19] Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

[20] And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

[21] Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

[22] And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:

[23] And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

[24] And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

[25] He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

[26] Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

[27] Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

## JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW CHAPTER XVII

### Matthew 17:1

Ver. 1 **And after six days,**

That is, so long after Christ's conversation with his disciples at Caesarea Philippi, Peter's confession of him, and the reproof he gave him, upon his intimating that he should suffer and die, and Christ's resentment of it; after he had discoursed about his disciples taking up their cross, and following him; and of men's losing and finding their lives; and after the promise, or prophecy, that he had given out, that some then present should not die, until he came into his kingdom. Mark says the same as here, Mark 9:2 but Luke 9:28 says, it was about an eight days after, which may be reconciled in this manner; Matthew and Mark leave out the day in which Christ delivered the above sayings, and that in which he was transfigured, and so reckon but six days; and Luke takes them both into the account, and makes it eight days, so that they all agree; and it appears, in short, to be that day seven night.

**Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother:**

Peter is taken, though he had so lately offended his master; Christ did not bear the offence in mind, but freely forgave him, and still loved him: James was not the brother of our Lord, who was of that name, but the Son of Zebedee; as appears from John being his brother, who was the beloved disciple; these three were all favourite disciples, and were at other times admitted to be with him, when others were not, Mt 26:37. Such a number was taken, as being proper and sufficient to bear witness of the truth of the following account of Christ's transfiguration;

**and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.** Luke says, to pray; as he was wont to do, in such places. This mountain is generally said to be Tabor; but for what reason does not appear. Christ was going to Caesarea Philippi, when he had that discourse with his disciples, which this account is connected with; and though it was a week after, yet we have no intimation of his removing from these parts, with his disciples; only of his leading them up into a mountain: and quickly after this, we hear of him at Capernaum, which was ten miles from Mount Tabor. Dr. Lightfoot {z} thinks, that this was the mountain, which Caesarea was at the foot of; where formerly, the first idolatry was set up, one of Jeroboam's calves; and now the eternal Son of God is shown, in the confession of Peter, and in the illustrious demonstration of the Messiah. Since the goodly mountain Lebanon, and which was a very high one, was in those parts which Moses had a sight of before he died; why may it not be that, which he now descended upon, to be one of the witnesses from heaven, of Christ's transfiguration?

**Matthew 17:2**

Ver. 2. **And was transfigured before them,**

Peter, James, and John, before whom he was metamorphosed, or changed into another form; for not the substance of his body was changed, nor even the shape of it altered, only it received a more glorious form; that whereas before he appeared in the form of a servant, and looked mean and despicable, now he appeared in the form and majesty of God; or there was a divine glory; which from his deity showed itself in a visible manner through his flesh:

**and his face did shine as the sun**

it had still the same appearance of an human face, but had such a dazzling glory upon it, as equalled the sun shining in its full strength:

**and his raiment was white as the light:** he did not put off his clothes, nor were the nature and substance, and fashion of them changed; but such rays of glory darted through his flesh, and through his clothes, as made them as bright and shining, as the light of the sun at noon day. Mark says, they became “exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them”. The Vulgate Latin reads, “as snow”, here; and so do the Ethiopic version, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel. Snow has a peculiar whiteness in it, and is therefore made use of, to express the glittering brightness of Christ’s raiment; and the fuller is mentioned, who by the Jews<sup>20</sup> is called *obwk*, and means one that whitens wool, or raiment, and such an one is here designed: not that any fuller makes garments of another colour white; for though this may be done, it is not the work of fullers, but dyers: but fullers, whatever colour garments are of, if sullied and spotted, can restore them to their native colour; and if white, can bring them to their former whiteness: now Christ’s garments were as white, yea, whiter, than any such men could possibly make garments, that were white at first: what colour Christ’s garments were of before, is not certain; now they appeared white, to the greatest degree of whiteness. Dr. Hammond<sup>21</sup> has a conjecture, that in the phrase “on earth”, reference is had to the earth fullers make use of in cleaning, and which is called “fullers’ earth”; and that the words are to be rendered, “as no fuller, by or with earth can white them”; but if this will not bear, the sense is, that there is no fuller, nor ever was, or ever will be upon earth, that can make raiment so white as Christ’s was.

**Matthew 17:3**

20 Maimon. in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 10. sect. 10,

21 In Mark ix. 3.

Ver. 3. **And behold there appeared unto them,**

The disciples:

**Moses and Elias;**

Moses the giver of the law, and Elias one of the chief of the prophets: one of them had been dead near a thousand and five hundred years, and the other had been caught up to heaven, about nine hundred years before this. The Jews sometimes speak of these two as together. They say<sup>22</sup>,

“that the Shekinah never descends below, but whylaw hvm, “Moses and Elias” ascend above.”

Yea, they expect that these two will come together in future time; for so they represent<sup>23</sup> a God saying to Moses;

“Moses, as thou hast given thy life for them (the Israelites) in this world, so in time to come (the days of the Messiah) when I shall bring Elias the prophet, שניכם באיני כאחד, “you two shall come together”.

Now they came. Luke says, they appeared “in glory”: in glorious bodies, in a glory upon their bodies; like, though inferior, to the glorious body of Christ, now transfigured: that they appeared in their own real bodies, no doubt need be made; about the body of Elijah, or Elias, there is no difficulty; since he was carried soul and body to heaven, he died not, but was changed; and has ever since remained in a glorious body, in which he doubtless now appeared: and why this should not be the case of Moses, or why he should appear in another body, and not his own, I see not; for though he died, yet he was buried by the Lord, and no man ever knew the place of his sepulchre; and there was a dispute about his body, between Michael and the devil, all which are uncommon circumstances: so that it might be, that his body was, quickly after his death, raised and restored to him; or at this time, as a pledge of the resurrection of the dead, as Christ’s transfiguration was of his glory. The Jews have a notion that Moses is not dead, but is ascended, and stands and ministers to God, in the highest heavens<sup>24</sup>: the appearance of these two with Christ, was to show, that Christ is the end of the law and prophets; that there is an entire agreement between him and them, and that they have their full accomplishment in him; and also shows, that he was neither Elias, nor

22 T. Bab. Succab, fol. 5. 1.

23 Debarim Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 239. 2.

24 T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 2. Maimon. praefat. ad Seder Zeraim in Talmud. fol. 86. 4. {



any of the prophets, as some took him to be; since he was distinct from them, and the chief and more glorious than any of them. If it should be asked; how came the disciples to know these two to be Moses and Elias, since they never saw them before, nor could have any statues or pictures of them, these being not allowed among the Jews; nor do the accounts of them in Scripture seem to be sufficient to direct them to such a thought; especially, since by their glorification, they must be greatly altered: it may be replied, they knew them, either by immediate divine revelation, or by the discourse that passed between them and Christ; for it follows,

**talking with him.**

The Jews often speak of the appearance of Elias to their doctors, and of his conversing with them, and teaching them. Whether this is done with design to lessen the glory of this appearance, I will not say; however, they cannot reasonably object to the probability of this account, since they make it to be so frequent among themselves; though they look upon it as an high favour, and that such are holy good men, that are indulged with it, take an instance or two: thus they say <sup>25</sup> of a certain person,

“Lo! the pious man, whom Elias used hydhb yet-vm, “to converse with””

And elsewhere it is said <sup>26</sup>,

“R. Phineas and R. Mari, the sons of R. Chasda, were godly men, Mhme rbdm whylaw, “and Elias was talking with them”, and they were priests.”

What Moses and Elias were talking with our Lord about, is expressed by Luke, See Gill on “Luke 9:31”.

**Matthew 17:4**

Ver. 4. **Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus**

Which was, as Luke informs us, after he, and James, and John, awoke out of sleep; for it being night when Christ was transfigured, and they weary, were overpressed, and fell asleep on the mount, as they afterwards did in the garden with him: but when they were awaked, either by the talk of the men with Christ, or by the rays of brightness and glory, which darted from them, and especially from Christ, to their great surprise; they saw the glory that was upon him, and observed the two men that were with him, who appeared also in glorious forms; whom either by revelation, or the sequel of their

discourse, they knew to be Moses and Elias: and just as these were taking their leave of Christ, Peter, charmed with such objects, and with such delightful company, and pleasant conversation, he had the happiness of hearing part of, addresses himself to Christ and says,

**Lord, it is good for us to be here;**

in this mountain, with thyself and such company; better than to be below among the throng and multitude, where nothing but misery and distress are to be seen, and noise and tumult heard; or it is better to be here, than to go to Jerusalem, and there suffer and die; the horror of which, is thought by some, still to abide on Peter’s mind.

**If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles:**

tents, or booths, such as were made, at the feast of tabernacles, of boughs and branches of trees, to keep off heat, cold, and rains:

**one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias;**

Luke adds, “not knowing what he said”; and Mark, “for he wist not what to say”: the one representing him, as with the rapture and surprise, not himself; and the other, under the awe and dread of such majesty, as at the utmost loss what to say, agreeably to such a situation of things: not but that he knew what words he did deliver, and with what view; but he spake as a mistaken man, being ignorant of the design of this appearance; which was, not that this glory should continue, only that he should be an emblem and pledge of what was future; and besides, he was wrong in putting these two men upon an equal foot with Christ, each of them being to have a separate tabernacle as he; and he appeared to be quite out of the way, in proposing earthly tabernacles for glorified persons to dwell in, who had an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: moreover, as to the mystical sense, Moses and Elias, the law and the prophets, were not to be considered as in distinct apartments, and separate from Christ, but as agreeing with him, and fulfilled and swallowed up in him; who only, according to the voice that followed, was to be heard and attended to, and not they, as distinct from him.

**Matthew 17:5**

Ver. 5. **While he yet spake,**

That is, while Peter was proposing the above to Christ, before an answer could be given by him, and which was unworthy of one, another scene of things presents, and a full answer is returned him by a voice from the Father; directing him and his fellow disciples, to attend to Jesus only, and not to Moses and Elias;

**and behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them;**

<sup>25</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 7. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Juchasin, fol. 101. 1. Vid. fol. 79. 1. & 118. 2. & 13. 132. 1. & T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 106. 1.

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEWS XVII

that is, Jesus, Moses, and Elias; the two last of which were seen no more; and which cloud covered them, as the cloud of glory covered the Israelites in the wilderness: and which, as it ceased at the death of Moses, the first prophet; one like unto it appeared at the declaration of Christ, as the greater prophet, spoken of, and typified by Moses. The disciples at its first appearance were not under it, and overshadowed by it; for Luke adds, “and they feared as they entered into the cloud”; there was such a solemnity and glory in it, as struck their minds with awe and fear, as they gradually came into it, and under it. This cloud, which is said to be a “bright” one, was a symbol of the divine presence, and a token of the love, grace, and favour of God; and expressive of the brightness and clearness of the Gospel dispensation, in distinction from the obscurity of the legal one, signified by the thick, dark, and black cloud, God descended in on Mount Sinai, when he gave the law;

### **and behold, a voice out of the cloud.**

The word “behold”, is prefixed both to the cloud and to the voice out of it, which were both wonderful and surprising; and which voice came from heaven, and from the excellent glory, from God the Father in heaven: as says Peter, who was now present, 2Pe 1:17. Which said,

### **this is my beloved Son;**

not a servant, as Moses, Elias, and the rest of the prophets were: though as Mediator, and as considered in his office capacity, he was a servant; but in this clause, he is considered in his personal character and relation to the Father, as a divine person, who was the Son of God: not by creation, as angels and men are the sons of God; nor by adoption, as saints are; or on account of his miraculous incarnation, and resurrection from the dead; whereby indeed, he was manifested and declared to be the Son of God, which he was before; but on account of his natural relation to God, as his Father; he being the eternal, essential, and only begotten Son of God, in a way of filiation no creature is, and which, is ineffable by us. And as such he is dearly beloved of God his Father, being his image and the brightness of his glory; of the same nature and perfections with him, and equal to him. So he ever was, and will be, and that even in the meanest form and lowest condition, in which he has appeared: he was his beloved Son, when he was made flesh and dwelt among men, while submitting to ordinances, as to baptism, and obeying his Father’s will, when covered with reproach, and full of sorrows; when he hung upon the cross, and laid down his life for his people; which he showed, by concealing nothing from him; by putting all

things into his hands, and by appointing him the head of the church, the Saviour of the body, and the judge of quick and dead.

### **In whom I am well pleased:**

Mark and Luke have not this clause, but Peter, who was present, and heard the words spoken, mentions it, 2Pe 1:17 which confirms Matthew’s relation. This regards, not so much the well pleasedness of God with the person of Christ, which is expressed in the former clause; but signifies that he was in him, as Mediator, well pleased with all his people; he was well pleased with his righteousness he was working out, whereby the law was magnified, and made honourable; and with the sacrifice he was about to offer up, which would be of a sweet smelling savour to him, his justice being entirely satisfied with it; and with all he did and suffered in human nature; which were things that always pleased the Father, being according to his will, his counsel and covenant: and so he graciously accepted of, and was infinitely well pleased with all his elect, as considered in him, and represented by him, on account of his righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction:

### **hear ye him;**

as the former clause chiefly respects that part of his mediatorial office, the priestly, this regards his prophetic office principally, and also his kingly office; so that in this divine testimony, first his sonship is bore witness to, and then his several offices; which his sonship is the foundation of, and qualifies him to bear and execute. This clause has the very words which Moses delivered, when he spoke of the Messiah, the great prophet like unto himself, that should be raised up among the Jews; saying, “unto him ye shall hearken”, De 18:15. So that these words, “hear ye him”, most clearly point to Christ, as being this prophet, who is to be heard, and he only; not Moses, but he, the prophet Moses prophesied of; nor Elias, or any of the other prophets, but one greater than them all: hear and believe his prophecies, concerning his sufferings, death, and resurrection, lately delivered by him; listen to, and embrace his doctrines, as coming from God, and as having a divine impress upon them, and being confirmed by miraculous works; submit to his ordinances, and obey his commands, as king of saints; hear him always, and in all things.

### **Matthew 17:6**

#### **Ver. 6. And when the disciples heard it,**

The voice out of the cloud, and which they apprehended came from God, and was uttered with so

much majesty:

**they fell on their face:**

not so much out of reverence, or for the sake of adoration, but as persons struck with astonishment and fear, and were as half dead; and so fell with their faces fiat to the ground, not being able to stand before God, to behold his majesty, and hear his voice:

**and were sore afraid:**

they were filled with fear, when, awaking out of their sleep, they saw the surprising glory of Christ, and of the two men that were with him, insomuch that they knew not what to think, or say; and so they were when they entered into the cloud, and still more upon hearing the voice of God himself, even though it was a voice of love, grace, and mercy; see De 5:24. But yet they were not struck with so much amazement and surprise, as not to know what was said; for they distinctly heard the words, rightly understood, and faithfully related them; from whom the evangelists had them, and which Peter perfectly remembered, and recorded many years after.

**Matthew 17:7**

Ver. 7. **And Jesus came and touched them,**

The disciples were at some little distance from Christ, but he observing the fear and surprise they were in, came to their relief and assistance; which he did not disdain to give, notwithstanding the glory he was covered with; but acts the part of a mediator between God and them, and lays hold on them to raise them up, whom the majesty of God's voice had cast down: the Persic version renders it, "he came and brought them to themselves"; who were just fainting and swooning away, at the awfulness of the voice:

**and said, arise, and be not afraid:**

it is not the voice of an angry God, but of God well pleased with me, and in me with you; it is the voice of my God, and your God, of my Father, and your Father; arise, stand on your feet, take heart, and be of good courage, no hurt will come to you.

**Matthew 17:8**

Ver. 8. **And when they had lift up their eyes,**

And "looked round about", as Mark says, to see whether the same objects still continued, as Moses and Elias; and the bright cloud:

**they saw no man;**

neither Moses nor Elias, who were both gone: signifying, that though the law and the prophets were till this time, they were now finished and completed, and the Mosaic economy was to be no more; as these

men appeared no more after, nor will they till the second coming of Christ. And Mark has it, "they saw no man any more"; that is, these men any more, neither then, nor afterwards, "save Jesus only". Mark adds, "with themselves"; in the same form as before his transfiguration. Christ is the only Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer; the only Prophet, Priest, and King; and who only is to be, and can be beheld as such; and who does, and will abide with his people; and helps, comforts, and saves them, when none else can. Luke observes, that "when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone"; which was so ordered, that it might be a clear case, that this voice was only concerning Christ, and not either Moses or Elias.

**Matthew 17:9**

Ver. 9. **And as they came down from the mountain,**  
Where all these things had been transacted,

**Jesus charged them, saying, tell the vision to no man:**

by the "vision" is meant, as it is explained in Mark, "what things they had seen"; as Moses and Elias, and the bright cloud that overshadowed them, and Christ transfigured before them, in a surprising, glorious manner. These Christ strictly ordered Peter, James, and John, to speak of to no man whatever; no, not their fellow disciples; who either would be apt to disbelieve them, on account of the greatness of them, as Thomas did the resurrection of Christ afterwards; or lest they should be troubled and displeased, that they were not admitted to the same sight; and especially not to the multitude, or to any other person,

**until the son of man be risen again from the dead;**

meaning himself and his resurrection, when such proof would be given of his mission, authority, and glory, which would make this account more easy to be believed: besides, he had told the Jews, that no sign, that is, from heaven, as this voice was, should be given, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas; referring to his resurrection, which would be a sure testimony of the truth of his Messiahship. This order of Christ was strictly observed by the disciples; for Luke, says, "they kept it close"; to themselves, in their own breasts; it lay concealed between these three; "and told no man in those days, any of those things which they had seen": and Mark says, "they kept that saying within themselves"; only as he adds, they were "questioning one with another, what the rising from the dead should mean": for they were not yet reconciled to the Messiah's dying, which was contrary to their expectation of a

temporal kingdom; and therefore could not tell what to make of his rising again, whether this had not some secret, mystical meaning; for of his resurrection from the dead, in a literal sense, they had no notion; though it was foretold in the writings of the Old Testament, and had been so lately affirmed by Christ himself.

**Matthew 17:10**

Ver. 10. **And his disciples asked him, saying,**

That is, these three, Peter, James, and John, before they came to the rest; whilst they were going down the mountain, or from it, to the place where the others were; for the rest knew nothing of the appearance of Elias, and so cannot be thought to join in a question concerning him.

**Why then say the Scribes, that Elias must first come?**

That is, come before the Messiah comes; for certain it is, that this was the sense of the Scribes, as it was of the ancient Jews, and is still the opinion of the modern ones. They say <sup>27</sup>,

“that in the second year of Ahaziah, Elias was hid; nor will he appear, till the Messiah comes; then he will appear, and will be hid a second time; and then will not appear, till Gog and Magog come.”

And they expressly affirm <sup>28</sup>, that

“before the coming of the son of David, rvbl whyla aby, “Elias will come to bring the good news” of it.”

And this, they say <sup>29</sup>, will be one day before the coming of the Messiah. And Maimonides <sup>30</sup> observes,

“that there are of their wise men that say, **יבא אליהו** “that before the coming of the Messiah, Elias shall come””

So Trypho the Jew, the same with R. Tarphon, so often mentioned in Talmudic writings, disputing with Justin Martyr, tells him <sup>31</sup>, that the Messiah,

“shall not know himself, nor have any power, mecri an elywn Hliav, “till Elias comes”, and anoints him, and makes him known to all.”

And hence the Targumist <sup>32</sup> often speaks of Messiah

and Elias as together, and of things done by them; and in their prayers, petitions are put for them, as to come together <sup>33</sup>: this is founded upon a mistaken sense of Mal 4:5 and which is the general sense of their commentators <sup>34</sup>. Now the Scribes made use of this popular sense, to disprove Jesus being the Messiah: they argued, that if he was the Messiah, Elias would be come; but whereas he was not come, therefore he could not be the Messiah. The disciples having just now seen Elias, are put in mind of this tenet of the Scribes, and of their use of it; and inquire of Christ, not so much about the truth of it, and the reason of their imbibing it, as why they were suffered to make use of it, to his disadvantage; and especially why they, the disciples, should be forbid publishing what they had seen; whereas, were they allowed to divulge this vision, and bear their testimony to this truth, that Elias had appeared, and they had seen him, it might be a means of stopping the mouths of these Scribes; and of convicting men of the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus, upon their own principles, and of confirming them that believed it: or else the sense is, whereas they had seen Elias, and he was gone again, without making any public appearance in the nation, their question is, how came the Scribes to say, that he should come first? and if there was any truth in this, how came it to pass, that he did not come sooner, even before Christ came in the flesh; and inasmuch as he did now appear, why he did not appear more publicly, as the person that was to come, at least, before the setting up of the kingdom and glory of the Messiah; which they might hope were at hand, and that Elias was come to usher it in: but that he did not appear publicly, and they were not allowed to speak of it, they wanted to know Christ's sense of these things; and took this opportunity as they came from the mountain, to converse with him about it.

**Matthew 17:11**

Ver. 11. **And Jesus answered and said unto them,**  
By way of concession,

**Elias truly shall first come:** this is indeed a tenet of the Scribes, and it is also certain, that there is a prophecy in Mal 4:5 of the coming of Elias; of one that goes under that name, not of Elias the Tishbite, in person, but of one that was to come in his power and spirit,

**and restore all things.**

The Syriac and Persic versions render it, “shall

27 Seder Olam Rabba, p. 45, 46.

28 Gloss. in T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 43. 2.

29 R. Abraham ben David in Misn. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7.

30 Hilch. Melacim, c. 12. sect. 2.

31 Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 226.

32 In Exod. xl. 10. Deut. xxx. 4. & Lam. iv. 22.

33 Seder Tephillot, fol. 56. 2. & 128. 2.

34 Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Abarbinel in loc.

perfect, or complete all things”, that are prophesied of him; and shall put a period to the law and the prophets, and close the Mosaic economy, and direct persons to Christ; in whom are the perfection of the law, and the fulfilling of the prophets. The Arabic version reads it, “he shall teach you all things”; the whole of the Gospel being to be reduced to these two heads, repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; both which were taught by the true Elias: but the truest sense of the phrase is to be learned out of Mal 4:6. “He shall restore, byvh, he shall turn all things, the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers”; and as this is explained in Luke 1:17 “he shall turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and make ready a people prepared for the Lord”: which is other, and better sort of work, than what the Jews assign to their Elias, whom they expect, and whom they make to be a restorer of all things, in their way: they often speak of his purifying<sup>35</sup> of things, or pronouncing things pure, that were defiled; and among others, that he will purify bastards, and ישיבם, “restore them” to the congregation of the Lord<sup>36</sup>. Though Maimonides<sup>37</sup> denies, that when he comes he will pronounce defiled that which is pure, or pronounce pure, that which is defiled. They pretend<sup>38</sup>, that he is now employed, and very busy, in writing everything that is done in every age; so that when he comes, he will be able to give an account of everything: and nothing is more common with them, than to say concerning any matter, that there is any doubt or difficulty about it<sup>39</sup>, שיבא אליהו, “let it be left till Elias comes”.

#### Matthew 17:12

Ver. 12. **But I say unto you,**

A way of speaking used by Christ, when he opposes and contradicts any of the tenets of the Scribes and Pharisees; see Mt 5:22 “that Elias is come already”; the person that was signified by, and prophesied of, under the name of Elias: for Christ refers not to the late appearance of Elias on the mount, but to the coming of a certain person some time ago; who came in the power

35 T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 25. 1. & Becorot, fol. 33. 2. & 34. 1.

36 Kimchi in Zech. ix. 6.

37 Hilchot Melacim, c. 12. sect. 2. Vid. Misn. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7. & Maimon & Bartenora in ib.

38 Seder Olam Rabba, p 46. {u} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 1. sect. 8. T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 3. 1. & 37. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 94. 1.

39 Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 1. sect. 8. T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 3. 1. & 37. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 94. 1.

and spirit of Elias, and was the forerunner and harbinger of him, the Messiah; as was said of him he should, “and they knew him not”; that is, the Scribes and Pharisees, who believed that Elias would come before the Messiah; and yet when he who was designed by him was come, they knew him not, they did not know him to be the Elias; they knew him under the name of John the Baptist, and seemed pleased with his ministry for a while, but afterwards rejected his doctrine and baptism, which is referred to in the next clause:

**but have done unto him whatsoever they listed;**

they did not believe what he said, nor repent upon his preaching to them; they rejected the counsel of God he declared, not being baptized of him; they treated him with indignity and contempt, charging him with having a devil, and were well pleased when Herod put him to death; some of whom were doubtless among those that sat at meat with him; for whose sake, as well as for his oath's sake, he ordered the execrable murder to be committed:

**likewise also shall the son of man suffer of them.**

Christ takes this opportunity to confirm what he had said in the preceding chapter, concerning his sufferings and death; and his meaning is, that as sure as John the Baptist had suffered indignities, and death itself, so sure should the son of man suffer like things; if not from the same individual persons, yet from that generation of men.

#### Matthew 17:13

Ver. 13. **Then the disciples understood,**

By his saying that Elias was come, and by the account he gave of his ill usage, it was clear to them,

**that he spake unto them of John the Baptist;**

and that he was the Elias that was to come, and was come: so that this observation, that according to prophecy Elias was to come before the Messiah, was no objection to Jesus being the Messiah; but on the contrary, since he that was intended by Elias was come, and had done his work and office, it was a confirmation of the truth of his Messiahship.

#### Matthew 17:14

Ver. 14. **And when they were come to the multitude,**

Which was on the next day, as in Luke 9:37 when Christ and his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, came down from the mount to the other nine, with whom the multitude of the people were; during their stay on the mountain,

**there came to him a certain man;**

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who was, as Mark says, “one of the multitude”; and as Luke, “a man of the company”: who had applied to the nine disciples on the behalf of his son, but without success, and was waiting till Christ came from the mount; who when he saw him, made up to him, and

### **kneeling down to him**

in the manner of a supplicant, doing him homage and worship; hereby showing his great esteem of him, and veneration for him,

### **and saying**

the following words:

### **Matthew 17:15**

Ver. 15. **Lord, have mercy on my son,**

He addressed him with great marks of honour and respect, not only by gesture, but by words; he craves mercy, pity, and compassion; for the case he had to present, was a miserable one; and his earnestness and importunity he hoped might be excused, since it was for a child of his own. Luke adds “for he is mine only child”; and therefore his affection for him must be thought to be very strong, and he greatly concerned for its grievous affliction, and earnestly desirous of its health and life.

### **For he is lunatic:**

not a mad man, but troubled with the epileptic disease; upon which, as on madness or lunacy, the changes and full of the moon have an influence: hence the next clause,

### **and sore vexed,**

is rendered in the Arabic version, “and sore vexed at the beginning of full moons”; at which times, he had very grievous and frequent fits of his disorder:

**for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water:**

which shows it to be the “epilepsy”, or “falling sickness”, he was afflicted with; which, whenever it seized him, whether by the fireside, or by the side of a river or brook, or any place of water, or in any other dangerous situation, he fell into it, not being able to help himself, or avoid any danger to which he was exposed. A larger account of this child’s disorder, and of the circumstances of his cure, are related by Mark 9:17 where this case will be more fully considered. See Gill on “Mark 9:17”. See Gill on “Mark 9:18”.

### **Matthew 17:16**

Ver. 16. **And I brought him to thy disciples,**

To the nine, whilst Christ was with the other three upon the mountain: no doubt but his design was to bring him to Christ first; but he being absent, he applied to his

disciples, and, desired them to make use of their power to heal him; and which they attempted, but without success:

### **and they could not cure him.**

This he said, partly to show the malignity and stubbornness of the disease, and partly to accuse the disciples of weakness; when he himself was as much in fault as they, as the following words show. Here the Jew<sup>40</sup> insults, and charges with contradiction, that in one place it should be said, that Jesus gave his disciples power to cast out unclean spirits, and here all the disciples could not cast a spirit out of one little child: but without any reason; let it be observed, that “all” the disciples were not present, the three principal ones were with Christ; besides, this was not owing to want of power in them, which Christ had conferred on them, and which they often made use of with success: but partly to their own unbelief, and partly to the unbelief of the father of this child, and others with him, as appears from what follows: and it is clear from Mark, that when he came to Christ, he had but little faith; he says to him, “if thou canst do anything, help us”; and after Christ had talked with him about his faith, he could only say, “Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief”.

### **Matthew 17:17**

Ver. 17. **Then Jesus answered and said,**

Not to the disciples, but to the father of the child; see Mark 9:19 and those that were with him, and the Scribes that were present, disputing with the disciples, upbraiding them with their weakness, and triumphing over them: “O faithless and perverse generation”; a way of speaking, which is never used of the disciples, and indeed could not be properly said of them; for though they often appeared to be men of little faith, yet not faithless; nor were they so rebellious, stubborn, and perverse, as here represented, though there was a great deal of perverseness in them: but the characters better suit the body of the Jewish nation, who, on account of the incredulity of this man, and those that were present, being of the same temper with them, are exclaimed against in words, which were long ago spoken of their ancestors, De 32:5 and from whence they seem to be taken.

**How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?**

Upbraiding them with the length of time he had been with them, in which so many wonderful works

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40 .Vet. Nizzachon, p. 219, 220.

had been done among them, and yet they remained unbelieving and incorrigible; and intimating, that his patience and longsuffering would not always continue; and that in a short time, he should be gone from them, and they should no longer enjoy the benefit of his ministry and miracles, but wrath should come upon them to the uttermost: but however, whilst he was with them, notwithstanding all their unbelief and obstinacy, he should go on to do good; and therefore says,

**bring him hither to me,**

meaning the lunatic child. These words also are directed, not unto the disciples, but to the father of the child; for so it is said in Luke 9:41 “bring thy son hither”; and so the Syriac renders it here whyta, “bring thou him”; though, as expressed in the plural number, may very well be thought to intend him, and his friends.

#### Matthew 17:18

Ver. 18. **And Jesus rebuked the devil,**

The words may indeed be rendered, “and Jesus rebuked him, and the devil departed out of him”; so the Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions; but the sense our version gives is certainly right; for it was not the father of the child Christ rebuked for his unbelief; this he had done already; nor the lunatic himself, as some have thought, either for his unbelief, or because he was possessed by the devil, for some sins of his own; which is not likely, since he was so from a child, and perhaps not now in his right mind, and capable of any rebuke: besides, the Evangelists Mark, and Luke expressly say, that he “rebuked the foul”, or “unclean spirit”: for though it was a natural disease which attended this child, yet he was afflicted with it in a preternatural way, by the means of Satan; who, by divine permission; had a power of inflicting bodily diseases: and that this disease was effected by him, is clear from the manner of curing, by the dispossession of him; for when

**he departed out of him;**

at the command of Christ, whose power he could not withstand, but was obliged, whether he would or not, to obey;

**the child was cured from that very hour;**

directly, immediately, and continued well, and in good health. Hence the word rendered lunatic, in Mt 17:15 is in several Oriental versions, translated in the sense of “demoniac”, or one possessed with a devil. The Arabic version renders it, “he is with a demon”: the Persic thus, “on whom a demon hath power”; and the Ethiopic after this manner, “an evil demon takes hold on him”. And it

is usual with the Jews, to ascribe diseases to evil spirits; and perhaps this uncommon dispensation in the times of Christ, may give rise to such a notion; particularly, they ascribe this very same disease of the “epileptic”, or “falling sickness”, to the same cause, which they call <sup>41</sup> “Kordicus”, or “Cardiacus”, the “Cardiac” passion, which one of their commentators <sup>42</sup> explains thus.

”It is a disease which proceeds from the repletion of the vessels of the brain, whereby the understanding is confounded; wherefore it is one of the sorts *lpwnh ylwX*, “of the falling sickness”.

Says another <sup>43</sup> of them,

”It is *שם שידה*, “the name of a demon”, that rules over such, that drink much wine out of the vat.

”To which others agree, saying <sup>44</sup>, that one attended with this disorder, is one,

”whose understanding is confounded, *קְהוּמַת שַׁד* “by means of a demon”, who rules over such, that drink new wine; and lo! the spirit’s name is “Kardiacus”.

From whence it is clear, that with them, the disease and the demon go by the same name; and that the former is from the latter.

#### Matthew 17:19

Ver. 19. **Then came the disciples to Jesus apart,**

Or “secretly”, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel read; that is, privately, and when alone; and as Mark says, “when he was come into the house”; and was by himself, then came the nine disciples to him, to converse with him about this matter,

**and said unto him, why could not we cast him out?**

That is, the devil, and so cure the lunatic; the Syriac and Persic versions render it, “why could not we heal him?” The lunatic; which only could be done by casting out the demon: they were concerned, fearing they had lost the power which Christ had bestowed on them, and wanted to know what they had done, which had deprived them of it; and what should be the cause of their late unsuccessful attempt, when they had so frequently triumphed over the unclean spirits, that were subject to them. Though they might have learned from the answer Christ gave to the father of the lunatic, and the general

<sup>41</sup> Misn. Gittin, c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Maimon. in ib.

<sup>43</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 67. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Bartenora & Yom Tob. in Misn. Gittin, c. 8. sect. 1.

character of the Jewish nations in that answer, the true reason of their own inability; but this they took no notice of, imagining it belonged entirely to others, and not to them.

**Matthew 17:20**

Ver. 20. **And Jesus said unto them, because of your unbelief,**

The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, “because of your little faith”, or “the smallness of your faith”; and so does one Greek manuscript; and which is what is doubtless meant by their unbelief; for they were not altogether destitute of faith, but their faith was very low, and their unbelief very great. Christ says, not because of the unbelief of the parent of the child, and those that were with him, though that also was a reason; but because of their unbelief, being willing to convince them of their unbelief, as he had done the father of the child, who had confessed it, and desired it might be removed from him: but lest they should think they had lost their power of doing miracles, Christ adds;

**for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed;**

which was a very small seed, the least of all seeds, and is used very often proverbially by the Jews, to signify anything of a small quantity or weight<sup>45</sup>, and is sometimes used of faith, as here; so speaking of the congregation of Edom, meaning the Christians, they<sup>46</sup> say,

”they have not אמונה כמו גרין של חרדל, “faith as a grain of mustard seed”.

And it is used in like sense in other eastern nations; and by Mahomet in his Alcoran<sup>47</sup>, who says,

”We will appoint just balances in the day of resurrection, neither shall any soul be injured at all, although the merit or guilt of an action be of the weight of “a grain of mustard seed”.

So that it has no reference to the quality of mustard seed, being hot and acrimonious; which has led some interpreters wrong, to compare faith unto it, for its liveliness and fervency: when our Lord only means, that if his apostles had ever so small a degree of faith in exercise, which might be compared for its smallness to this least of seeds, such an effect as he after mentions

45 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3l. 1. Megilla, fol. 28. 2. Nidda, fol. 66. 1. Maimon. Issure Biah, c. 11. sect. 4. Maacolot Asurot, c. 2. sect. 21. &c. 14. sect. 8. Tumaot Okelim, c. 4. sect. 2. & 7. 6.

46 Vet. Nizzachon, p. 148.

47 C. 21. p. 268. & c. 31. p. 336. Ed. Sale.

would follow; and which therefore is to be understood, not of an historical faith, by which men assent to all that is in the Bible as true; nor of a special, spiritual faith, by which souls believe in Christ, as their Saviour and Redeemer; for of neither of these can the following things in common be said; but of a faith of miracles, peculiar to certain persons in those early times, for certain reasons; which such as had but ever so small a degree of, as the apostles here spoken to might say, as Christ observes to them,

**ye shall say to this mountain;**

pointing perhaps to that he was just come down from, which might be in sight of the house where he was,

**remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove:**

meaning, not that it would be ordinarily or ever done in a literal sense by the apostles, that they should remove mountains; but that they should be able to do things equally difficult, and as seemingly impossible, if they had but faith, when the glory of God, and the good of men, required it. So that it does not follow, because the apostles did not do it in a literal sense, therefore they could not, as the Jew insultingly says<sup>48</sup>; since it was meant that they should, and besides, have done, things equally as great as this, and which is the sense of the words. So the apostle expresses the faith of miracles, by “removing mountains”, 1Co 13:2 i.e. by doing things which are difficult, seem impossible to be done: wherefore Christ adds,

**and nothing shall be impossible to you;**

you shall not only be able to perform such a wonderful action as this, were it necessary, but any, and everything else, that will make for the glory of God, the enlargement of my kingdom and interest, the confirmation of truth, and the good of mankind.

**Matthew 17:21**

Ver. 21. **Howbeit, this kind goeth not out,**

The Vulgate Latin renders it, “is not cast out”; and so do the Arabic version, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; and which confirm the more commonly received sense of these words, that they are to be understood of that kind of devils, one of which was cast out of the lunatic, and was of the worst sort, of a fierce and obstinate kind; and having had long possession, was not easily ejected: and that there is a difference in devils, some are worse and more wicked than others, is clear from Mt 12:45 and not of that kind of miracles, or kind of faith to the

48 Vet. Nizzachon, p. 237.



working of such miracles. Moreover, the above versions, as they fitly express the word *ekporeutai*, here used; see Mark 9:17 compared with Mt 15:17. So they pertinently set forth the dispossession of devils, who do not go out voluntarily, but by force; and this sort could not be ejected,

**but by fasting and prayer:**

that is, in the exercise of a miraculous faith, expressed in solemn prayer to God, joined with fasting. It seems that Christ not only suggests, that faith was greatly wanting in his disciples; for which reason they could not cast out the devil, and heal the lunatic; but they had been wanting in prayer to God, to assist them in the exercise of their miraculous gifts; and that whilst Christ, and the other three disciples were on the mount, they had been feasting and indulging themselves with the people, and so were in a very undue disposition of mind, for such extraordinary service, for which our Lord tacitly rebukes them. This agrees with the notions of the Jews, who think that, by fasting, a divine soul <sup>49</sup> *חשני את מבוקשה*, “may obtain that which is sought for”; and that among other things, for which a private person may afflict himself with fasting, this is one, *מפני רוח*, “because of an evil spirit” <sup>50</sup>; which they think may be got rid of this way.

**Matthew 17:22**

Ver. 22. **And while they abode in Galilee,**

Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads it *וכשהלכו*, “and while they were walking in Galilee”, for they passed through it, when they departed from hence; see Mark 9:30 and as they were going to Capernaum, and so onward, to the coasts of Judea, in order to be at Jerusalem at the feast of the passover; where, and when, Christ was to suffer: and observing that the time of his death drew nigh, he inculcates it again to his disciples a third time, that they might be prepared for it, and not be discouraged and terrified by it;

**Jesus said unto them, the son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:**

some copies read, “sinful men”; and so the angels report the words, in Luke 24:7 by whom may be meant the Gentiles, who, by the Jews, were reckoned very wicked men, and called sinners of the Gentiles. Now Christ intimates, that the son of man, meaning himself, should be betrayed by the Jews, into the hands of the Gentiles; than which, with the Jews, nothing was reckoned a fouler

action, or a viler crime; their canons run thus <sup>51</sup>:

“It is forbidden to betray an Israelite into the hands of the Gentiles, whether in his body or in his substance; and though he may be a wicked man, and a ringleader in sin, and though he may have oppressed and afflicted him; and everyone that betrays an Israelite into the hands of the Gentiles, whether in his body, or in his substance, has no part in the world to come.

“They forgot this rule, when they delivered Christ to Pontius Pilate. They go on to observe, that

“it is lawful to kill a betrayer in any place, even at this time, in which they do not judge capital crimes; and it is lawful to kill him before he betrays; but when he says, lo! I am about to betray such an one in his body, or in his substance, though his substance is small, he exposes himself to death; and they admonish him and say to him, do not betray: if he is obstinate, and says I will betray him, it is commanded to kill him; and he that is first to kill him, is a worthy man,”

**Matthew 17:23**

Ver. 23. **And they shall kill him,....** Put him to death, with the death of the cross; for the angels in rehearsing these words, affirm, that Christ told his disciples at this time, and in this place, whilst they were in Galilee, that he should be crucified, Luke 24:7. And the third day he shall be raised again: this he said for their comfort; and it is observable, that when Christ speaks of his rising again, he makes mention of the exact time, the third day, on which he should rise, according to the types and prophecies of the Old Testament: and they were exceeding sorry: that he should be betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles, fearing that another nation would come, and take away, and possess the worldly kingdom and grandeur they were dreaming of; and that he should die at all; and much more that he should die such a cruel and ignominious death, as that of the cross. They seem to have overlooked, and to have taken no notice of his rising again from the dead; which might have administered comfort to them, and have relieved them under their melancholy apprehensions of things; but this they understood not, nor indeed truly any part of what he had said; so Mark and Luke intimate: but then it may be said, how came they to be so very sorrowful, if they did not know what was said? To which may be replied, that

<sup>51</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Chobel Umazzik, c. 8. sect. 9, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Jacchiades in Dan. x. 3.

<sup>50</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 22. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Taaniot, c. 1. sect. 6.

this might be the reason of their sorrow, because they did not understand what he said, and they were afraid to ask; they could not tell how to reconcile the betraying of him into the hands of men, and his sufferings and death, with their notions, that the Messiah should abide for ever, and should set up a temporal kingdom, in great splendour and magnificence; and what he meant by rising again from the dead, they could not devise; they could not tell whether all this was to be understood in a literal, or mystical sense.

### **Matthew 17:24**

#### **Ver. 24. And when they were come to Capernaum**

Called Christ's own city, Mt 9:1 where he dwelt some time Mt 4:13 and Peter had an house, Mt 8:14 "they that received tribute money", or the "didrachms"; in Talmudic language, it would be גובני השקלים<sup>52</sup>, "they that collect the shekels": for not the publicans, or Roman tax gatherers are meant; nor is this to be understood of any such tribute: there was a tribute that was paid to Caesar, by the Jews; see Mt 22:17 but that is expressed by another word, and was paid in other money, in Roman money, which bore Caesar's image and superscription; and was exacted of them, whether they would or not: but this designs the collection of the half shekel, paid yearly for the service of the temple: the original of this custom, was an order of the Lord to Moses, upon numbering the people; that everyone that was twenty years of age and upwards, should give half a shekel as atonement money, or as a ransom for his soul; which was to be disposed of for the service of the tabernacle, Ex 30:12. This does not appear to have been designed for a perpetual law, or to be paid yearly; nor even whenever the number of the people was taken, but only for that present time: in the time of Joash king of Judah, a collection was set on foot for the repair of the temple; and the collection of Moses in the wilderness, was urged as an argument, and by way of example; nor is any mention made of the half shekel, nor was any sum of money fixed they should pay; but, according to the account, it was entirely free and voluntary. In the time of Nehemiah, there was a yearly charge of the "third" part of a "shekel", for the service of the temple; but this was not done by virtue of a divine order, or any law of Moses, with which it did not agree; but by an ordinance the Jews then made for themselves, as their necessity required. Aben Ezra<sup>53</sup> indeed says, that this was an addition to the half shekel. Now in process

of time, from these instances and examples, it became a fixed thing, that every year an half shekel should be paid by every Israelite, excepting women, children, and servants, towards defraying the necessary charges of the temple service, and this obtained in Christ's time. There is a whole tract in the Jewish Misna, called Shekalim; in which an account is given of the persons who are obliged to pay this money, the time and manner of collecting it, and for what uses it is put: and so it continued till the times of Titus Vespasian, who, as Josephus says<sup>54</sup>, laid a tax of two drachms, the same with the half shekel, upon the Jews; and ordered it to be brought yearly into the capitol at Rome, as it used to have been paid into the temple at Jerusalem. We need not wonder that we hear of receivers of the half shekel at Capernaum; since once a year, on the "fifteenth" of the month Adar, tables were placed, and collectors sat in every city in Judea, as they did on the "twenty fifth" of the same month, in the sanctuary<sup>55</sup>. The value of the half shekel, was about "fifteen pence" of our money. The Syriac version renders the word here used, "two zuzim of head money": now a "zuz" with the Jews, answered to a Roman penny, four of which made a "shekel"<sup>56</sup>; so that two of them were the value of an half "shekel"; it is further to be observed, that shekels in Judea, were double the value of those in Galilee, where Christ now was: five "shekels" in Judea, went for ten in Galilee, and so ten for twenty<sup>57</sup>. The receivers of this money

#### **came to Peter;**

not caring to go to Christ himself; but observing Peter a forward and active man among his disciples, they applied to him; or rather, because he had an house in this place, at which Christ might be:

#### **and said, doth not your master pay tribute?**

or the "didrachms", the half "shekel" money. Had this been the Roman tribute, the reason of such a question might have been either to have ensnared him, and to have known whether he was of the same mind with Judas, of Galilee, that refused to pay tribute to Caesar; or because they could not tell whether he was reckoned as an inhabitant, or citizen of that city; for, according to

<sup>54</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 20.

<sup>55</sup> Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 9.

<sup>56</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 11. 2. Vid. Targum & Kimchi in 1 Sam. ix. 3. Maimon. in Misn. Shekalim, c. 2. 4. & Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Misn. Trumot, c. 10. sect. 8. & Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 9. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 59. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 2. sect. 4.

<sup>53</sup> In Neh. x. 32.

the Jewish canons<sup>58</sup>, a man must be twelve months in a place, before he is liable to tribute and taxes; or because they might suspect him to be exempted, as a doctor, or teacher for the Jewish doctors, wise men, and scholars, were freed from all tribute and taxes<sup>59</sup> even from the “head money”, the Syriac version here mentions; and which was a civil tax paid to kings<sup>60</sup>; to which sense that version seems to incline: the rule concerning wise men or scholars, is this<sup>61</sup>.

”They do not collect of them for the building a wall, or setting up gates, or for the hire of watchmen, and such like things; nor for the king’s treasury; nor do they oblige them to give tribute, whether it is fixed upon citizens, or whether it is fixed on every man.”

“But this was not the Roman tax, nor tribute, on any civil account, but the half shekel for religious service: and it may seem strange that such a question should be asked; and especially since it is a rule with them<sup>62</sup>, that”

all are bound to give the half shekel, priests, Levites, and Israelites; and the strangers, or proselytes, and servants, that are made free; but not women, nor servants, nor children; though if they gave, they received it of them.

”But a following canon<sup>63</sup> explains it, and accounts for it: on the fifteenth”

(i.e. of the month Adar,) the collectors sit in every province or city, (that is, in the countries,) כָּל־עַבְדֵי בְנֵי־בְנֵי “and mildly ask everyone”: he that gives to them, they receive it of him; and he that does not give, אֵינָם כּוֹפְיֵי אֲחֻלָּיָהּ, “they do not oblige him to give”: on the five and twentieth they sit in the sanctuary to collect, and from hence and onward, they urge him that will not give, until he gives; and everyone that will not give, they take pawns of him.”

So that it seems, there was a different usage of persons, at different times and places: our Lord being in Galilee at Capernaum, was treated in this manner.

#### **Matthew 17:25**

58 T. Hieros. Bava Bathra, fol. 12. 4. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 1.

59 Maimon. & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 5.

60 Gloss. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 100. 2. & Nedarim, fol. 62. 2. & Bava Metzia, fol. 73. 2.

61 Maimon Talmud Tora, c. 6. 10.

62 Ib. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 7.

63 Ib. sect. 9.

Ver. 25. **He saith, yes,**

Without any hesitation, knowing it had been his master’s practice; and therefore as he had done it, did not doubt but he would again:

**and when he was come into the house;**

that is, Peter, as both the Syriac and Persic versions express; when he was come into his own house, or at least into that where Christ was, in order to talk with him about this affair, the collectors had been speaking of to him, who seems to have been alone when they met with him; however, Christ was not with him:

**Jesus prevented him;**

saying what he intended to say, on that head; for he being the omniscient God, though not present, knew what question had been put to Peter, and what answer he had returned; and therefore, before Peter could lay the case before him, he puts this question to him;

**saying, what thinkest thou, Simon?**

How does it appear to thee, to thy reason and understanding? in what light dost thou consider this matter? what is thy judgment of it?

**of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers,**

or others? What is the usual practice of earthly kings, whether of Judea, or of other countries? do their own children, sons, and heirs, such as are of their own family, pay? or is it only their subjects that are not of their family?

**Matthew 17:26**

Ver. 26. **Peter saith unto him,**

The Vulgate Latin reads, “and he said”: and so the Ethiopic, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; but without doubt Peter is meant, and rightly expressed; whose answer to Christ’s question is,

**of strangers:**

meaning not foreigners, or such who formerly belonged to other nations, but were now taken captive, and brought into subjection; but their own native subjects, so called, in distinction from their domestics, their children, and those of their own family:

**Jesus saith unto him, then are the children free;**

from paying custom, tribute, and taxes, and leaves Peter to make the application; and which he suggested might be made, either thus: supposing it was a civil tax, that since he was the son of David, king of Israel, was of his house and family, and heir apparent to his throne and kingdom; according to this rule, he must be exempt from such tribute: or, thus; taking it to have respect to the half shekel, paid on a religious account, for the service of the

temple worship; that since he was the Son of the King of kings, for the support of whose worship and service that money was collected; and was also the Lord and proprietor of the temple, and greater than that, he might well be excused the payment of it.

**Matthew 17:27**

Ver. 27. **Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them,**

Though Christ could have maintained his right of exemption from payment, by such strong and clear reasons and arguments; yet he chose to forego it, lest any should be offended with him, and look upon him as a transgressor of the law; one that had no regard to the temple, and slighted the worship and service of it, and so be prejudiced against him, and his doctrines: which, by the way, may teach us to be careful to give no offence, to Jew or Gentile, or the church of God; though it may be to our own disadvantage, when the honour and interest of religion lie at stake. This is following the example of Christ, who therefore said to Peter,

**go thou to the sea;**

of Tiberias, which was near this city,

**and cast an hook;**

a fisher's hook into it:

**and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money:**

a "stater", as in the original text, the same with the אַחֲרֵי of the Talmudists; and which word the Syriac version here retains, and was, they<sup>64</sup> tell us, of the same value with a "sela", or "shekel" of the province. The Arabic and Persic versions render it, by "four drachms", which also were the same with a "shekel": and so was just enough to pay the two half shekels, for Christ and Peter, and was worth, of our money, near "half a crown"; and not "nearly a crown", as in a late paraphrase is said, through mistake. This was a wonderful instance of the omniscience of Christ, who knew there was in such a fish, such a piece of money, as exactly answered the present exigence, and that that would come first to Peter's hook; and of his omnipotence, if not in forming this piece of money immediately in the fish's mouth, as is thought by some, yet in causing this fish to come to Peter's hook first, and as soon as cast in; and of his power and dominion over all creatures, even over the fishes of the sea; and so proved himself to be what he suggested,

the Son of the King of kings; and to be a greater person than the kings of the earth, to whom tribute was paid: and yet, at the same time, it declares his great poverty as man, that he had not a shekel to pay on such an occasion, without working a miracle; and his great condescension to do it, rather than give offence by non-payment:

**and take, and give unto them for me and thee;**

for the half shekel was expected of Peter, as well as of Christ, and he had not wherewith to pay it; and this Christ knew, and therefore provides for both. But why did not Christ pay for the other disciples, as well as for himself and Peter? It may be replied, that this money would pay for no more than two: but this is not a full answer; Christ could have ordered more money in the same way he did this: it may then be further said, that only he and Peter were looked upon as inhabitants of this place; and so the rest were not called upon here, but in their respective cities, where they might pay also, and, besides, were not now present.

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

**CHAPTER XVIII**

*1 Christ warneth his disciples to be humble and harmless. 7 To avoid offence, and not to despise the littles. 15 teacheth how we are to deal with our bretheren, when they offend us. 21 and how often to forgive them. 23 which he setteth forth by a parable of the king that took account of his servants. 32 and punishsd him, who showed no mercy to his fellow.*

Matthew 18

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

[2] And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

[3] And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[4] Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

[5] And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

[6] But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

[7] Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man

<sup>64</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 64. 1. & 105. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 102. 2.

by whom the offence cometh!

[8] Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

[9] And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

[10] Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

[11] For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

[12] How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

[13] And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

[14] Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

[15] Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

[16] But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

[17] And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

[18] Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

[19] Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

[20] For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

[21] Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

[22] Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

[23] Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

[24] And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

[25] But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord

commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

[26] The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

[27] Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

[28] But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

[29] And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

[30] And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

[31] So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

[32] Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

[33] Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

[34] And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

[35] So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

## JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW CHAPTER XVIII

### Matthew 18:1

Ver. 1. **At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus,**

When the receivers of the half shekel had spoke to Peter about his master's paying it, and Christ and he had conversed about it, by whose orders he had taken up a fish out of the sea, and from it a piece of money, which he had paid for them both; just at this time came the other eleven disciples to the house where Christ and Peter were: saying,

### **who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?**

Mark says, that the disciples disputed this point in the way; and that when they came to Jesus, he put the question to them, what they had been disputing about: and Luke takes no notice of any question put by one or another; but observes, that Christ perceiving the

thoughts of their hearts, in order to rebuke, and convince them, took the method hereafter mentioned. All which is reconcilable, and of a piece: the sum is this; that as they were in the way to Capernaum they fell upon this question, which, being known to Christ, the omniscient God; when they came to Capernaum, and to the house where he was, and knowing that the same thought was in them, he asked them what they had been talking of by the way; upon which they were silent; but calling them nearer to him, and they finding that the matter was known, took courage to put the question to him, and desired to have his sense of it. The Vulgate Latin reads, “who dost thou think”; and the Arabic version, “who in thy opinion”, &c. The occasion of this could not be the respect shown to Peter, in paying the half shekel for him; for this conversation was begun in the way, and before this was done, or, at least, before they knew it: rather it might be occasioned by his promise of giving the keys of the kingdom of heaven to him; or by his taking him, and James, and John, so lately to the mountain with him, where he was transfigured before them; though it seems best to ascribe it to the mention Christ had made of his resurrection from the dead: for as Dr. Lightfoot, Hammond, and others, have observed, something of this kind generally followed any account Christ gave of his death and resurrection, as Mark 9:31 and this thought of an earthly kingdom still continued, when they saw him risen, Ac 1:6 for they had been taught, that the resurrection, and the kingdom of the Messiah, would be at the same time<sup>65</sup>. And, by the kingdom of heaven, they meant, not the kingdom of glory in another world, but the kingdom of the Messiah in this; and which they looked upon to be a temporal one, though they call it the kingdom of heaven; not only because Christ often used this phrase, but because the times of the Messiah, and his reign, were frequently so called by the Jews;

See Gill “Mt 3:2”. Now, what they wanted to be satisfied in was, who should be advanced to the post highest in that kingdom next to the Messiah; and, as they doubted not but it would fall on one of them, to have the most honourable post, and the place of the greatest trust, they were desirous of knowing who it should be.

### **Matthew 18:2**

Ver. 2. **And Jesus called a little child unto him,**

One, very likely, that was in the house, and might belong to the master of it, and which was big enough to

come to him at his call. Some have thought that this was Ignatius the martyr, but without any foundation. His own words, in his epistle to the church at Smyrna<sup>66</sup>, can give no countenance to it; where he says, “for I also know, that after his resurrection he was in the flesh, and I believe that he is.” The Latin version indeed renders it thus; “for I also saw him in the flesh after the resurrection, and believe that he exists.” But it does not follow from hence that he must be this child, but rather the contrary; since it cannot be thought, that a child so young as this, in half a year after, had it seen Christ, when risen from the dead, could have took so much notice of him, as this version represents Ignatius to do; but it matters not who it was; Christ designed, by this emblem, to give them his sense of the question, and convey some proper instruction to the minds of his disciples:

**and set him in the midst of them;**

that everyone might see him; and upon the very sight of him, had he said no more to them, they might easily have perceived what was his opinion; that he that was but a child, the most humble, and least in his own eyes, would be the greatest: but besides setting the child in such a situation, he pointed to him, saying what follows.

### **Matthew 18:3**

Ver. 3. **And said, verily I say unto you,**

You may take it for a certain truth, and what may be depended upon, that

**except ye be converted or turned;**

from that gross notion of a temporal kingdom, and of enjoying great grandeur, and outward felicity in this world; and from all your vain views of honour, wealth, and riches,

**and become as little children:**

the Arabic renders it, “as this child”; that is, unless ye learn to entertain an humble, and modest opinion of yourselves, are not envious at one another, and drop all contentions about primacy and pre-eminence, and all your ambitious views of one being greater than another, in a vainly expected temporal kingdom; things which are not to be found in little children, though not free from sin in other respects,

**ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven:**

ye shall be so far from being one greater than another in it, that you shall not enter into it at all; meaning his visible, spiritual kingdom, which should

<sup>65</sup> Vid. Poceck. not. miscell. ad. Port. Mosis, p. 103, 104, 105, 106.

<sup>66</sup> p. 3. Ed. Voss.

take place, and appear after his resurrection, upon his ascension to heaven, and pouring forth of the Spirit: and it is to be observed, that the apostles carried these carnal views, contentions, and sentiments, till that time, and then were turned from them, and dropped them; for, upon the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, they were cleared of these worldly principles, and understood the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom; which they then entered into, and took their place in, and filled it up with great success, without envying one another; having received the same commission from their Lord, and Master: so that these words are a sort of prophecy of what should be, as well as designed as a rebuke to them for their present ambition and contentions.

#### **Matthew 18:4**

Ver. 4. **Whosoever therefore shall humble himself,**

Whoever shall entertain mean thoughts of himself, and prefer others to himself, shall behave in a modest humble manner, not affecting dominion over others, or treating his brethren and Christians in a haughty and supercilious manner, with scorn and contempt; but condescend to those of the lowest state, and place himself in the lowest form, conversing with his friends freely and familiarly, without distinction,

**as this little child;**

or any other of the like age; for there is no reason to suppose, that there was anything peculiar in this child, which was not in another, it being common to children to behave towards one another, as on a level; not to envy one another, or to set up one above another, or be vainly elated with the distinctions of birth and fortune.

**The same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven;**

in the Gospel church state; which was verified in the Apostle Paul, though not one of the twelve: nor are these words limited to them; at least, this passage may be illustrated in his case: he thought himself to be the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints, and unworthy to be called an apostle; yet had the largest measures of grace, the greatest gifts and abilities; and was honoured with the greatest usefulness and success in the preaching of the Gospel to the conversion of sinners, and planting of churches; labouring more abundantly than they all.

#### **Matthew 18:5**

Ver. 5. **And whoso shall receive one such little child** Which is to be understood, not literally but metaphorically; meaning not such an one in age, but one, as the Syriac renders it, and אֵיךְ טְלִיחַ, "that is as this

child": like unto it for modesty and humility; one, that is as that, free from pride, ambition, and envy. Christ's sense is, that whoever receives his disciples, that are meek and lowly, into their houses, or into their hearts and affections; that receives their ministry and message, embraces the Gospel preached by them with readiness and cheerfulness, with faith and love,

**in my name;**

on his account, because they are his disciples, believe in him, preach his Gospel, and, as being sent by, and representing him,

**receiveth me:**

it is so taken by Christ, as if he was personally present, and personally received, and had all the favours shown to his, done to himself in person; yea, such receive Christ in the ministry of the word, he being the sum and substance of it. This is said to encourage modesty and humility; and intimates, that proud and haughty persons will not be received as the disciples and followers of the meek and lowly Jesus; and to encourage persons to receive such that are modest and humble, since the respect shown to them, is all one as if shown to him.

#### **Matthew 18:6**

Ver. 6. **But whoso shall offend one of these little ones,**

Not in age, but are little and mean in their own eyes, and contemptible in the esteem of the world; though otherwise men of great grace, gifts, and usefulness; who may be said to be offended, when they are not received; their persons despised, their ministry rejected, and they reproached and persecuted; and everything done to them to discourage, and cause them to stumble and fall, to drop their profession of Christ, to quit his service, and desert his cause: and that such persons are designed, appears by the following descriptive character of them,

**which believe in me;**

which cannot be said of infants, or little ones in age, and who also are not capable of offence; but must be understood of adult persons, of such who by faith look unto, lay hold on, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Saviour and Redeemer, and who make a profession of their faith in him; and chiefly of such who preach the doctrine of faith, who having believed, therefore speak; and who are generally the butt of the contempt, reproach, and persecution of men.

**It were better for him, that a mill stone be hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**

The word translated “depth”, is sometimes used for the Sea itself, Isa 51:10 and signifies the middle, or deeper path, and answers to the Hebrew phrase, “the heart of the sea”; פִּילְנוּ דִּימָא רבָּא, used by the Targum, in Ps 46:3 and by Jonathan ben Uzziel, in Ex 15:8. Jerom thinks, that this was a sort of punishment in use among the Jews, that is here referred to; but this does not appear. The four capital punishments inflicted by them were stoning, burning, slaying with the sword, and strangling<sup>67</sup>: they had indeed other sorts of punishment, which they borrowed from other nations; and so they might this, either from the Romans, or Greeks, or their neighbours the Syrians. The mill stone, in the original, is called *μυλῶν στικῶν*, which may be rendered “the ass mill stone”, being either the nether mill stone, as some think, which was called “the ass”, because, like an ass, it bears the chief of the weight and burden; or else respects such mill stones as were turned about by an ass, in distinction from those that were turned by the hand; for that it was usual with the Jews to make use of asses in grinding, as well as other nations, is certain: hence we read<sup>68</sup> of חמרה ריהיאל “the ass of mills”, that were employed in grinding in the mills, and of one that turned his mill with wild asses<sup>69</sup>: but it is further to be observed, that mention is made<sup>70</sup> of של רהימ של יד, “the ass of an handmill”: which the commentators say<sup>71</sup>, was a beam on which an handmill was fixed, and was called “the ass.” Now, I should rather think that this is meant than the other. It does not seem likely that a nether mill stone, or one that required an ass to turn it, should be tied to a man’s neck, in order to drown him, when cast into the sea; for our Lord must be thought to refer to a practice somewhere in use: but rather, that such a beam, or log, of an handmill, so called, were wont to be put about the necks of malefactors, in drowning them. Our Lord’s sense is, that it was much better for a man to endure the severest temporal punishment, rather than by offending, and evil treating any of his disciples, expose himself to everlasting destruction. The phrase of having a mill stone about the neck, I find, is sometimes used to denote anything very troublesome and burdensome<sup>72</sup>.

67 Misn. Sanhedrim. c. 7. sect. 1. {a} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 1. 10. 2. Maimon. Hileh. Yom Tob, c. 8. sect. 15.

68 T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 1. 10. 2. Maimon. Hileh. Yom Tob, c. 8. sect. 15.

69 T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 16. 2.

70 Mish. Zabim. c. 4. sect. 2..

71 R. Maimon. R. Sampson. & R. Obadiah Bartenora, in. ib.

72 T. Bab. Kiddusbin, fol. 29. 2.

“The tradition is, a man that marries a wife, and after that learns the law, R. Jochanan says, רַיְחִימ בּוֹאֵר, “though a mill stone is about his neck”, yet he must study in the law: that is, though his worldly circumstances are narrow, and his wife and family are as burdensome as if he had a mill stone about his neck, he must continue his studies.”

#### Matthew 18:7

Ver. 7. **Woe unto the world because of offences!**

By which are meant, not sins, as sometimes, but rather temptations to sin; and so the Ethiopic version renders this word by “temptation” in every clause, as the Arabic does in the next; and may design all the contempt and reproach cast upon the doctrines, ordinances, and people of Christ, and all those afflictions, distresses, and persecutions exercised on them, on purpose to cause them to stumble and fall; to tempt them to deny the truth, drop their profession of religion, and relinquish the service of Christ; things which are displeasing to God, discouraging to his people, and often attended with bad consequences to formal professors; and bring down the judgments of God upon the men of the world; who sooner or later will vindicate his own cause, avenge his own elect, and render tribulation to them that trouble them.

#### For it must needs be that offences come;

considering the implacable malice of Satan, his unwearied and indefatigable pains, the malignity of the men of the world, their aversion and enmity to the Gospel of Christ, and all good men; it cannot be thought, God suffering such things for the trial of such as are truly gracious, and for the discovery of hypocrites, and for the manifestation of his grace, power, and faithfulness in the preservation of his dear children, that it should be otherwise, but that such offences should be:

#### but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh;

for though God, for wise ends and reasons, as above, voluntarily permits such things to be in the world; and though they do not succeed, as to cause the true followers of Christ so to stumble and fall, as to perish, yet this does not excuse their sin and wickedness, in doing all that in them lay to effect it. For though God will, and does overrule all their base designs against his ministers, church, and people, for his glory, and their good, this is no thanks to them; and as it does not in the least extenuate their crime, it will not abate the severity of their punishment.

#### Matthew 18:8



Ver. 8, 9. **Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot,**

The same words are repeated here on occasion of offences, as are spoken by Christ, Mt 5:29 on account of unchaste looks, desires and lusts: giving offence to Christ's disciples, or endeavouring, by any means whatever, to cause them to stumble and fall, is equally gratifying the flesh, and no more to be indulged, than the other, on pain of eternal damnation. See Gill "Mt 5:29" See Gill "Mt 5:30"

**Matthew 18:9**

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Mt 18:8".

**Matthew 18:10**

Ver. 10. **Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones,**

That is, one of those little ones that believed in Christ; for he is not speaking of infants in age, but of those who might be compared to such, for their humility and modesty; who were little in their own eyes, and mean and despicable in the eyes of the world, as well as appeared but little in the eyes of their fellow disciples and brethren; for our Lord returns and addresses himself to his disciples, who had been contending among themselves who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and so were striving to lessen one another, each looking upon himself as the greater, and every other as little. Wherefore Christ cautions them against such a spirit, and bids them beware of despising their fellow disciples, as little, and below them; especially since so much notice and care were taken of them, both in heaven, and in earth:

**for I say unto you, that in heaven:**

the phrase, "in heaven", is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions, perhaps because it might be looked upon as unnecessary, since it afterwards appears; but is very proper, or pertinent, whether it be considered as descriptive of the angels, who have their habitation there, in distinction from the evil angels, who are cast down from thence; or as pointing out the place where the angels behold the face of God, and who are styled "their angels"; the angels of the little ones, that believe in Christ, who are ministering spirits unto them, the guardians of them, who encamp about them, and do many good offices for them. Some have thought from hence, that every good man has his peculiar angel that waits upon him, and cares for him; but this does not necessarily follow from, these words, only that they all have an interest in angels, and in their good services. This seems indeed to have been a notion that prevailed among the Jews, not only that there were angels which presided over particular

nations, but who also had the care of particular persons; so they speak of an angel that was particularly appointed for Abraham<sup>73</sup>. Nor will they allow, that one angel does two messages, nor two angels one<sup>74</sup> message: but that everyone has his particular place, person, and work; of whom it is further said, that they

**do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven:**

which is not so much to be understood of their intellectual knowledge, and apprehension of the divine being, of their beholding the glory of his nature, and essence, and of their contemplating and applauding his perfections; as of their ministering before him, waiting, as servants, upon him, watching to receive his orders, and ready to obey his commands. And our Lord's argument is, that if such excellent creatures as the angels in heaven, who are continually favoured with being in the presence of Christ's heavenly father, honoured with so high a station, as always to stand before him, as ministers of his; if these are the guardians of these little ones, if they are committed to their care, and they have the oversight of them, then they ought not to be despised: and besides, since the angels that have the care of them are so near the throne, it should deter everyone from having their charge in contempt, or doing any injury to them; since they are capable of lodging accusations and complaints against them; and, when leave is given, have power of executing the sorest judgments upon men. This description of angels agrees with what the Jews say of them, especially of the chief of them. Michael, they say<sup>75</sup>, is the first and principal of the chief princes, *רואי פני המלך* "that behold the face of the king"; that is, the King of kings, the Lord of hosts. Suriel, which, with them, is another name of an angel, is called<sup>76</sup> *שר הפנים*, "the prince of faces", who is always in the presence of God; and, as the gloss says, is "an angel that is counted worthy to come before the king."

**Matthew 18:11**

Ver. 11. **For the Son of man is come to seek that which was lost.**

This is another, and stronger reason, why these little ones should not be despised; because Christ, who is here meant by the Son of man, came into this world to save these persons; who were lost in Adam, and had destroyed themselves by their transgressions, and carries great force

<sup>73</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 96. 1.

<sup>74</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 44. 4.

<sup>75</sup> Jacchiades in Dan. x. 13.

<sup>76</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 51. 1.

in it: for if God had so great a regard to these little ones, as to send his Son to obtain eternal salvation for them, when they were in a miserable and perishing condition; and Christ had so much love for them, as to come into this world, and endure the sorrows, sufferings, and death itself for them, who were not only little, but lost; and that to obtain righteousness and life for them, and save them with an everlasting salvation; then they must, and ought to be, far above the contempt of all mortals; and the utmost care should be taken not to despise, grieve, offend, and injure them in any form or shape whatever; see Ro 14:15. Beza observes, that this whole verse is left out in some Greek copies, but it stands in others, and in all the Oriental versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor can it be omitted; the following parable, which is an exemplification of it, requires it.

**Matthew 18:12**

Ver. 12. **How think ye,**

Or, as the Arabic, "what do you think?" what is your opinion of this matter? what is your sense of it? how does it appear to you? It is a Talmudic way of speaking, the same with *מה אתם בורין* "what do you think?" what is your judgment? So the Rabbins, after they have discussed a point among themselves, ask <sup>77</sup> *מאי בירא לן*, "what is our opinion?" or what do we think upon the whole? Christ here appeals to his disciples, makes them judges themselves in this matter, and illustrates it by a familiar instance of a man's seeking and finding his lost sheep, and rejoicing at it.

**If a man have an hundred sheep;**

who is the proprietor of them; not the hireling, who has them under his care, and whose the sheep are not; but the owner of them, to whom they belong, and who must be thought to be most concerned for anyone of them that should go astray: a hundred sheep seem to be the number of a flock; at least flocks of sheep used to be divided into hundreds. In a Maronite's will, a field is thus bequeathed <sup>78</sup>;

"the north part of it to such an one, and with it Nau ham, "a hundred sheep", and a hundred vessels; and the south part of it to such an one, and with it Nau ham, "a hundred sheep", and a hundred vessels; and he died, and the wise men confirmed his words, or his will."

Such a supposition, or putting such a case as this, is very proper and pertinent.

<sup>77</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 88. 2..

<sup>78</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 156. 2.

**And one of them be gone astray;**

which sheep are very prone to; see Ps 119:176;

**doth he not leave the ninety and nine,**

which are not gone astray, in the place where they are; it is usual so to do:

**and goeth into the mountains;**

alluding to the mountains of Israel, where were pastures for sheep, Eze 34:13 and whither sheep are apt to wander, and go from mountain to mountain, Jer 50:6, and therefore these were proper places to go after them, and seek for them in: but the Vulgate Latin version joins the words "in" or "on the mountains", to the preceding clause, and reads,

**doth he not leave the ninety and nine in the mountains;**

and so read all the Oriental versions, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Persic; and in the same manner Theophylact;

**and seeketh that which is gone astray?**

This is usual with men: no man that has a flock of sheep, and though but one strays from it, but takes this method. This parable now may be considered, either as an illustration of the Son of man's coming into this world, to seek, and to save his lost sheep, mentioned in the preceding verse; even the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the little ones that believed in him, who were despised by the Jews. And then by the "ninety and nine", we are not to understand the angels; who never went astray, never sinned, but kept their first estate, whom Christ left in the highest heavens, on the holy mountains of eternity, when he became incarnate, and came down on earth to redeem mankind: for these never go by the name of sheep; nor are they of the same nature and kind with the one that strays, and is sought out; nor is their number, with respect to men, as ninety nine to one; at least it cannot be ascertained; nor were they left by Christ, when he came on earth; for a multitude descended at his birth, and sung glory to God. Nor are the saints in heaven intended, whose state is safe; since it cannot be said of them, as in the following verse, that they went not astray; for they went astray like lost sheep, as others, and were looked up, sought out, and saved by Christ as others; but rather, by them, are meant the body of the Jewish nation, the far greater part of them, the Scribes and Pharisees, who rejected the Messiah, and despised those that believed in him: these were in sheep's clothing, of the flock of the house of Israel, of the Jewish fold; and with respect to the remnant among them, according to the election of grace, were as ninety

nine to one: these were left by Christ, and taken no notice of by him, in comparison of the little ones, the lost sheep of the house of Israel he came to save: these he left on the mountains, on the barren pastures of Mount Sinai, feeding on their own works and services; or rather, he went into the mountains, or came leaping and skipping over them, So 2:8, encountering with, and surmounting all difficulties that lay in the way of the salvation of his people; such as appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh, bearing, and carrying the griefs and sorrows of his people, obeying the law, satisfying justice, bearing their sins, and undergoing an accursed death, in order to obtain the salvation of his chosen ones, designed by the one sheep "that was gone astray"; who strayed from God, from his law, the rule of their walk, out of his way, into the ways of sin, which are of their own choosing and approving: or, the intention of this parable is, to set forth the great regard God has to persons ever so mean, that believe in Christ, whom he would not have stumbled and offended, and takes special care of them, that they shall not perish; even as the proprietor of a flock of sheep is more concerned for one straying one, than for the other ninety nine that remain.

**Matthew 18:13**

Ver. 13. **And if so be that he find it,**

Which is a casual and uncertain thing with the shepherd, but not so with Christ, who certainly finds all those he goes after, and seeks: for,

**verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep;**

at the finding of it, whose loss greatly affected him,

**than of the ninety and nine which went not astray;**

who seemed not to go astray, were outwardly righteous before men, and, in their own opinion, being the same with the ninety and nine just persons who needed no repentance in their own apprehension, Luke 15:7. This same parable is related in Luke 15:3, and it being there more largely expressed, and along with other parables of the same kind, I shall refer the more particular consideration of it to that place; only observe, that it seems to me that this parable was twice delivered by our Lord, and that on two different occasions; once, as here, in his discourse on offences, and upon mention of his coming into this world to save lost sinners; at another time, as there, upon the Pharisees murmuring at his receiving sinners, and eating with them.

**Matthew 18:14**

Ver. 14. **Even so it is not the will of your father**

**which is in heaven,**

This is the accommodation, or application of the parable of the lost sheep to the present purpose, and is the top of the climax or gradation here made use of. First, Christ observes, in order to deter any from despising and offending any of his disciples, even the meanest, that they have angels to be their guardians, who are continually in the presence of God; and next, that he himself in human nature came to be the author of salvation to these persons; and then rises up to the sovereign will of his Father, and their's, the source and security of their everlasting happiness; which will is, not

**that one of these little ones,**

that believe in Christ,

**should perish.** It is his will of command that no stumbling block should be laid in their way to cause them to stumble and fall, to the grieving of their souls, the wounding of their consciences, and the perishing, or loss of their peace and comfort; and it is his unalterable will of purpose, or his unchangeable decree, that not one of them, even the meanest, shall perish eternally: in pursuance of which will, he has chosen them in his Son, he has put them into his hands, and secured them in his covenant; and having redeemed them by Christ, and called them by grace, he keeps them by his power, through faith unto salvation. Nor shall anyone of them finally and totally fall away and perish, through the power of their own corruptions, the temptations of Satan, the reproaches and persecutions of men, the frowns or flatteries of the world, or through the errors and heresies of false teachers, or any other way. It is to be observed, that when our Lord, in Mt 18:10, is speaking of the happiness of the angels, and the honour done to the little ones by having such guardians; then the more to aggrandize this matter, he represents those as in the presence of his "Father which is in heaven"; but here, when he would express the wonderful love and grace of God, in the resolutions of his heart, and purposes of his will, to save them, then it is "your Father which is in heaven"; and this, the rather to engage them to the belief of it, since they stood in such a near relation to him, as children to a father: and therefore must be infinitely more concerned for their welfare, than a proprietor of sheep can be, for one that is lost. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions indeed read, "my father", but without any authority; for the phraseology, "the will before your Father", as in the original text, See Gill "Mt 11:26"

**Matthew 18:15**

Ver. 15. **Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee,**

This is said to show, that as on the one hand, if any of those that believe in Christ, should commit a trespass against his fellow Christian, his sin is not to be connived at, for fear of offending him; for what Christ has before said, is not to be taken in such sense, as to prevent private reproof, or public censures, when there is occasion for them; so on the other hand, he is not to be despised and ill used, and treated in the same injurious manner; but gentle reproofs are to be made use of, for his good. This is spoken not to the apostles as such, but as believers in Christ; and concerns everyone that stands in the relation of a brother, or church member to each other, and only such; for they that are without, do not fall under their notice, nor are they obliged to take, nor can they take altogether, the same methods with them. This rule respects sins committed by one brother against another, either in word or deed; or such as are of a private nature, and which one only, or at least but few, are acquainted with: in such cases the advice is,

**go and tell him his fault between thee, and him alone;**

do not wait for his coming to thee, as being the aggressor, to acknowledge his fault, testify his repentance, express his sorrow for his sin, and ask pardon: but go to him, and freely and faithfully lay his sin before him; but do not aggravate it, and reproach him with it, and bear hard on him for it, but gently rebuke and reprove him: let this be done in the most private manner; let none be present, nor any know of it, even the most intimate friend and acquaintance:

**if he shall hear thee; patiently,**

take your reproof kindly, acknowledge his offence, declare his hearty sorrow for it, and desire it might be overlooked, and reconciliation made:

**thou hast gained thy brother;**

recovered him from the error of his ways, restored him to his duty, and secured his friendship, and interest in his favour; nor should any mention be made of this ever after, either to him, or any other, or to the church.

**Matthew 18:16**

Ver. 16. **But if he will not hear thee,**

But will either deny the fact, or extenuate and excuse it, or defend it, or at least is obstinate and incorrigible, shows no signs of repentance, but is angry, gives hard words, and ill language:

**then take with thee one or two more;**

members of the church, and perhaps of weight, reputation, and character, who either know some thing of the matter, and so can confirm, by their testimony, what has been alleged, in order to bring the person to conviction and acknowledgment; or if they do not, and which seems rather to be the sense, they may, by hearing what is said on both sides, judge where the truth lies, and join with the offended person in the admonition, that it may fall with the greater weight, and become more effectual:

**that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established,**

referring to De 19:15. So that should the matter be brought before the whole church, these witnesses would be able to testify the truth of the case, and report the steps that had been taken, and what effect they had had; so that things being thus prepared, the case would appear plain and easy, and without difficulty. The whole of this is very agreeable to the rules and customs of the Jews, and is founded on the law, in Le 19:17, upon which they form rules very much like to these. They represent God himself taking such a method as this, with the sons of men <sup>79</sup>:

”When the holy blessed God reproveth a man, he reproveth him in love, privately: if he receives it, it is well; if not, he reproveth him among his friends: if he receives it, it is well; if not he reproveth him openly before the eyes of all; if he receives it is well; if not, he leaves him, and reproveth him no more.”

And this is an instruction to men, how they should reprove their friends. They say <sup>80</sup>, “he that sees anything in his friend that is not becoming, he ought to reprove him.” And which is elsewhere more <sup>81</sup> largely expressed:

”he that seeth his friend walking in a way that is not good, he is bound to reprove him, even a disciple his master; and this he shall do for his good, and in order to bring him to the life of the world to come, or eternal life; and “if he takes it of him, it is well”: but if not, he must reprove again, “a second and a third time”; and so he must reprove him many times, if, or until he hears him.”

And this they require to be done, in the most private manner:”

<sup>79</sup> Raya Mehimna in Zohar, in Lev. fol. 35. 4.

<sup>80</sup> T. Bab. Betacot, fol. 31. 1, 2.

<sup>81</sup> Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. Affirm. 11.

“reproof out of love (they <sup>82</sup> say) is secret from the children of men; whoever reproves his friend in love, seeks to secrete his words from the sons of men, that he may not expose him thereby to shame and reproach.”

That is, as the gloss <sup>83</sup> on it observes,

“he seeks to reprove him in secret, so that he may not be put to shame before many.

”If this way does not succeed, they allow of a public reproof, for so it is said <sup>84</sup>;”thou mayest not reprove him with hard words, till his countenance changes; for whoever causes the face of his friend to turn pale publicly, has no portion in the world to come; but thou mayest reprove in the words of heaven, or God; and if he does not return privately, thou mayest make him ashamed publicly, and expose his sin before him; and reproach and curse him, until he returns to do well; so did all the prophets to Israel.”

They plead also for a second reproof, from the text in Le 19:17 <sup>85</sup>

”From whence does it appear, that he that sees anything in his friend unbecoming, ought to reprove him? As it is said, “thou shalt in any wise rebuke”, &c. if he reproves him קבל “and he does not receive it”, (he does not take it kindly, or, as here, he does not hear him,) from whence is it manifest, that he must return and reprove him (or repeat the reproof)? from what is said, reproving thou shall reprove.”

The whole of this is very fully expressed in a few words, by one <sup>86</sup> of their best writers, and in great agreement with these rules of Christ:

”He that sees his friend sinning, or going in a way not good, he is commanded to cause him to return to that which is good; and to let him know, that he sins against himself by his evil works; as it is said, “thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour”: he that reproveth his friend, whether for things between him and himself, or whether for things between him and God, “ought to reprove him”, ביני לבני מו, “between him and himself”; and

82 Zohar. in Lev. fol. 19. 3.

83 Imre Binah in ib.

84 Milzvet Tora, pr. neg. 6.

85 T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 16. 2.

86 Maimon. Hilch. Deyot. c. 6. sect. 7.

should speak to him mildly, and in tender language; and let him know that he does not speak to, him, but for his good, and to bring him to everlasting life; “and if he receives it of him, it is well, and if not, he must reprove him”, ושלישית פּוּ שנייה “a second and a third time”; and so a man must continually reprove, until the sinner strikes him and says”, I will not hear.”

Buxtorf has produced a passage out of one of their writers <sup>87</sup>, in the very language in which Christ here delivers himself:

“The wise man says, if thy friend does thee an injury, reprove him between him and thee alone: if he hears thee, thou hast already gained; if he does not hear thee, speak to him before one or two, who may hear the matter, and if he will not hear reckon him a “worthless friend”.

One would almost be ready to think, that this writer should mean Christ by the wise man, were it not for the implacable enmity they bear unto him. The above author has cited also the following passage out of the same <sup>88</sup> writer, pertinent to the present purpose:

“A friend that declares to thee thy faults, “between him and thee”, whenever he meets thee, is better to thee than a friend, that whenever he meets thee, gives thee a golden penny.”

#### Matthew 18:17

Ver. 17. **And if he shall neglect to hear them,**

The one or two, in conjunction with the offended person that shall hear the ease, and admonish and reprove; if he takes no notice of what they say to him, but remains stiff and impenitent, tell it unto the church: which some understand, of the רבים or “multitude”, before whom it was lawful to reprove, after such private methods had been taken: others, the political magistrates, or sanhedrim; who took cognizance of cases between one person and other, either by themselves, or messengers; and gave admonitions and reproofs, as to parents, when they did not provide for their families <sup>89</sup>, and to wives that were perverse, and provoked their husbands <sup>90</sup>, &c. others, of the presbyters and governors of the Christian church; others, of the church itself, and so the Ethiopic

87 Mischar happeninim apud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 297.

88 Ibid.

89 Maimon Hilehot Ishot, c. 12. sect. 14.

90 Ib. c. 14. sect. 9. & Moses Kotsensis Mitzvet Tora, pr. neg. 81.

version renders it, “the house of Christians”; to which it is objected, that as yet a Christian church was not formed: but what were the twelve apostles of the Lamb? They were the great congregation and church, in the midst of which Christ sung praise to his Father: and since the whole of this advice, and these excellent rules are given to them, and they are spoken of in the next verse, as having the power of binding and loosing, they may well be thought to be meant here; and that the design of Christ is, to instruct them how to behave, in case of offence to one another; that the reproof should be first private, and if it did not succeed, to be made before one or two more; and if that did not do, the whole body was to be acquainted with it; and which rules hold good, and are to be observed by all Christian men and churches, in all ages: though no doubt but allusion is made to the Jewish customs, in rebuking before the multitude, or carrying of a private case, after all other means used were ineffectual, to the sanhedrim.

**But if he neglect to hear the church:**

the advice they should give unto him, the reproof they should think proper for him, or the censure they should pass upon him,

**let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican.**

This is not a form of excommunication to be used among Christians, nor was there ever any such form among the Jews; nor could Heathens or publicans, especially such publicans as were Gentiles, be excommunicated, when they never were of the Jewish church.

”A religious person indeed, that becomes a collector of taxes, they first said, is to be driven from the society; but they afterwards said, all the time that he is a tax gatherer, they drive him from the society; but when he goes out of his office, lo! he is as a religious person<sup>91</sup>.

”But one that never was of a religious society, could not be driven out of it. And besides, this is given, not as a rule to the church, but as advice to the offended person, how to behave towards the offender: after he has come under the cognizance, reproof, and censure of the church, he is to look upon him as the Jews did one that disregarded both private reproof by a man’s self, and that which was in the presence of one or two more, חֵבֵר פְּחוּת “a worthless friend”, or neighbour; as a Gentile, with whom the Jews had neither religious nor civil conversation; and

a “publican”, or as Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads it, בְּרָה בַּל “a notorious sinner”, as a publican was accounted: hence such are often joined together, and with whom the Jews might not eat, nor keep any friendly and familiar acquaintance: and so such that have been privately admonished and publicly rebuked, without success, their company is to be shunned, and intimate friendship with them to be avoided.

**Matthew 18:18**

Ver. 18. **Verily I say unto you,**

To them all, what he had said before to Peter; See Gill “Mt 16:19”: what is said here, refers to things and not persons, as there also.

**Matthew 18:19**

Ver. 19. **Again, I say unto you,**

As the words in the former verse seem to regard the whole body of the disciples, whose decisions in cases brought before them, declaring them just or unjust, are determinate and unalterable; these seem to respect the one or two, that should join the offended person in the reproof of the offender, and are spoken for their encouragement; who might think proper either to premise, or follow their engaging in such a work with prayer:

**that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask;**

both in the case before mentioned, and in any other thing; whether it be for themselves or others; to assist them in the ministry of the word, and give success to it, for the conversion of sinners; and in the performance of any miracle, for the confirmation of the Gospel; in the administration of ordinances, for the comfort of saints; and in laying on of censures, for the reclaiming of backsliders; or be it what it will that may be done, consistent with the glory of God, the purposes of his mind, and the declarations of his will, and the good of men, provided they agree in their requests; though they are here on earth, and at such a distance from heaven, from whence their help and assistance come:

**it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven;**

with whom nothing is impossible; and who, as he regards the effectual fervent prayer of any righteous man, so more, of two agreed together in anyone thing; and still more, of a church and community of saints in their united requests: a great encouragement this to social prayer, though ever so few are engaged in it.

**Matthew 18:20**

91 T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 23. 1.

Ver. 20. **For where two or three are gathered together,**

This seems to be said in opposition to a Jewish notion, that a number less than ten, is not a congregation<sup>92</sup>; whereas, though the number is ever so few that are met together to pray to God; or to hear his word, attend on his ordinances, or do the business of his house, or transact any affair that is for the glory of God, and the good of souls, in my name, says Christ; that is, by his authority, depending on his assistance, calling upon his name, and making use of it, and seeking the glory of it:

**there am I in the midst of them;**

presiding over them, ruling in their hearts, directing their counsels, assisting them in all they are concerned, confirming what they do, and giving a blessing and success to all they are engaged in. The Jews, though they say there is no congregation less than ten, yet own that the divine presence may be with a lesser number, even as small an one as here mentioned<sup>93</sup>.

“Ten that sit and study in the law, the Shechaniah dwells among them, as it is said, Ps 82:1. From whence does this appear, if but five? from Am 9:6, from whence, if but three? from Ps 82:1, from whence, if but two? from Mal 3:16, from whence, if but one? from Ex 20:24.”

’And again<sup>94</sup>, two that sit together, and the words of the law are between them, the Shechaniah dwells among them, according to Mal 3:16, from whence does it appear, that if but one sits and studies in the law, the holy blessed God hath fixed a reward for him? from La 3:28.”

**Matthew 18:21**

Ver. 21. Then came Peter unto him,.... Having heard and observed the rules Christ gave concerning offences and brotherly reproofs, he drew near to Christ, and put this question to him: and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? He instances in a brother, because it was such an one Christ had been speaking of; he makes no doubt of its being his duty to forgive him upon his repentance, and acknowledgment, but wanted to be reformed, how often this was to be done, and asks, whether until seven times? Which was, as he might think, a large number; and especially, since it was double the number of times, that the Jewish doctors set

for forgiveness: for thus they say<sup>95</sup>, “A man that commits a sin, the “first” time they pardon him; the “second” time they pardon him; the “third” time they pardon him: the “fourth” time they do not pardon, according to Am 2:6.” Again, he that says I have sinned, and I repent, they forgive him “unto three times”, and no more<sup>96</sup>.”

**Matthew 18:22**

Ver. 22. **Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee,**

Which is as if he had said, observe what I am about to say, I do not agree to what thou sayest to fix the number, “until seven times only”, but

**until seventy times seven;**

a certain number for an uncertain, see Ge 4:24. Christ’s meaning is, that a man should be all the days, and every day of his life, forgiving those that sin against him, as often as they repent and acknowledge their fault; and that no time is to be set for the exercise of the grace of forgiveness; but as often as there are objects and occasions, though ever so many and frequent, it should be used; and which he illustrates by the following parable.

**Matthew 18:23**

Ver. 23. **Therefore is the kingdom of heaven,**

The Gospel church state, or the church of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, and the methods of God’s dealings in it; likened unto a certain king; or “a man”, “a king”, pointing either to Christ, the king Messiah, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, the King of saints and churches; who, as God, has a natural kingdom of providence, and as man and Mediator, a kingdom of grace; and will have a more visibly glorious one, both in this world and in the other; or rather, the Father of Christ, as appears from the application of the parable, in Mt 18:35, who is the living God, and everlasting King: whose is the kingdom of nature, grace, and glory:

**which would take account of his servants;**

not all mankind, though these are all in a sense his servants, and accountable to him; nor only ministers of the Gospel, who are so in an eminent and peculiar sense, and must give an account to God of their time and talents, and souls committed to them; but all that bear the Christian name, that are professors of religion, that are either really or nominally the subjects and servants of God. These, it is sometimes the will and pleasure of God, to “take account of”: not of their persons, or number, but of their conduct and behaviour; which, as it will be more

92 Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 6. T. Bab. Megilia, fol.

23. 2. Gloss. in ib.

93 Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 6. {c} Ib. sect. 2.

94 Ib. sect. 2.

95 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 36. 2. Mainion. Hilch. Teshuba. c. 3. sect. 5.

96 Abot. R. Nathan, c. 40. fol. 9. 3.

fully done at death, or at judgment, so sometimes is taken in this life: God sometimes calls, and brings, professors of religion to an account, and reckons with them by afflictive dispensations of providence; when he puts them upon reflecting how they have spent their time, made use of their talents and gifts, and have behaved in their families, and in the world, and church; or by dealing roundly with men's consciences, awakening and convincing them of their sins, of omission and commission, which seems to be intended here.

**Matthew 18:24**

Ver. 24. **And when he had begun to reckon,**

To open the book of conscience, and to bring to account by some awakening providence, and strong conviction: one was brought unto him; whether he would or no, through the force of an awakened conscience, under guilt and terror;

**which owed him ten thousand talents;**

which must be understood, either of gold, or silver: a talent of silver contained 3,000 shekels, as appears from Ex 38:25, and was in value of our money £375. but a talent of gold was equal to £4,500. of our <sup>97</sup> money. According to Dr. Prideaux <sup>98</sup>, a talent of silver was £450. and a talent of gold, the proportion of gold to silver being reckoned as sixteen to one, was £7,200. and according to Bishop Cumberland, a talent of silver was £353. 11s. 10d. ob. and a talent of gold of the same weight, was £5,075. 15s. 7d. ob. The whole, according to Dr. Hammond, was a thousand eight hundred seventy five thousand pounds, reckoning them silver talents; but if talents of gold are meant, what an immense sum must ten thousand of them be! According to some, seventy two millions sterling. The design of the phrase, is to set forth the exceeding greatness of the debt. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, "ten thousand manehs", or pounds; and so the Persic version: now the value of a maneh of gold, was 75l. and of silver, £7 10s. <sup>99</sup> take the sum in the least quantity and value, it was exceeding large. The Arabic version renders it a "sum of talents", without mentioning the number, and may mean an innumerable one. Mention is made of such a number of talents of silver, in Es 3:9, which Aben Ezra says is defective, and signifies ten thousand thousand talents. The "second" Targum on the place says, that the sum of six hundred thousand zuzim, drachms, or pence (i.e. Roman ones) is ten thousand talents of silver. These "ten thousand talents" intend sins, which are called debts,

<sup>97</sup> Brerewood de Nummis Heb. c. 4.

<sup>98</sup> Connection, Vol. 1. Preface, p. 20.

<sup>99</sup> Brerewood de Numuis. Heb. c. 4.

in Scripture; not that they are properly so, or owing to God, for then it would be right to pay them, but because they bind over to punishment. All men owe a debt of thankfulness to God, for their beings, the preservation of them, and all the mercies of life; and a debt of obedience to the whole law, in failure of which, they are obliged to punishment: hence every sin becomes a debt, and these are numerous; indwelling sin, and the lusts thereof, are innumerable; as are actual sins and transgressions, they are more than the hairs of a man's head, and are fitly expressed, both for the weight and quantity of them, by "ten thousand talents". In this light they appear to the conscience of an awakened sinner, who sees that he has been doing nothing but sin, all the days of his life; and that he has been continually breaking the law, one precept or another of it, in thought, word, or deed: which violations of the law, even in word and deed, are risen up to so great a sum, that he is not able to give it to any nearness, and with any exactness; he cannot understand all his errors, nor express the full number of them, or declare all their aggravated circumstances; besides the swarms of corruption of internal lusts and sins, which he observes dwelling in his heart, and are as innumerable as the motes and atoms in a sunbeam. The sins of God's people, which have been all made to meet upon Christ, have been laid upon him by his Father's imputation of them to him, with his own consent, are represented in this manner; see Ps 40:12. And indeed, if the debts of one of them amount to ten thousand talents, what must the sum of all be, put together! and how great must be the strength and power of Christ, to bear the weight of these sins, and not be broken or discouraged, and fail, as he did not! and what a rich virtue and efficacy must there be in his blood, to pay off all these debts, and make satisfaction for them, which could never have been done, if he had not done it! for, it is impossible that a person in such circumstances as here described, should ever be able to recover himself, or pay his debts, as follows.

**Matthew 18:25**

Ver. 25. **But forasmuch as he had not to pay,**

Every sinner is insolvent; sinful man has run out the whole stock of nature, and is become a bankrupt, and has nothing to offer by way of composition; nor has he any righteousness to answer for him, nor any works of righteousness which deserve that name: and if he had, these are nothing in point of payment: for a debt of sin cannot be discharged by a debt of obedience; since God



has a prior right to the latter; and in paying it, a man does but what is his duty. Sin being committed against an infinite God, contracts the nature of an infinite debt, which cannot be paid off by a finite creature. Christ only was able to pay this debt, and he has done it for his people; and without an interest in his blood, righteousness, and satisfaction, every debtor is liable to be cast, and will be cast into the prison of hell, there to lie till the uttermost farthing of the ten thousand talents is paid, which will be to all eternity. We see what a sad condition sin has brought men into; it has stripped them of their estates and possessions; it has reduced them to want and beggary; it exposes them to a prison; to the just resentments of their creditor; to the wrath of God, and the curses of the law; and what little reason there is to think, yea, how impossible it is, that a man should be able to merit anything at the hands of God, to whom he is so greatly indebted: he must first pay his debts, which is a thing impracticable, before he can pretend to do anything deserving the notice of God; and even was he set free, and clear of all his debts, and entered upon a new life of obedience, and this strictly attended to, without contracting any debts for the future, yet all this would be but what is due to God, and could merit nothing of him; see Luke 17:10. We see also from hence, how much the saints are obliged to Christ Jesus, and how thankful they should be to him, who became a surety for such insolvent creatures; has paid all their debts for them, and procured for them every blessing of grace they stand in need of: but think, O sinner, what thou wilt be able to say and do, when God comes to reckon with thee, and thou hast nothing to pay, nor any to pay for thee, or be thy surety; a prison must be thy portion ever.

**His Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had;**

according to the Jewish laws, in such a case: of a man's being sold, or selling himself when poor, see Le 25:47, for the law in Ex 22:3, referred to by some as an instance of this, respects the selling of a man for theft, and not for debt. Of the selling of a man's wife for the payment of his debts, I do not remember to have read any law concerning it, or instances of it; but of children being taken for bondmen by the creditor, for their father's debts, mention is made, 2Ki 4:1. These children, by the Jewish writers<sup>100</sup>, are said to be the children of Obadiah, who contracted the debt to feed the prophets in a cave, when they were persecuted by Jezebel; and the creditor,

<sup>100</sup> Targum Jon. in loc. Tanchuma in Abarbinel in loc. Jarchi, Kimchi & Laniado in ib.

according to them, was Jehoram, the son of Ahab, who lent him money on usury for this purpose, in his father's time; and now Obadiah being dead, he takes his children for the debt, and makes them bondmen; see also Ne 5:5. There seems to be an allusion to this practice, in Isa 50:1, and it was not only the custom of the Jews to come upon children for the debts of parents, but of other nations: with the Athenians, if a father could not pay his debts, the son was obliged to pay, and in the mean while to be kept in bonds till he did<sup>101</sup>: and as Grotius, in 2Ki 4:1 proves from Plutarch and Dionysius Halicarnassensis, children were sold by the creditors of their parents, as in Asia, at Athens, and at Rome. Now this expresses the state of bondage, sin, as a debt, brings men into; they become slaves to their own lusts, vassals of Satan, and in bondage to the law; and also the ruin and destruction it exposes them to; as, the curse and condemnation of the law, the wrath of God, eternal death, even the destruction of body and soul in hell:

**and payment to be made**

by punishment, which will always be making, and never finished. This order of the king was not intended to be executed, as the sequel shows; but declares the will of God, that the sad and woeful condition of man should be set before him by the ministers of the word; signifying what his state is, how deserving of vengeance, and what must be his portion, if grace prevent not: the view of which is to vindicate the rights of law and justice, to express the sinner's deserts, and move him to apply to the Lord for grace and mercy, which effect it had.

**Matthew 18:26**

Ver. 26. **The servant therefore fell down,**

At his feet, upon his knees, or on his face, to the ground; not being able to stand before him, or look him in the face, and much less to answer the demands of his law and justice; but owned the debt, and his present inability to pay,

**and worshipped him:**

the Vulgate Latin reads it, "prayed", or entreated him, **saying, Lord have patience with me;**

give me but time, spare me a little longer, send me not to prison, and I will pay thee all: a very weak and foolish promise, but what is usual for men in such circumstances to make. Thus men, under guilt, and dreadful apprehensions of wrath and ruin, frequently promise, that if their lives are but spared, what they will do for God, and in a religious way; and very foolishly and

<sup>101</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 10.

ignorantly imagine, that by their humiliation and tears, their prayers and other services by their good lives and conversations, for the future, they shall be able to make compensation to God for all the iniquities they have been guilty of: which shows them to be exceeding ignorant of the nature of sin, which is committed against an infinite being, and therefore reconciliation for it cannot be made by finite creature; as also of the nature of their duties and services, which, when performed, in ever so good a manner, can never make satisfaction for past offences, these being duties they are obliged to perform; and would have been equally obliged thereunto if they had never offended; and likewise betrays great vanity, pride, boasting, and conceit of themselves, and abilities, as that they shall be able, in a little time to pay all, when they have nothing at all to pay with: and was patience to be exercised towards them ever so long, they would still be in the same condition, and in no better capacity to make payment; but, on the contrary, would still run a larger score, and be more and more in debt. Indeed, the patience and longsuffering of God to his people is salvation; not that by giving them time, and bearing with them, they discharge their debts, and work out their salvation; but waiting upon them to be gracious to them, he brings them to repentance, to a sense of themselves and sins, and to an acknowledgment of them, and leads them, by faith, to his Son for righteousness, forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life; but as for others, his patience towards them, and forbearance of them, issue in their everlasting destruction, which, by their iniquities, they are fitted for.

**Matthew 18:27**

Ver. 27. **Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion,**

Or had compassion on him, showed pity to him, and extended mercy towards him; not that he was moved hereunto by any actions of his, as his prostrating himself before him, and his worshipping him, nor by his cries and entreaties, nor by his promises, which were not at all to be depended on, but by his own goodness, and will; for not to anything that this man said, or did, nor to any deserts of his, but to the pure mercy, and free grace of God, is to be ascribed what is after related: and loosed him; from obligation to punishment, and from a spirit of bondage, through the guilt of sin, and work of the law upon his conscience: and forgave him the debt; the whole debt of ten thousand talents: for when God forgives sin, he forgives all sin, original and actual, secret

and open, sins of omission and commission, of heart, lip, and life, of thought, word, and deed, past, present, and to come; and that freely, according to his abundant mercy, and the riches of his grace; without any regard to any merits, motives and conditions in the creature; though not without respect to the satisfaction of Christ, which no ways detracts from the grace and mercy of God, since this is owing to his gracious provision and acceptance. It was grace in God that provided, sent, and parted with his Son to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and accepted the satisfaction when made, in the room, and stead of sinners: it was grace in Christ to become a surety for them, to assume their nature, to shed his precious blood, and give himself an offering, and a sacrifice for them; and it is distinguishing grace that this satisfaction should be provided, made, and accepted, not for angels, but for men; and though it is at the expense of Christ's blood and life that this satisfaction is made, and remission of sins obtained, yet the whole is entirely free to those who are partakers of it; they have it without money; and without price. So, that though the satisfaction of Christ is not expressly mentioned in this parable, and forgiveness of sin, which lies in a non-remembrance, and non-imputation of it, in a covering, and blotting it out, and in remitting the obligation to punishment for it, is ascribed to the compassion and mercy of God, yet it is implied; since these two involve each other: the special mercy of God, in the forgiveness of sins, streams only through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ largely display the grace and mercy of God.

**Matthew 18:28**

Ver. 28. **But the same servant went out,**  
From his Lord's palace and presence, immediately, directly, after he had got his pardon and liberty:

**and found one of his fellow servants;**

a fellow creature and Christian; not only one of the same nature and species; but of the same profession of religion, and in the service of the same kind and generous master:

**which owed an hundred pence;**

which, if understood of Roman pence, each penny being seven pence halfpenny of our money, amounted to no more than three pounds and half-a-crown; a small sum, in comparison of the ten thousand talents which had been just now forgiven him: for so sins committed against men, against fellow creatures, or fellow Christians; are but small, when compared with

those which are committed against God. All which circumstances, as that it was immediately after he had been forgiven himself; that it was a fellow servant he found: and the sum he owed him so inconsiderable, greatly aggravate his inhuman carriage, next related:

**and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest;**

he laid hold on him in a violent manner, and used him with great inhumanity: he took him by the collar, and shook him, and griped him so hard about the neck, that he almost throttled, and strangled, or choked him, as the word signifies, and is so rendered in most versions. It answers to the Hebrew word qnh, which is used by the Jews<sup>102</sup> in the same sense:

”החניק, he that throttles anyone (who is indebted to him) in the streets, and his friend comes up and says, let him go, and I will pay thee, he is free, &c.

”This man insisted on payment of the whole debt; which expresses the rigour and severity used by some professors of religion to their fellow Christians; who, having offended them, in ever so small a matter, will not put up with the affront, nor forgive the injury, without having the most ample satisfaction, and avenging themselves upon them to the uttermost.

#### Matthew 18:29

Ver. 29. **And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, In the most humble and submissive manner, just as he himself had done a little before at the feet of his Lord: and besought him, saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;**

using the very same words, in which he had expressed himself to his Lord, and had succeeded.

#### Matthew 18:30

Ver. 30. **And he would not,** Have patience with him, give him time for payment, and forbear severity at present, as he requested:

**but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt;**

had him before a proper officer, and proved his debt, and got him sent to jail, there to lie till the whole debt was paid; which, as it discovered ill nature, severe usage, so, great ignorance and stupidity; for a prison will pay no debt: which sets forth the rigorous proceedings of some church members against their brethren, that have displeased them; who immediately bring the matter

<sup>102</sup> Apud Castell. Lexic. Polyglott. col. 1314.

before the church, and will not be easy unless some censure is laid upon them, or they are cast out, until full satisfaction is given them, whereby oftentimes an useful member of a church is lost. Matthew 18:31 Ver. 31. So when his fellow servants saw what was done,.... What hard usage, and ill treatment, their fellow servant met with; the Syriac reads, “their fellow servants”, being the fellow servants both of the creditor and the debtor: they were very sorry; they were greatly grieved and troubled at the cruelty of the one, and the unhappiness of the other; being more tenderhearted, and of a more forgiving spirit than he: and came and told unto their Lord all that was done; to their fellow servant, by one that had so lately received such favours from him: this may be expressive of the concern of some members of churches at such conduct: who, though they may not have strength and number sufficient to oppose such measures, yet being secretly grieved at such cruel methods, go to the throne of grace, and spread the case before the Lord, tell him all that is done by way of complaint; which, is no impeachment of his omniscience, only shows their trouble for such malpractices, and the sense they have, by whom only such grievances can be redressed.

#### Matthew 18:32

Ver. 32. **Then his Lord, after that he had called him,** Or ordered him to be called, and brought before him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant! Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads, “thou servant of Belial”; thou cruel and hard hearted man to thy fellow servant, and ungrateful creature to me, on whom my goodness to thee has not made any impression, nor taken any effect:

#### **I forgave thee all that debt:**

all that vast debt of ten thousand talents, and that freely:

#### **because thou desiredst me:**

not to forgive the debt, but to have patience, and give time, and therefore unasked forgave the whole sum, every farthing of it; which was such an instance of pure goodness, as was enough to have wrought upon an heart of stone, and engaged the most tender concern and pity for a fellow creature, as well as filled with thankfulness to the kind benefactor. The favour so lately bestowed on him is justly observed as an aggravation of his wickedness.

#### Matthew 18:33

Ver. 33. **Shouldest not thou also have had compassion.....** It is but reasonable, what ought to be, and may be expected, that such who have received mercy, should show mercy; and as the Lord had compassion on

this man, and had forgiven him such an immense sum, and saved him, his wife and children, from being sold for bondslaves, the least he could have done after this, would have been to have followed such an example, and have had mercy, as his Lord says to him, on thy fellow servant; between whom, and him, there was not so great a distance, as between him, and his Lord; and the sum so small that was owing to him, as not to be mentioned with his: even as, I had pity on thee; such an instance of pity and compassion did not only set him an example, worthy of his imitation, but laid him under an obligation to have acted such a part.

**Matthew 18:34**

Ver. 34. **And his Lord was wroth,**

Very angry, greatly incensed, and justly provoked at such inhuman treatment:

**and delivered him to the tormentors,**

or jail keepers. The Ethiopic version renders it, “to them that judge”, or the judges; Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, “to the punishers”, or such that inflicted punishment according to the decree of the judge: from both, the sense may be, that he was delivered over to proper judges of his case, to be treated as the nature of it required, to be cast into prison, and there endure all the severities of law and justice:

**till he should pay all that was due unto him;**

which being so vast a sum, and he but a servant, could never be done: but inasmuch as this man was fully and freely pardoned before, how comes it to pass, that full payment of debt is yet insisted on? It is certain, that sin, once pardoned by God, he never punishes for it; for pardon with him is of all sin; he forgives all trespasses, though ever so many, and remits the whole debt, be it ever so large; which act of his grace will never be revoked: it is one of his gifts which are without repentance; it proceeds upon, and comes through a plenary satisfaction for sin made by his own Son, and therefore it would be unjust to punish for it: by this act, sin is covered out of sight; it is blotted out, and entirely done away, and that for ever. Hence some think this man had only the offer of a pardon, and not that itself; but it is not an offer of pardon, that Christ, by his blood, has procured, and is exalted to give, but that itself; and this man had his debt, his whole debt forgiven him: others think, that this was a church forgiveness, who looked upon him, judged him, and received him as one forgiven; but for his cruel usage of a fellow member, delivered him to the tormentors, passed censures on him, and excommunicated him, till he

should give full satisfaction, which is more likely: others, this forgiveness was only in his own apprehensions: he presumed, and hoped he was forgiven, when he was not; but then his crime could not have been so aggravated as is: rather, this forgiveness is to be understood of averting calamities and judgments, likely to fall for his iniquities, which is sometimes the sense of this phrase: see 1Ki 8:34 and so his being delivered to the tormentors may mean, his being distressed with an accusing guilty conscience, an harassing, vexing devil, many misfortunes of life, and temporal calamities. Though after all, this is not strictly to be applied to any particular case or person, but the scope of the parable is to be attended to; which is to enforce mutual forgiveness among men, from having received full and free pardon at the hands of God; and that without the former, there is little reason to expect the latter, as appears from what follows.

**Matthew 18:35**

Ver. 35. **So likewise shall my heavenly Father,**

This is the accommodation and application of the parable, and opens the design and intent of it; showing that God, who is Christ’s Father, that is in heaven, will act in like manner towards all such persons, who are cruel and hard hearted to their brethren, and are of merciless and unforgiving spirits; for so it is said,

**he will do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.**

The phrase, “their trespasses”, is omitted by the Vulgate Latin, the Arabic, and the Ethiopic versions, but is in all the Greek copies; and designs not pecuniary debts, though these are to be forgiven, and not rigorously exacted in some cases, and circumstances; but all injuries by word or deed, all offences, though ever so justly taken, or unjustly given; these should be forgiven fully, freely, and from the heart, forgetting, as well as forgiving, not upbraiding with them, or with former offences, and aggravating them; and should also pray to God that he would forgive also. It is certainly the will of God, that we should forgive one another all trespasses and offences. The examples of God and Christ should lead and engage unto it; the pardon of sin received by ourselves from the hands of God strongly enforces it; the peace and comfort of communion in public ordinances require it; the reverse is contrary to the spirit and character of Christians, is very displeasing to our heavenly Father, greatly unlike to Christ, and grieving to the Spirit of God.

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

## CHAPTER XIX

*2 Christ healeth the sick. 3 answereth the Pharisees concerning divorcement. 10 sheweth when marriage is necessary. 13 receiveth children. 16 instructeth the young man how to attain eternal life, 20 and how to be perfect. 23 telleth his disciples how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 27 and promiseth reward to thos that foresake any thing to folow him.*

Matthew 19

- [1] And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan;
- [2] And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.
- [3] The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?
- [4] And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,
- [5] And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?
- [6] Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
- [7] They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?
- [8] He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.
- [9] And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.
- [10] His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.
- [11] But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.
- [12] For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.
- [13] Then were there brought unto him little children,

that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

- [14] But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.
- [15] And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.
- [16] And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?
- [17] And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.
- [18] He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,
- [19] Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- [20] The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?
- [21] Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.
- [22] But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.
- [23] Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.
- [24] And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.
- [25] When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?
- [26] But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.
- [27] Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?
- [28] And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
- [29] And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.
- [30] But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall

be first.

**JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW  
CHAPTER XIX**

**Matthew 19:1**

Ver 1. **And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings,**

Concerning humility, avoiding offences, the methods to be taken in reproofing offenders, and the forgiveness that is to be exercised towards them:

**he departed from Galilee;**

where he had chiefly preached and wrought his miracles, no more to return thither till after his resurrection:

**and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan;**

that is, to that country which was called "beyond Jordan", and bordered on Judea; coming still nearer and nearer to Jerusalem, where he had told his disciples, a little while ago, he must come, and suffer, and die. Rather, it should be rendered, "on this side Jordan", as also in Joh 1:28 for the coasts of Judea were on this side; *בְּרֵי הַיַּרְדֵּן* so, is rendered in De 4:49

**Matthew 19:2**

Ver. 2. **And great multitudes followed him,**

The Persic version adds, "of the sick and diseased"; but all that followed him were not such, though some were: these came not only from Galilee, but from the adjacent parts, from the country beyond Jordan, and the coasts of Judea, where he had been formerly; and who resort to him again, as Mark observes; and whom, according to his usual manner, he taught and instructed in the knowledge of divine things, and confirmed his doctrines by miracles:

**and he healed them there;**

in the above mentioned places, even as many of them as were sick and diseased.

**Matthew 19:3**

Ver. 3. **The Pharisees also came unto him,....** Either from the places round about, or from Jerusalem: these came unto him, not for the sake of learning, or to be instructed by him; but as spies upon him, to observe what he said and did, and watch every opportunity to expose him to the contempt and hatred of the people;

**tempting him**

with a question about divorces, in order to ensnare him:

**and saying to him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?**

be it ever so trivial, as said the school of Hillell: for

there was a difference between the school of Shammai and the school of Hillell about this matter; the former insisted that a man might not put away his wife but in case of uncleanness; but the latter allowed putting away for very trifling things; as if she spoiled her husband's food by over roasting, or over salting it; and, as one of the doctors say, if he found another woman that was more beautiful than her; see Gill "Mt 5:32". This question being now agitated in the schools, they artfully put to Christ; not for information, but with a view to reproach him in some way or other; and that he might incur the resentment of one party or another, as he should answer. They might argue thus with themselves, and hope to succeed in this manner; should he be on the side of the school of Shammai, which was the weakest side, and less popular, as they had reason to believe he would, he would then expose himself to the resentment of the school of Hillell, and all on that side the question; should he take the part of Hillell, he would make the school of Shammai his enemies; should he forbid putting away of wives, which Moses allowed, they would then traduce him as contrary to Moses, and his law, which could not fail of setting the people against him; and should he consent to it, they would charge him with contradicting himself, or with inconstancy in his doctrine, since he had before asserted the unlawfulness of it, but in case of adultery; and should he abide by this, they might hope to irritate the men against him, who would think their liberty granted by Moses was entrenched on; as, on the other hand, should he, according to the question, admit of putting away for every cause, the women would be provoked at him, who would be left to the uncertain humour and caprice of their husbands; so that either way they hoped to get an advantage of him.

**Matthew 19:4**

Ver. 4. **And he answered and said unto them,**

Not by replying directly to the question, but by referring them to the original creation of man, and to the first institution of marriage, previous to the law of Moses;

**have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female?**

This may be read in Ge 1:27 and from thence this sense of things collected; that God, who in the beginning of time, or of the creation, as Mark expresses it, made all things, the heavens, and the earth, and all that is therein, and particularly "man", as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel supply it here,

made the first parents of mankind, male and female; not male and females, but one male, and one female; first, one male, and then, of him one female, who, upon her creation, was brought and married to him; so that in this original constitution, no provision was made for divorce, or polygamy. Adam could not marry more wives than one, nor could he put away Eve for every cause, and marry another: now either the Pharisees had read this account, or they had not; if they had not, they were guilty of great negligence and sloth; if they had, they either understood it or not; if they did not understand it, it was greatly to their reproach, who pretended to great knowledge of the Scriptures, and to be able to explain them to others; and if they did understand it, there was no need for this question, which therefore must be put with an evil design.

**Matthew 19:5**

Ver. 5. **And said,**

Ge 2:24 where they seem to be the words of Adam, though here they are ascribed to God, who made Adam and Eve; and as if they were spoken by him, when he brought them together; and which is easily reconciled by observing, that these words were spoken by Adam, under the direction of a divine revelation; showing, that there would be fathers, and mothers, and children; and that the latter, when grown up, would enter into a marriage state, and leave their parents, and cleave to their proper yoke fellows, which relations then were not in being: this therefore being the effect of a pure revelation from God, may be truly affirmed to be said by him. Some think they are the words of Moses the historian; and if they were, as they were delivered by divine inspiration, they may be rightly called the word of God. A note by Jarchi on this text exactly agrees herewith, which is כִּן הַרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֵימְרָה “the holy Spirit says thus: for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife”; and not wives: and the phrase denotes that close union between a man and his wife, which is not to be dissolved for every cause, it being stricter than that which is between parents and children; for the wife must be cleaved unto, and father and mother forsaken: not that upon this new relation between man and wife, the former relation between parents and children ceases; nor does this phrase denote an entire separation from them, so as to have the affection alienated from them, or to be disengaged from all duty and obedience to them, and care and regard for them, for the future; but a relinquishing the “house of his father and the bed of his mother”, as all

the three Targums on the place explain it: that is, he shall quit the house of his father, and not bed and board there, and live with him as before; but having taken a wife to himself, shall live and cohabit with her:

**and they twain shall be one flesh;**

the word “twain” is: not in the Hebrew text in Genesis, but in the Septuagint version compiled by Jews, in the Samaritan Pentateuch, and version, and in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, who renders, it as here, וַיְהוּנָה תְרוּוּיָהוּן לְבִישְׂרָא חַד, “and they two shall be one flesh”. This is the true sense, for neither more nor less can possibly be meant; and denotes that near conjunction, and strict union, between a man and his wife, the wife being a part of himself, and both as one flesh, and one body, and therefore not to be parted on every slight occasion; and has a particular respect to the act of carnal copulation, which only ought to be between one man and one woman, lawfully married to each other;

See Gill on “1Co 6:16”.

**Matthew 19:6**

Ver. 6. **Wherefore they are no more twain,**

They were two before marriage, but now no more so; not but that they remain two distinct persons,

**but one flesh;**

or, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, “one body”: hence the wife is to be beloved by the husband as his own body, as himself, as his own flesh, Eph 5:28.

**what therefore God hath joined together;**

or, by the first institution of marriage, has declared to be so closely united together, as to be, as it were, one flesh, and one body, as husband and wife are;

**let no man put asunder;**

break the bond of union, dissolve the relation, and separate them from each other, for every trivial thing, upon any slight occasion, or for anything; but what is hereafter mentioned. The sense is, that the bond of marriage being made by God himself, is so sacred and inviolable, as that it ought not to be dissolved by any man; not by the husband himself, or any other for him; nor by any state or government, by any prince or potentate, by any legislator whatever; no, not by Moses himself, who is, at least, included, if not chiefly designed here, though not named, to avoid offence: and God and man being opposed in this passage, shows, that marriage is an institution and appointment of God, and therefore not to be changed and altered by man at his pleasure; this not merely a civil, but a sacred affair, in which God

is concerned.

**Matthew 19:7**

Ver. 7. **They say unto him,**

That is the Pharisees, who object the law of Moses to him, hoping hereby to ensnare him, and expose him to the resentment of the people, should he reject that, as they supposed he would;

**why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and put her away?**

referring to De 24:1 which they thought to be a contradiction, and what they knew not how to reconcile to the doctrine Christ had delivered, concerning the original institution of marriage, and the close union there is between a man and his wife, by virtue of it, and which is not to be dissolved by men. Concerning a writing of divorcement and the form, and manner of it,

see Gill "Mt 5:31"

**Matthew 19:8**

Ver. 8. **He saith unto them,**.... In answer to their objection;

**Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives:**

in which may be observed, that, though it was by direction that Moses, in his system of laws, allowed of divorces; yet not God, but he is said to do it, because it was a branch of the political and judicial laws, by which the people of the Jews were governed under Moses, and whilst the Mosaic economy continued, and did not concern other people, and other times; and therefore it is said "you" and "your" wives, you Jews, and you only, and not the Gentiles. And so the Jews say<sup>103</sup>, that the Gentiles have no divorces: for thus they represent God, saying;

"in Israel I have granted divorces, I have not granted divorces among the nations of the world. R. Chananiah, in the name of R. Phineas, observed, that in every other section it is written, the Lord of hosts, but here it is written, the God of Israel; to teach thee, that the holy, blessed God does not join his name to divorces, but in Israel only. R. Chayah Rabbah says, גְּוִיִּם אֵינָם לְדַעַת גִּירוּשֵׁי, "the Gentiles have no divorces."

Besides, this was a direct positive command to the Jews, as the Pharisees suggest in their objection; it was only a sufferance, a permission in some cases, and not in everyone; and that because of the hardness of their hearts; they being such a stubborn and inflexible people, that when they were once displeased there was no reconciling

103 T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 58. 3.

them; and so malicious and revengeful, that if this had not been granted, would have used their wives, that displeased them, in a most cruel, and barbarous manner, if not have murdered them: so that this grant was made, not to indulge their lusts, but to prevent greater evils; and not so much as a privilege and liberty to the men, as in favour of the women; who, when they could not live peaceably and comfortably with a man, might be dismissed and marry another:

**but from the beginning it was not so;**

from the beginning of time, or of the creation, or of the world, or at the first institution of marriage, and in the first ages of the world, there was no such permission, nor any such practice. This was not the declared will of God at first, nor was it ever done by any good men before the times of Moses; we never read that Adam, or Seth, or Noah, or Abraham, put away their wives, upon any consideration; though in the latter there might have been some appearance of reason for so doing, on account of sterility, but this he did not; nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor any of the "patriarchs".

**Matthew 19:9**

Ver. 9. **And I say unto you,**.... To his disciples, when they were with him alone in the house, and asked him more particularly about the subject, concerning which he had been discoursing with the Pharisees, as Mark observes, Mark 10:10 when he said to them much the same things, he had delivered before in Mt 5:32

**whosoever shall put away in his wife;**

separate her from his person, house and bed, and dismiss her as his wife, no more to be considered in that relation to him,

**except it be for fornication;**

or whoredom, for defiling his bed: for this is not to be understood of fornication committed before, but of uncleanness after marriage, which destroys their being one flesh:

**and shall marry another woman, committeth adultery;**

Marks adds, "against her"; which may be understood either of the woman he marries, which not being lawfully done, she lives in adultery with the husband of another woman; or of his former wife, and who is still his wife, and to whose injury he has married another; and he not only commits adultery himself, but, as in Mt 5:32 "causeth her to commit adultery also", by being the occasion of marrying another man, when she is still his lawful wife:



**and whoso marrieth her which is put away,**

for any other cause than adultery,

**doth commit adultery**

also; since he cohabits with the wife of another man;

see Gill "Mt 5:32"

#### **Matthew 19:10**

Ver. 10. **His disciples say unto him,**

Being surprised at this account of things, it being quite contrary to what they had been taught, and very different from the general practice and usage of their nation:

**if the case of a man be so with his wife;**

if they are so closely joined together in marriage; if they are, as it were, one flesh, or one body, that a man's wife is himself: that the bond between them is so inviolable, that it is not to be dissolved, but in case of adultery; that if a separation be made by a bill of divorce, in any other case, and either party marry again, they are guilty of adultery; if a man cannot part with his wife lawfully, provided she be chaste, and is faithful to his bed, let her be what she will otherwise, though ever so disagreeable in her person, and troublesome in her behaviour; though she may be passionate, and a brawler; though she may be drunken, luxurious, and extravagant, and mind not the affairs of her family, yet if she is not an adulteress, must not be put away:

**it is not good to marry;**

it would be more expedient and advisable for a man to live always a single life, than to run the risk of marrying a woman, that may prove very disagreeable and uncomfortable; to whom he must be bound all the days of his or her life, and, in such a case, not to be able to relieve and extricate himself. This they said under the prejudice of a national law and custom, which greatly prevailed, and under the influence of a carnal heart.

#### **Matthew 19:11**

Ver. 11. **But he said unto them,**

With respect to the inference or conclusion, the disciples formed from what he had asserted:

**all men cannot receive this saying;**

of their's, that it is not good to marry, but it is more proper and expedient to live a single life! every man, as the Syriac version renders it, is not hl qpo, "sufficient", or "fit", for this thing; everyone has not the gift of continency, and indeed very few; and therefore it is expedient for such to marry; for what the disciples said, though it might be true in part, yet not in the whole; and though the saying might be proper and pertinent

enough to some persons, yet not to all, and indeed to none,

**save they to whom it is given;**

to receive such a saying, to live unmarried with content, having the gift of chastity; for this is not of nature, but of grace: it is the gift of God.

#### **Matthew 19:12**

Ver. 12. **For there are some eunuchs,**

Our Lord here distinguishes the various sorts of persons, that can and do live in a single state with content: some by nature, and others by violence offered to them, are rendered incapable of entering into a marriage state; and others, through the gift of God, and under the influence of his grace, abstain from marriage cheerfully and contentedly, in order to be more useful in the interest of religion; but the number of either of these is but few, in comparison of such who choose a conjugal state, and with whom it is right to enter into it, notwithstanding all the difficulties that may attend it. Some men are eunuchs, and of these there are different sorts; there are some,

**which were so born from their mother's womb;**

meaning, not such who, through a natural temper and inclination of mind, could easily abstain from marriage, and chose to live single; but such who had such defects in nature that they were impotent, unfit for, and unable to perform the duties of a marriage state; who, as some are born without hands or feet, these were born without proper and perfect organs of generation; and such an one was, by the Jews, frequently called, hmh oyro, "an eunuch of the sun"<sup>104</sup>: that is, as their doctors<sup>105</sup> explain it, one that from his mother's womb never saw the sun but as an eunuch; that is, one that is born so; and that such an one is here intended, ought not to be doubted. The signs of such an eunuch, are given by the Jewish<sup>106</sup> writers, which may be consulted by those, that have ability and leisure. This sort is sometimes<sup>107</sup> called Mymv ydyb oyro "an eunuch by the hands of heaven", or God, in distinction from those who are so by the hands, or means of men, and are next mentioned:

**and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men:**

as among the Romans formerly, and which Domitian

104 T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 75. 1. 79. 2. & 80. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 14.

105 Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 4.

106 Bartenora, ibid. & Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, ut supra.

107 T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 80. 2.

the emperor forbid by a law <sup>108</sup>; and more especially in the eastern countries, and to this day among the Turks, that they may the more safely be entrusted with the custody of their women; and this sort the Jews call אַרְמֵי הַיָּדַיִם, “an eunuch of men”, or בְּיַדֵי אַרְמֵי הַיָּדַיִם “by the hands of men”. The distinction between an “eunuch of the sun”, and an “eunuch of men”, is so frequent with the Jews <sup>109</sup>, and so well known to them, that a question need not be made of our Lord’s referring to it:

**and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs;**

not in a literal sense, in which the words are not to be taken, as they were by Origen; who though otherwise too much pursued the allegorical way of interpreting Scripture, here took it literally, and castrated himself <sup>110</sup>; as did also a sort of heretics, called Valesians <sup>111</sup>, from one Valens an Arabian; and which practice is recommended by Philo the Jew <sup>112</sup>, and by Heathen philosophers <sup>113</sup>, for the sake of chastity. But here it means such, who having the gift of continency without mutilating their bodies, or indulging any unnatural lusts, can live chastely without the use of women, and choose celibacy:

**for the kingdom of heaven’s sake;**

not in order, by their chaste and single life, to merit and obtain the kingdom of glory; but that they might be more at leisure, being free from the incumbrances of a marriage state, to attend the worship and service of God, the ordinances of the Gospel church state, to minister in, and preach the Gospel of Christ, and be a means of spreading it in the world, and of enlarging his kingdom and interest.

**He that is able to receive it, let him receive it:**

whoever is able to receive cordially, and embrace heartily, the above saying concerning the expediency and goodness of a single life, and having the gift of continency, can live according to it; let him take it, and hold it fast, and act up to it; he may have less of worldly trouble, and be more useful for God in the Gospel of Christ, and to the interest of religion; but this should be a voluntary thing: no man should be forced into it; and

he that goes into it, ought to consider well whether he is able to contain, or not.

**Matthew 19:13**

Ver. 13. **Then were there brought unto him little children,**

It does not appear that they were new born babes; the words used by either of the evangelists do not always signify such, but are sometimes used of such as are capable of going alone; yea, of receiving instructions, of understanding the Scriptures, and even of one of twelve years of age, Mt 18:2 nor is it probable that infants just born, or within a month, should be had abroad. Moreover, these were such as Christ called unto him,

Luke 18:16 and were capable of coming to him of themselves, as his words following suppose; nor does their being brought to him, or his taking them in his arms, contradict this; since the same things are said of such as could walk of themselves, Mt 12:22 Mark 9:36. Nor is it known whose children they were, whether their parents were believers or unbelievers, nor by whom they were brought: but the end for which they were brought is expressed,

**that he should put his hands on them, and pray;**

not that he should baptize them, nor did he; which may be concluded from the entire silence of all the evangelists; and from an express declaration that Christ baptized none; and from the mention of other ends for which they were brought, as that Christ should “touch” them,

Mark 10:13 as he sometimes used to do persons, when he healed them of diseases; and probably some of those infants, if not all of them, were diseased, and brought to be cured; otherwise, it is not easy to conceive what they should be touched by him for: or as here, that he might put his hands on them, and pray over them, and bless them, as was usual with the Jews to do; see Ge 48:14 and it was common with them to bring their children to venerable persons, men of note for religion and piety, to have their blessing and prayers <sup>114</sup>:

**and the disciples rebuked them;**

not the children, as the Persic version reads, but those that brought them, Mark observes; either because they came in a rude and disorderly manner, and were very noisy and clamorous; or they might think it would be too troublesome to Christ, to go through such a ceremony with so many of them; or that it was too

<sup>108</sup> Philostrat. vit. Apollon. l. 6. c. 17.

<sup>109</sup> Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 4. Zabim, c. 2. sect. 1. T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 26. & 4. 18. Mechosre Caphara, c. 3. sect. 6. Mishcabumoshab, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>110</sup> Euseb. Ecel. Hist. l. 6. c. 8.

<sup>111</sup> Augustin de Haeres. c. 37. & Danaeus in ib.

<sup>112</sup> Lib. quod deterius, p. 186.

<sup>113</sup> Sexti Pythag. Sent. p. 8.

<sup>114</sup> Massechet Sopherim, c. 18. sect. 5. see the note on Luke ii. 42.

mean for him, and below him to take notice of them; or for fear he should take fresh occasion, on the sight of these children, to rebuke them again for their pride and ambition. However, from this rebuke and prohibition of the disciples, it looks plainly as if it had never been the practice of the Jews, nor of John the Baptist, nor of Christ and his disciples, to baptize infants; for had this been then in use, they would scarcely have forbid and rebuked those that brought them, since they might have thought they brought them to be baptized; but knowing of no such usage that ever obtained in that nation, neither among those that did, or did not believe in Christ, they forbid them.

#### **Matthew 19:14**

Ver. 14. **But Jesus said, suffer little children.**

This he said to show his humility, that he was not above taking notice of any; and to teach his disciples to regard the weakest believers, and such as were but children in knowledge; and to inform them what all ought to be, who expect the kingdom of heaven; for it follows;

**and forbid them not to come unto me,**

now, or at any other time;

**for of such is the kingdom of heaven;**

that is, as the Syriac renders it, “who are as these” or as the Persic version, rather paraphrasing than translating, renders it, “who have been humble as these little children”: and it is as if our Lord should say, do not drive away these children from my person and presence; they are lively emblems of the proper subjects of a Gospel church state, and of such that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: by these I may instruct and point out to you, what converted persons should be, who have a place in my church below, and expect to enter into my kingdom and glory above; that they are, or ought to be, like such children, harmless and inoffensive; free from rancour and malice, meek, modest, and humble; without pride, self-conceit, and ambitious views, and desires of grandeur and superiority. Christ’s entire silence about the baptism of infants at this time, when he had such an opportunity of speaking of it to his disciples, had it been his will, has no favourable aspect on such a practice. It is not denied that little children, whether born of believers or unbelievers, which matters not, may be chosen of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and have the passive work of the Spirit on their souls, and so enter into heaven; but this is not the sense of this text. It was indeed a controversy among the Jews, whether the little

children of the wicked of Israel, abh Mlwel Nyab, “go into the world to come”: some affirmed, and others denied; but all agreed, that the little children of the wicked of the nations of the world, do not. They dispute about the time of entrance of a child into the world to come; some say, as soon as it is born, according to Ps 22:31 others, as soon as it can speak, or count, according to Ps 22:30 others as soon as it is sown, as the gloss says, as soon as the seed is received in its mother’s womb, though it becomes an abortion; according to the same words, “a seed shall serve thee”: others, as soon as he is circumcised, according to Ps 88:15 others, as soon as he can say “Amen”, according <sup>115</sup> to Isa 26:2 All weak, frivolous, and impertinent **Matthew 19:15**

Ver. 15. And he laid his hands on them,.... “And blessed them”, as Mark says; he put his hands upon them, according to the custom of the country, and wished all kind of prosperity to them: and departed thence, out of the house where he had been, and his disciples with him: the Ethiopic version renders it, “and they went from thence”, from those parts, towards Jerusalem.

#### **Matthew 19:16**

Ver. 16. **And behold, one came,**

The Persic version reads, “a rich man”; and so he was, as appears from what follows: Luke calls him, “a certain ruler”; not of a synagogue, an ecclesiastical ruler, but a civil magistrate: perhaps he might be one of the sanhedrim, which consisted of “twenty one” persons; or of that which consisted only of “three”, as in some small towns and villages Mark represents him as “running”; for Christ was departed out of the house, and was gone into the way, the high road, and was on his journey to some other place, when this man ran after him with great eagerness; and, as the same evangelist adds, “kneeled to him”; thereby paying him civil respect, and honour; believing him to be a worthy good man, and deserving of esteem and veneration:

**and said unto him, good master:**

some say, that this was a title which the Jewish doctors were fond of, and gave to each other, but I have not observed it; he seems by this to intimate, that he thought him not only to be a good man, but a good teacher; that he was one that came from God, and taught good doctrine, which induced him to run after him, and put the following question to him:

**what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?**

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115 T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 110. 2.

Or, as in the other evangelists, “inherit eternal life”; a phrase much in use with the Jewish Rabbins <sup>116</sup>:

”Judah confessed, and was not ashamed, and what is his end? נהל חיי הנלם הבא, “he inherits the life of the world to come” (i.e. eternal life); Reuben confessed, and was not ashamed, and what is his end? “he inherits the life of the world to come”.

This man was no Sadducee, he believed a future state; was a serious man, thoughtful about another world, and concerned how he should enjoy everlasting life; but was entirely upon a legal bottom, and under a covenant of works; and speaks in the language and strain of the nation of Israel, who were seeking for righteousness and life by the works of the law: he expected eternal life by doing some good thing, or things; and hoped, as the sequel shows, that he had done every good thing necessary to the obtaining it.

**Matthew 19:17**

Ver. 17. **And he said unto him,**

By way of reply, first taking notice of, and questioning him about, the epithet he gave him:

**why callest thou me good?**

not that he denied that he was so; for he was good, both as God and man, in his divine and human natures; in all his offices, and the execution of them; he was goodness itself, and did good, and nothing else but good. But the reason of the question is, because this young man considered him only as a mere man, and gave him this character as such; and which, in comparison of God, the fountain of all goodness, agrees with no mere man: wherefore our Lord’s view is, by his own language; and from his own words, to instruct him in the knowledge of his proper deity. Some copies read, “why dost thou ask me concerning good”. And so the Vulgate Latin, and the Ethiopic versions, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel read; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, read as we do, and this the answer of Christ requires.

**There is none good but one, that is God;**

who is originally, essentially, independently, infinitely, and immutably good, and the author and source of all goodness; which cannot be said of any mere creature. This is to be understood of God considered essentially, and not personally; or it is to be understood, not of the person of the Father, to the exclusion of the Son, or Spirit: who are one God with the Father, and equally good in nature as he. Nor does this contradict and deny

<sup>116</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 7. 2.

that there are good angels, who have continued in that goodness in which they were created; or that there are good men, made so by the grace of God; but that none are absolutely and perfectly good, but God. What Christ here says of God, the <sup>117</sup> Jews say of the law of Moses, whose praise they can never enough extol; חורה אלא “there is nothing good but the law”. The law is good indeed; but the author of it must be allowed to be infinitely more so. Christ next directly answers to the question,

**but if thou wilt enter into life:**

eternal life, which is in the question, and which being sometimes expressed by a house, a city, and kingdom, by mansions, and everlasting habitations, enjoyment of it is fitly signified by entering into it; which, if our Lord suggests, he had a desire of having a right to by doing any good thing himself, he must

**keep the commandments;**

that is, perfectly: he must do not only one good thing, but all the good things the law requires; he must not be deficient in any single action, in anyone work of the law, either as to matter, or manner of performance; everything must be done, and that just as the Lord in his law has commanded it. Our Lord answers according to the tenor of the covenant of works, under which this man was; and according to the law of God, which requires perfect obedience to it, as a righteousness, and a title to life; and in case of the least failure, curses and condemns to everlasting death; see De 6:25. This Christ said, in order to show, that it is impossible to enter into, or obtain eternal life by the works of the law, since no man can perfectly keep it; and to unhinge this man from off the legal foundation on which he was, that he might drop all his dependencies on doing good things, and come to him for righteousness and life.

**Matthew 19:18**

Ver. 18. **He saith unto him, which?**

Whether those commandments of a moral, or of a ceremonial kind; whether the commands of the written, or of the oral law; of God, or of the elders, or both; or whether he did not mean some new commandments of his own, which he delivered as a teacher sent from God:

**Jesus said;**

according to the other evangelists, “thou knowest the commandments”; not the true nature, spirituality, and use of them, but the letter and number of them;

<sup>117</sup> T. Hieroa. Roshhashanah, fol. 59. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 151. 2.

being trained up from a child by his parents, in the reading them, committing them to memory, and the outward observance of them, particularly those of the second table:

**thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness.**

Christ takes no notice of the ceremonial law, nor of the traditions of the elders, only moral precepts; and these only such as refer to the second, and not the first table of the law, which respect duty to the neighbour, and not to God: and this he does, because these commandments were more known, and were in common use; and he chose to instance in these, partly to show, that if men are under obligation to regard these, much more such as concern God more immediately; and partly, to observe, that if men are deficient in their duty to one another, they are much more so in their worship of God; and consequently, eternal life is never to be got and enjoyed by the performance of these things.

#### Matthew 19:19

Ver. 19. **Honour thy father and thy mother:**

This, as it is the first commandment with promise, so the first of the second table, and yet is here mentioned last; which inversion of order is of no consequence: so the "seventh" command is put before the "sixth", and the "fifth" omitted, in Ro 13:9 and with the Jews it is a common<sup>118</sup> saying, *אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה*, "there is neither first nor last in the law": that is, it is of no consequence which commandment is recited first, or which last. Moreover, it looks as if it was usual to recite these commands in this order, since they are placed exactly in the same method, by a very noted Jewish<sup>119</sup> writer. And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; which is not a particular distinct command from the rest, or an explication of the tenth and last, not mentioned; but a recapitulation, or compendium, and abridgment of the whole, and is said to be a complement and fulfilling of the law; see Ro 13:9.

#### Matthew 19:20

Ver. 20. **The young man saith unto him,**

For though he was so very rich and in such an exalted station in life, as to be a ruler, it seems he was but a young man; and to be so early serious and religious, amidst so much riches and grandeur, though it was but externally, was both remarkable and commendable: upon hearing the answer of Christ, with which he was highly pleased

and greatly elated, he very pertly replies, all these things have I kept from my youth up: as soon as he was capable of learning, his parents taught him these precepts; and ever since he had the use of his reason, and understood the letter, and outward meaning of them, he had been careful to observe them; nor could he charge himself with any open and flagrant transgression of them; not understanding the internal sense, extensive compass, and spirituality of them; and therefore asks, what lack I yet? In what am I deficient hitherto? in what have I come short of doing these things? what remains at last to be performed? what other precepts are to be obeyed? if there are any other commands, I am ready to observe them, which may be thought necessary to obtain eternal life.

#### Matthew 19:21

Ver. 21. **Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect,**

Wanting nothing, completely righteous, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, having no evil, concupiscence, or worldly lusts: our Lord signifies it was not enough to be possessed of negative holiness, and do no hurt to his neighbour, to his person, property, and estate, but he must love him, and do him good; and therefore, though so far as he had complied with the law, it was right and commendable; wherefore it is said by Mark, "that Jesus beholding him loved him"; had an affectionate regard to him as man, and approved of his intentions, seriousness, and actions, so far as agreeable; yet tells him,

**one thing thou lackest:**

not but that he lacked many more, but he was only willing to observe one thing to him, as a trial of his love to his neighbour, which is the fulfilling of the law:

**go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven:**

not that either the law of God, or Gospel of Christ, require this to be done of all men, and at all times; for though it is a duty binding upon all, and always, to relieve the poor and the needy, yet a man is not obliged to give all that he has to them; see 2Co 8:11 nor does either legal or Christian perfection lie in doing this: a man may give all his goods to the poor and yet be destitute of the grace of God, 1Co 13:3 much less can such an action merit the heavenly treasure of eternal life. Nevertheless of some persons, and in some cases, it has been required, that they part with all their worldly substance, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; as the apostles were called to leave all and follow Christ, as this man was also; for it is added,

<sup>118</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 6. 2. Zohar in Num. fol. 61. 4.

<sup>119</sup> R. Sangari, Sepher Cosri, par. 3. sect. 11, fol. 146. 2.



so difficult, and clog the way, either into grace or glory, but putting trust and confidence in them; and therefore in Mark, they “that have riches”, are by Christ explained of such, that “trust in riches”; and which rich men in common are very apt to do, as this young man did, against which the apostle cautions, 1Ti 6:17

#### Matthew 19:24

Ver. 24. **And again I say unto you,**

After the apostles had discovered their astonishment at the above expression, about the difficulty of a rich man entering into the kingdom of heaven; when they expected that, in a short time, all the rich and great men of the nation would espouse the interest of the Messiah, and acknowledge him as a temporal king, and add to the grandeur of his state and kingdom; and after he had in a mild and gentle manner, calling them “children”, explained himself of such, that trusted in uncertain riches, served mammon, made these their gods, and placed their hope and happiness in them; in order to strengthen and confirm what he had before asserted, and to assure, in the strongest manner, the very great difficulty, and seeming impossibility, of rich men becoming followers of Christ here, or companions with him hereafter, he expresses himself in this proverbial way:

**it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God:**

thus, when the Jews would express anything that was rare and unusual, difficult and impossible, they used a like saying with this. So speaking of showing persons the interpretation of their dreams <sup>122</sup>.

”Says Rabba, you know they do not show to a man a golden palm tree i.e. the interpretation of a dream about one, which, as the gloss says, is a thing he is not used to see, and of which he never thought, דמחטא בקופא דמחטא, ולא פילא דגליל בקופא דמחטא, “nor an elephant going through the eye of a needle”.

Again, to one that had delivered something as was thought very absurd, it is said <sup>123</sup>;

”perhaps thou art one of Pumbeditha (a school of the Jews in Babylon) דמחטא בקופא דמחטא “who make an elephant pass through the eye of a needle”.

That is, who teach such things as are equally as monstrous and absurd, and difficult of belief. So the

authors of an edition of the book of Zohar, to set forth the difficulty of the work they engaged in, express themselves in this manner <sup>124</sup>:

In the name of our God, we have seen fit, דמחטא להכני פילא בקופא “to bring an elephant through the eye of a needle”.

And not only among the Jews, but in other eastern nations, this proverbial way of speaking was used, to signify difficulties or impossibilities. Mahomet has it in his Alcoran <sup>125</sup>;

”Verily, says he, they who shall charge our signs with falsehood, and shall proudly reject them, the gates of heaven shall not be opened to them, neither shall they enter into paradise, “until a camel pass through the eye of a needle”.

All which show, that there is no need to suppose, that by a camel is meant, not the creature so called, but a cable rope, as some have thought; since these common proverbs manifestly make it appear, that a creature is intended, and which aggravates the difficulty: the reason why instead of an elephant, as used in most of the above sayings, Christ makes mention of a camel, may be, because that might be more known in Judea, than the other; and because the hump on its back would serve to make the thing still more impracticable.

#### Matthew 19:25

Ver. 25. **When his disciples heard it.**

That is, the difficulty of a rich man’s entering into the kingdom of heaven, aggravated by the above proverbial expression,

**they were exceedingly amazed.**

They were surprised at his first words; but when he confirmed them by the proverb of a camel’s passing through the eye of a needle, they were, as Mark says, “astonished out of measure”: they did not imagine there was any difficulty of rich men coming into the kingdom of the Messiah, which they took to be a worldly one, and would be filled with rich men; for so they understood Christ; though he meant by the kingdom of heaven a spiritual kingdom, a Gospel church state here, or the heavenly glory, or both; but when he expressed, by the proverb, the impracticableness of such men becoming the subjects thereof, their amazement increased;

**saying,**

<sup>122</sup> T. Bab. Beracot fol. 55. 2.

<sup>123</sup> T. Bab Bava Metzia, fol. 38. 2.

<sup>124</sup> Prefat. ad Zohar, Ed. Sultzbach.

<sup>125</sup> Chap. 7. p. 120. Ed. Sale.

as in Mark, “among themselves”, privately to one another,

**who then can be saved?**

meaning, not with a spiritual and everlasting salvation, but a temporal one: for upon Christ’s so saying, they might reason with themselves, that if rich men did not come into the kingdom of the Messiah, they would oppose him and his kingdom, with all their force and strength; and then what would become of such poor men as themselves, who would not be able to stand against them? nor could they hope to be safe long, or enjoy any continued happiness in the expected kingdom, should this be the case.

**Matthew 19:26**

Ver. 26. **But Jesus beheld them,**

Looking wishfully and earnestly at them; signifying thereby, that he knew their reasonings among themselves, though they did not speak out so as to be heard by him; and that there was no reason why they should be in so much concern, as their countenances showed, or possess themselves with such fears:

**and said unto them, with men this is impossible.**

Mark adds, “but not with God; for with God all things are possible”; to be done by him, if he will, which are consistent with the glory and perfections of his nature: for as he could, by his almighty power, if he would, reduce a camel to so small a size, as to be able to go through the eye of a needle, which, with men, is an impossible thing; so by the mighty power of his grace he can work upon a rich man’s heart, in such a manner, as to take off his affections from his worldly substance, and cause him to drop his trust and confidence in it: he can so influence and dispose his mind, as to distribute his riches cheerfully among the poor, and largely, and liberally supply their wants, and even part with all, when necessity requires it: he can change his heart, and cause the desires of his soul to be after true riches of grace and glory; and bring him to see his own spiritual poverty, his need of Christ, and salvation by him; and to deny himself, take up the cross, and follow him, by submitting to his most despised ordinances, and by suffering the loss of all things for his sake; and he can carry him through a thousand snares safe to his kingdom and glory, which is Christ’s sense; though the thing is impossible upon the foot of human nature, and strength, which can never effect anything of this kind: and as to what the apostles suggested concerning the safety of persons in the Messiah’s kingdom, if no rich man could enter there, but should be in opposition

to it; our Lord’s answer implies, that though, humanly speaking, it was not possible and practicable that they, a company of poor, mean, and despicable men, should be able to stand against the united force of the great and mighty men of the earth; yet God was able to support, and uphold them, succeed, and keep them, and make them both useful and comfortable, amidst all the opposition and persecution they should meet with, until he had finished his whole will and work by them.

**Matthew 19:27**

Ver. 27. **Then answered Peter and said unto him,**

Peter observing what Christ said to the young man, bidding him sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and he should have treasure in heaven, and come and follow him, lays hold on it, and addresses him in the following manner,

**behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee.**

Though their worldly substance was not so large as the young man’s, they had not such estates to sell, nor that to give to the poor, he had; yet all that they had they left for Christ’s sake, their parents, wives, children, houses, and worldly employments, by which they supported themselves and families; and became the disciples and followers of Christ, embraced his doctrines, submitted to his commands, imitated him in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, denying themselves, and suffering many hardships on his account: wherefore it is asked,

**what shall we have therefore?**

what reward for all this? what part in the Messiah’s kingdom? or what treasure in heaven?

**Matthew 19:28**

Ver. 28. **And Jesus said unto them,**

To all the disciples whom Peter represented;

**verily I say unto you:**

the thing being something very considerable, and of great moment, Christ uses the asseveration he sometimes does in such cases:

**that ye which have followed me.**

Christ does not deny that they had forsaken all for his sake, nor does he despise it, because it was but little they left, though he does not repeat it; but only takes notice of their following him, which, including their faith in him, their profession of him, and subjection to him, was a much greater action, and of more importance than the other, and therefore is only mentioned, and which our Lord confirms:

**in the regeneration.**

This clause is so placed, that it may be read in



connection with the preceding words, and be understood of the disciples following Christ in the regeneration; meaning, not the grace of regeneration, in which they could not be said, with propriety, to follow Christ; and one of them was never a partaker of it: but the new state of things, in the church of God, which was foretold, and is called the time of reformation, or setting all things right, which began upon the sealing up the law, and the prophets, and the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ; who both, when they began to preach, declared, that this time, which they call the kingdom of heaven, was at hand, just ushering in. Now the twelve apostles followed Christ herein: they believed, and professed him to be the Messiah; they received, what the Jews called, his new doctrine, and preached it to others; they submitted to the new ordinance of baptism, and followed Christ, and attended him wherever he went, working miracles, preaching the Gospel, and reforming the minds and manners of men. Now this new dispensation is called the regeneration, and which more manifestly took place after our Lord's resurrection, and ascension, and the pouring down of the Spirit; wherefore the phrase may be connected with the following words,

**when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory in the regeneration;**

not in the resurrection of the dead, or at the last judgment, but in this new state of things, which now began to appear with another face: for the apostles having a new commission to preach the Gospel to all the world; and being endued with power from on high for such service, in a short time went every where preaching the word, with great success. Gentiles were converted, as well as Jews, and both brought into a Gospel church state; the ceremonies of the old law being abolished, were disused; and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper, every where practised; old things passed away, and all things became new: agreeably to this the Syriac version renders the phrase, בלמא חדתא, "in the new world"; and so the Persic. The Arabic reads it, "in the generation", or "age to come"; which the Jews so often call the world, or age to come, the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation.

**When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory,**

or glorious throne; as he did when he ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God; and was then exalted as a prince, and made, or declared to be Lord and Christ; and was crowned in human nature, with honour, and glory, and angels, principalities, and

powers, made subject to him:

**ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones:**

for though Judas fell from his apostleship, yet Matthias was chosen in his room, and took his place, and made up the number twelve; a metaphorical phrase, setting forth the honour, dignity, and authority of their office and ministry, by which they should be judging the twelve tribes of Israel; doctrinally and practically; by charging them with the sin of crucifying Christ, condemning them for their unbelief, and rejection of him, denouncing the wrath of God, and the heaviest judgments that should fall upon them, as a nation, for their sin; and by turning from them to the Gentiles, under which judgment they continue to this day. So the doctors among the Jews are represented as sitting and judging others: of "the potters", in 1Ch 4:23 they say <sup>126</sup>,

"these are the disciples of the law, or the lawyers, for whose sake the world is created, דיתבני ל דינא "who sit in judgment", and establish the world; and build, and perfect the ruins of the house of Israel."

**Matthew 19:29**

Ver. 29. **And everyone that hath forsaken houses,**

Not only the then disciples of Christ, but any other believer in him, whether at that time, or in any age, that should be called to quit their habitations, or leave their dearest relations, friends, and substance: as

**brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, lands, for my name's sake;**

or, as in Luke, "for the kingdom of God's sake"; that is, for the sake of the Gospel, and a profession of it. Not that believing in Christ, and professing his name, do necessarily require a parting with all worldly substance, and natural relations, but when these things stand in competition with Christ, he is to be loved and preferred before them; and believers are always to be ready to part with them for his sake, when persecution arises, because of the word. All these things are to be relinquished, rather than Christ, and his Gospel; and such who shall be enabled, through divine grace, to do so,

**shall receive an hundred fold:**

Mark adds, "now in this time"; and Luke likewise, "in this present time", in this world; which may be understood either in spiritual things, the love of God, the presence of Christ, the comforts of the Holy Ghost, the communion of saints, and the joys and pleasures felt in the enjoyment

<sup>126</sup> Targuru in 1 Chron. iv. 23.

of these things, being an hundred times more and better to them, than all they have left or lost for Christ's sake; or in temporal things, so in Mark it seems to be explained, that such shall now receive an hundred fold,

**even houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children and lands;**

not that they should receive, for the leaving of one house, an hundred houses; or for forsaking one brother, an hundred brethren, &c. which last indeed might be true, as to a spiritual relation; but that the small pittance of this world's goods, and the few friends they should have "with persecutions" along with them, and amidst them, should be so sweetened to them, with the love and presence of God, that these should be more and better to them than an hundred houses, fields, and friends, without them:

**and shall inherit everlasting life.**

The other evangelists add, "in the world to come", which is infinitely best of all; for this is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens, when all other inheritances are corruptible, defiled, fading and perishing; houses fall, relations die, friends fail, and lands and estates do not continue for ever: they then have the best of it, who being called, in providence, to quit all terrene enjoyments for Christ's sake, are favoured with his presence here, and shall enjoy eternal glory and happiness with him in another world.

**Matthew 19:30**

Ver. 30. **But many that are first shall be last,**

This may refer unto, or be occasioned by, either the young ruler; signifying that he, and others like him, who were superior in riches and honour, were first in this world, of the first rank and figure, should be the last in the world to come:

**and the last shall be first;**

the apostles, who were last in this world, being poor, mean, and abject, should be the first in the other: or to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were in the chief place, and highest esteem, in the Jewish church, and yet least in the kingdom of heaven; when, on the other hand, the publicans and sinners, who were in the lowest class, and in least esteem, went first into it: or to the case of persecution, when some, who seem most forward to endure it at a distance, when it comes nearer, are most backward to it; whilst others, who were most fearful of it, and ready to shrink at the thoughts of it, most cheerfully bear it: or to the apostles themselves, one of which, who was now first, Judas, should be last; and the apostle Paul,

who was last of all, as one born out of due time, should be first: or to Jews and Gentiles, intimating, that the Jews, who were first in outward privileges, would be rejected of God for their unbelief, and contempt of the Messiah; and the Gentiles, who were last called, should be first, or chief, in embracing the Messiah, professing his Gospel, and supporting his interest. This sentence is confirmed, and illustrated, by a parable, in the following chapter.

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

### CHAPTER XX

*1 Christ, by similitude of the labourers in the vineyard. showing that God is debtor to no man. 17 foretelleth his passion. 20 by answering the mother of Zebedee's children teaching his disciples to the lowly. 30 and giveth two blind man thier sight.*

Matthew 20

- [1] For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.
- [2] And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.
- [3] And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,
- [4] And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.
- [5] Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.
- [6] And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?
- [7] They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.
- [8] So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.
- [9] And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.
- [10] But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.
- [11] And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

- [12] Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.
- [13] But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?
- [14] Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.
- [15] Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?
- [16] So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.
- [17] And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,
- [18] Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,
- [19] And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.
- [20] Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.
- [21] And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.
- [22] But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.
- [23] And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.
- [24] And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.
- [25] But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.
- [26] But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;
- [27] And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:
- [28] Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

- [29] And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.
- [30] And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.
- [31] And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.
- [32] And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?
- [33] They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.
- [34] So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

### JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW CHAPTER XX

#### Matthew 20:1

Ver. 1. **For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man,**

That is, the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, may fitly be represented by a man

**that is an householder,**

or master of a family, as Christ is; See Gill "Mt 10:25" He is master of the whole family of God, in heaven, and in earth, of all the children of God, and household of faith; his house they are, he is Father and master, son and firstborn, priest and prophet there.

**Which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard:**

by "the vineyard" may be meant the church, which, like a vineyard, is separated by electing, redeeming, and calling grace, and by the order and ordinances of the Gospel, from the rest of the world; is set with various vines, with trees of righteousness, with pleasant plants, both fruitful and profitable; and which are dear and valuable to Christ; and about which much care is used to preserve, keep, and improve them. This may be called "his", Christ's, being what he has chosen for himself, his Father has given him, and he is heir of; which he has purchased with his blood, and which he plants, waters, takes care of, and enjoys. The "labourers" design either the ministers of the Gospel, who labour in the word and doctrine, who are, or at least ought to be, labourers in Christ's vineyard, and not loiterers; whose work in study,

meditation, and prayer, in the ministration of the word and ordinances, and in performing other services they are called unto, is very laborious; and made more so, through the wickedness of some, and weakness of others: the employment of these labourers in the vineyard is various; the business of some is to plant; they are chiefly made use of in conversion: the work of others is to water; these are instruments in edification, and means of the growth of grace: others have a good hand at pruning, giving reproofs and corrections, in a suitable manner, with success, to the checking of sin, and bringing forth more fruit: others are useful in propping and supporting the vines, comforting and strengthening weak believers; and others in protecting and defending the outworks of the church, the doctrines and ordinances of it: or else private Christians in general may be intended, who all are, or should be labourers, both in the exercise of grace; for there is the work of faith, and the labour of love, to God, Christ, and his people, in which they should be continually employed; and in the discharge of duty, with regard to themselves; and in the care of their own vineyard, with respect to their families, which are their charge, and also to the church of Christ, of which they are members. These labourers are said to be “hired” by the householder, or owner of the vineyard, Christ, not strictly and properly speaking; nor does it mean that he had no prior right to their obedience, or that there is any merit in their labour, or that that is the condition of their salvation; but it signifies the influence of his grace, in making them willing to serve him cheerfully, and labour in his vineyard freely; to encourage them in which, he makes them many gracious, and exceeding great and precious promises, and particularly that of eternal life: for which purpose, it is said, that he “went out”, either from his Father as mediator, being sent by him; or from heaven into this world, by the assumption of human nature; or by his Spirit, and the influence of his grace, in the calls of his people, to their several services, in his church; and that “early in the morning”: some of them being very early called to labour there; meaning either in the morning of the world, as Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, and others; or in the morning of the Jewish church state, as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and the like; or in the morning of the Gospel dispensation, as the apostles of Christ, which seems most likely; or in the morning of youth, as Timothy and others. Several things, in this first part of the parable, might be illustrated from the Jewish writings. They have a parable indeed, which, in the several parts of it, greatly resembles this, and begins

thus <sup>127</sup>;

“to what is R. Bon like? to a king that hath a vineyard,

וַשְׂכַּר לְיוֹ פּוֹלִימָ “and hires labourers into it”, &c.”

Out of which some other things will be remarked, in the following parts of this parable: of a son’s being sent, and going out to hire labourers into the vineyard, take the following instance <sup>128</sup>:

“it happened to R. Jochanan ben Matthia, that said to his son, וַשְׂכַּר אָ, “go out, and hire labourers” for us: “he went out”, and agreed with them for their food.”

The time of hiring labourers, here mentioned, exactly agrees with the Jewish accounts <sup>129</sup>.

“Says R. Juda ben Bethira, when the face of all the east is light unto Hebron, all the people go out, every man to his work; and when it is so light, it is good “to hire labourers we say”.

Upon which the gloss says,

“every man goes out to his work, not for labourers, but the “householder”, who מַשְׁכִּימֵ יוֹהָר, “rises earlier to find labourers to hire”.”

Perhaps it may not be worth while to observe, how large a spot of ground, set with vines, was, by them, called a vineyard: it is frequently said by them <sup>130</sup>,

“that a vineyard planted by less than four cubits, is no vineyard; but R. Simeon, and the wise men, say it is a vineyard.”

### Matthew 20:2

Ver. 2. **And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day,**

These labourers were of that sort that were called וַשְׂכֵּר יוֹמָ, “hired for a day”; concerning whom is the following rule <sup>131</sup>:

“he that is hired for a day, may demand it all the night; and he that is hired for a night may demand it all the day: he that is hired for hours, may demand it all the night, and all the day;

127 Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 21. 3. Vid. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4. & Talmud Hicros. Beracot, fol 5. 3.

128 Misua Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 1.

129 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 28. 2.

130 T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 33. 2. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 37. 2. & 33. 1.

131 Misna Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 11. Maimon Hilch. Shericut, c. 11. sect. 2.

he that is hired for a week, he that is hired for a month, he that is hired for a year, he that is hired for seven, if he goes out in the day, may demand all the day; and if he goes out in the night, he may demand it all the night, and all the day.”

And the wages of a day were usually rnyd “a penny”; which, if understood of a Roman penny, was seven pence halfpenny of our money. One of their canons runs thus <sup>132</sup>:

“he that hires a labourer in the winter, to work with him in the summer, כָּכֵל יוֹם “for a penny every day”, and he gives him his hire; and, lo! his hire is alike to that in the winter, a “sela” every day, this is forbidden; because it looks as if he chose that time to lessen his wages; but if he says to him, work with me from this day, to such a time, “for a penny every day”, though his hire is the same, a “sela” every day, this is lawful.”

By the penny a day agreed for with the labourers, may be meant external privileges; or the free promise made, whether to ministers, or private believers, of a sufficient supply of grace daily, that as their day is, their strength shall be; together with that of eternal life and happiness at last.

He sent them into his vineyard; to labour there: for none have any business there, but such who are called and sent by the owner of it; and where sons are sent, and work, as well as servants; see Mt 21:28.

### **Matthew 20:3**

Ver. 3. **And he went out about the third hour,**

About nine o'clock in the morning,

**and saw others standing idle in the market place:**

the place where labourers used to be hired: and may design the world, because a place full of people, and of great wickedness, for the whole world lies in it; a place of trade and traffic in worldly things, and likewise of worldly and carnal pleasure, and also of idleness. Now God's elect before calling, are in this place: they are natives of it, have their conversation according to it: here Christ came in person, and here he sends his ministers, his Gospel, to find them out, and by his Spirit and grace he calls them from hence; so that afterwards they are no more of it, though they are in it: but before conversion they belong to it, and their posture then is standing idle; being sluggish, and slothful in business, unwilling to work, and afraid of a little danger and trouble, sauntering

away their time in carnal pleasures, and so clothed with rags, and in a starving, famishing condition: but Christ's eye is upon them; he observes, and takes notice of them in this disagreeable position and situation, and speaks of them in the following manner.

### **Matthew 20:4**

Ver. 4. **And said unto them, go ye also into the vineyard,**

Expressive of a call of divine grace out of the world, into the church; and which arises from mere grace, and good will, without any merit in, or motive from man, as the case here shows: for the householder went out to these men, not they to him; he puts the question to them, and calls them, and bids them go into his vineyard; they do not ask him to hire them, nor desire to be in his service. Moreover, the persons called were a parcel of idle, mean, vulgar people, as market folks commonly are; the weak, base, and foolish things of the world. The encouragement given them follows,

**and whatsoever is right I will give you**

which is to be understood, not of strict justice; for in this sense nothing could be given to sinful mortals, for their services; but of grace, for what is had on this score, whether in this, or in the other world, is in a way of giving and receiving, which are the phrases used here, and in the context. It properly signifies what is meet and convenient, and will be satisfying; and since it is not expressed what he would give them, and they should receive, it calls for faith and dependence on divine goodness: for it does not yet appear, what the faithful labourers in Christ's vineyard will want, and shall receive in this life, nor what will be their happiness in the world to come: the glories and joys of heaven are unseen things; and eternal life is a hidden one at present, and must be trusted for:

**and they went their way:**

into the vineyard, the church, to labour there; which shows, that the call was powerful and efficacious; they were powerfully wrought upon by it; were at once inclined, and made willing to, and did go cheerfully, without standing to dispute about their work or wages.

### **Matthew 20:5**

Ver. 5. **Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour,**

About twelve o'clock, or at noon, and three o'clock in the afternoon. These three last mentioned seasons of the day, were the hours of prayer; see Ac 2:15 and did likewise: seeing others in the same place, and posture, he called them, and sent them into his vineyard, to labour

<sup>132</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Milvah Ulavah, c. 7. sect. 12. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 86. 2. & 87. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

there, giving them the same promise he did to others.

**Matthew 20:6**

Ver. 6. **And about the eleventh hour he went out,**

About five o'clock in the afternoon. The Persic version reads it, "the twelfth hour", which was six o'clock in the afternoon, the last hour of the day. The Jews divided their day into twelve hours,

Joh 11:9 and these twelve hours into four parts; Ne 9:3 each part containing three hours, to which division there is a manifest respect in this parable. These different seasons of the husbandman's going out to hire labourers, may have regard either to the several periods of time, and ages of the world, as before the law, under the law, the times of the Messiah, and the last days; or the various dispensations of the Gospel, first by Christ, and John the Baptist to the Jews, then by the apostles to the same in their first mission, afterwards when their commission was renewed, first to the Jews in Judea, and then to the same among the nations of the world, and last of all to the Gentiles; or to the several stages of human life, and may regard Christ's call of persons in childhood, youth, manhood, and old age; which last may be signified by the eleventh hour, as also the Gentiles, and the remainder of God's elect in the last day:

**and found others standing idle;**

in the same place and position as before: for the state and condition of God's elect, by nature, as it is the same with others, it is the same with them all. The word "idle" is omitted here by the Vulgate Latin, the Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but is retained in the Syriac and Persic versions; and stands in the Greek copies:

**and saith unto them, why stand ye here all the day idle?**

for being about the eleventh hour, the day was far spent, it was almost gone, a small portion of it remained, but one hour, as appears from Mt 20:12.

**Matthew 20:7**

Ver. 7. **They say unto him, because no man hath hired us,**

This may be fitly applied to the Gentiles, who hundreds of years were neglected by God; he overlooked the times of their ignorance, took no notice of them in their state of stupidity, blindness, and irreligion; but suffered them to walk in their own ways, sent no prophets to instruct them, nor messages, nor messengers to them; till at length the Jews, having rejected and crucified the Messiah, and persecuted his apostles, and contradicted,

and blasphemed the Gospel, they were ordered to go to the Gentiles, and preach it to them:

**he saith unto them, go ye also into the vineyard:**

the Gospel was made the power of God unto salvation to them; they were called by grace, became of the same body the church, were fellow heirs with the believing Jews, partakers of the same promises and privileges, in a Gospel church state, and were equally labourers in the Lord's vineyard:

**and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive;**

with the rest of the labourers in it. This clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor is it in Beza's most ancient Greek copy, though in all the rest; nor is it in the Persic version, which has added, "and they went", as they were bidden, into the vineyard, the call being effectual; but is retained in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

**Matthew 20:8**

Ver. 8. **So when even was come,**

At six o'clock, or when the sun was set, which was the time of paying labourers their wages: thus in the parable of the Jews, before referred to, which bears some resemblance to this, it is said,

לָתָּהָרָב<sup>133</sup> that "at evening time" the labourers came to take their wages."

Sooner than this, one that was hired for a day, could not demand it; nor was the master of the vineyard, who hired him, obliged to pay him till the sun was set<sup>134</sup>, which was the time of his going forth from his labour<sup>135</sup>. This even may be understood, either of the evening of the Jewish state, upon the calling of the Gentiles; or of the end of the world, the close of the Gospel dispensation; when the work of it will be over, when all the elect of God, Jews and Gentiles, shall be called and gathered in, and all brought to repentance towards God, and faith in Christ.

**The lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward:**

by the lord of the vineyard may be meant God the Father, who has chosen and separated the vineyard of the church for himself; and has made it the care and charge of his Son Jesus Christ; who, as mediator, may be designed by "his steward"; who has not only all the stores of grace in his hand, to distribute to his people, in this life, as their cases require; but has also eternal life

<sup>133</sup> Shirashirim Rabba, fol. 21. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4. T. Hicros. Beracot, fol. 5. 3.

<sup>134</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 11.

<sup>135</sup> Jarchi in Lev. xix. 13.

and happiness in his possession for them; not only the promise of it, but that itself; and has a power of giving it to as many as the Father hath given him; and which he, the righteous judge, and faithful steward, will give at the day of judgment, to all that love his appearing.

**Call the labourers, and give them their hire;**

the proper time being come: for the Jews say <sup>136</sup>

“it is an affirmative precept to give the wages of an hired person in its time; as it is said, De 24:15 at “his day thou shalt give him his hire”; and if it is prolonged after its time, it is transgressing a negative precept, as it is said, (in the same place,) “neither shall the sun go down upon it.””

So Jews and Gentiles were called to partake of the same Gospel privileges; and so will all the faithful labourers in the Lord’s vineyard be called together, and have the reward of eternal life bestowed upon them, and be bid to enter into the joy of their Lord, and inherit the kingdom prepared for them, as they before were ordered to go into the vineyard, and work. And though eternal life may be called hire or reward, because as hire is given to labourers, so is eternal life; and as that is given at the even and close of the day, and when the labourer has done his work, so everlasting glory will be given to the saints at the end of life, and when they have done the will and work of God: yet it will not be bestowed by way of merit, or, as if there was a just proportion between the work, labour, and services of the saints, and the glory that shall be revealed in them. Their purest services, even their sufferings for Christ, are not worthy to be compared with that; nor are there any that are done by them, but what are due to God, what he has a right unto, and are their duty to perform; so that when they are done by them in the best and most perfect manner, they are but unprofitable servants: nor can they, by anything they do, be profitable to God, or give anything to him, which can be obligatory upon him, to do anything for them, or be a valuable consideration for anything they should receive from him; and therefore they cannot merit anything at his hand, and much less eternal life: besides, their services are impure and imperfect, and whenever anything is well done by them, it is done not by their own strength and might, but by the assistance and grace of God; and therefore they can have no demand upon him for what they do: eternal life, though a reward, is not a reward of debt, but of grace; it is the free gift of God through Christ; God has graciously promised it in

the covenant of his grace, before the world began; he has given it into the hands of his Son for his people, with whom it is sure; and he gives it freely to all the sheep the Father has given him.

**Beginning from the last unto the first;**

beginning with the last that was called and sent into the vineyard, and so proceeding on to the next to them; giving them their wages as he went along, till he came to the first, who were early in the morning hired into this service; intimating, that some such method will be taken in the introducing of the saints into the kingdom of the Messiah here, and into his everlasting kingdom hereafter; whereby that saying of our Lord’s which occasioned this parable, will be also fulfilled, “the first shall be last, and last first”.

**Matthew 20:9**

Ver. 9. **And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour,**

Who were the last that were hired; and signify either such, as are called in their last days, in old age; or Gentile sinners; or the last of God’s elect, that will be called by grace, in the end of the world:

**they received every man a penny:**

the same they first agreed for, that were hired early into the vineyard; and all, and every man alike, not one more and another less. So the same church privileges and immunities are common to all believers, Jews or Gentiles, sooner or later called; and equal title give to the same eternal life and happiness, which will be enjoyed alike, by one saint as another: they are all loved with the same everlasting love by God; they are chosen alike by him in his Son, at the same time, in the same way and manner, and to the same grace and glory; they are interested in the same covenant, in all the promises and blessings of it; they are bought with the same price of a Redeemer’s blood, are justified by the same righteousness, and are called in one hope of their calling; they are equally the sons of God, and their glory and happiness are always expressed by the same thing, as a kingdom, a crown, and inheritance, &c. They are all equally heirs of the same kingdom and glory, and are born again to the same incorruptible inheritance, of which they will all be partakers; they will all be called to inherit the same kingdom, they will sit on the same throne of glory, and wear the same crown of righteousness, and enjoy the same uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. Now, indeed, they have not the same measures of grace; some have more, others less; but in heaven,

<sup>136</sup> Maimen, Helch. Secirut, c. 11. sect. 1.

it will be alike, complete and perfect in all; and even now, they have the same grace for nature and kind, only it is not in all in the same exercise; now the saints are distinguished by the several stations and places in which they are; though they are members of the same body, they have not the same office, and have gifts differing from one another; but in the other state, all such offices and gifts will cease, and all will be upon an equal foot; be where Christ is, and behold his glory, and will stand in no need of each other's instruction and help. Now the capacities of man are different, according to the different temperament of their bodies, their different education, opportunities, advantages, and stations in life, but in the other world, where this difference will be no more, every vessel of mercy being prepared for glory, will be equally capable of receiving it: and though there will be degrees of punishment in hell, proportionate to the sins of men, which the justice of God requires, yet it follows not, that there will be degrees in glory; since that is not proportioned to the works of men, but springs from the grace of God, and yet in a way of justice too, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: and since the saints have an equal interest in these things, it seems that upon the foot of justice, they should equally enjoy all that happiness which these entitle them to.

**Matthew 20:10**

Ver. 10. **But when the first came,**

Who were early hired into the vineyard; and design either the first saints that were in the world; or the Jews that first believed in Christ, either really or nominally; or such, who were called by grace in their early days:

**they supposed,**

or "hoped", as the Syriac version renders it,

**that they should have received more;**

than a penny, a greater reward: not that they could expect it on the foot of their agreement, or on account of their work; but because they observed, that they that came last into the vineyard, had as much as they agreed for; and therefore hoped, from the goodness of their Lord to them, that they should receive more:

**and they likewise received every man a penny;** the selfsame privileges of the Gospel, and a title to the selfsame reward of free grace, the selfsame glory and happiness.

**Matthew 20:11**

Ver. 11. **And when they had received it,**

The external privileges of the Gospel dispensation, an inheritance among them that are sanctified, and a

right unto it, on the foot of free grace,

**they murmured against the good man of the house;** who had been so kind and liberal, to those who came last into the vineyard, and had done no injury to them, but gave them a full reward. So the Jews that first believed in Christ, were at first uneasy at the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles, at the calling of them, and their partaking of the same privileges in a Gospel church state with them, without submitting to the ceremonies of the law, as they had done; just as the Pharisees, in Christ's time, murmured against him; for receiving sinners, and eating with them: though in the latter day, the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and in the ultimate glory there will be no murmuring at each other's happiness.

**Matthew 20:12**

Ver. 12. **Saying, these last have wrought but one hour,**

Thinking it hard, that they should have the same reward for the service of one hour, others had for the service of many. This is grudged by the Jews <sup>137</sup>;

"Bath Kol", a voice from heaven, went out and said, "Ketiah bar Shallum", is prepared for the life of the world to come; Rabbi wept, and said, there is that obtains his world (or the world to come for himself) אַחַד שָׁעָה אֶחָד "in one hour"; and there is that obtains it in many years."

The same observation is also made by the same person, on account of R. Eleazar ben Durdia <sup>138</sup>. So in the parable of the Jews above mentioned, which is the broken remains of a common proverb among them like <sup>139</sup> this; it is observed, that there being one labourer among those that were hired, who did his work better than all the rest, and who was taken notice of by the king; that when

"at even the labourers came to take their wages, this labourer also came to take his; and the king gave him his wages equal with them, (or, as in another place, a perfect one,) the labourers began to press him with difficulty, (or as elsewhere <sup>140</sup> מִתְרַמְּיִן "they murmured,") and said, Oh! our Lord, the king, "we have laboured all the day"; but this man has not laboured but two or three

<sup>137</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 10. 2.

**138 Ib. fol. 17. 1.**

<sup>139</sup> Shirhashirim Rabba, fol 21. 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4.

<sup>140</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 3.



hours in the day, and he takes his wages, even as ours, or a perfect reward.”

And so it follows here,

**and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden and heat of the day;**

of all the Jewish rites and ceremonies, which were burdensome and intolerable. The ceremonial law was a burden to the Jewish people; the multitude of sacrifices enjoined them, and the frequent repetition of them, together with the great number of other ordinances and institutions, produced a weariness in them; especially in the carnal part of them, who saw not the things typified by them, the use and end of them, and so did not enjoy spiritual pleasure in them, Mal 1:13. It was a yoke, and a yoke of bondage to them, which brought on them a spirit of bondage, through the fear of death, which was the penalty annexed to it; and it was an insupportable one, which neither they, nor their forefathers, were able to bear, because it made them debtors to keep the whole law: and this was made still more burdensome, by the traditions of the elders, which were added to it, and which the Scribes and Pharisees obliged to the observance of; to which they themselves still added, and bound heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders. The law was a fiery law, and the dispensation of it was a hot and scorching one; it was uncomfortable working under the flashes of a mount, that burned with fire: the law worked wrath, and possessed the minds of men with a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation. This may also be applied to such Christians, who are called to more severe service or sufferings for Christ, than others are; who are almost pressed down without measure, and endure fiery trials, are scorched, and made black, with the sun of persecution beating upon them; as the saints under the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors, and as the confessors and martyrs in the times of papal power and cruelty; and who, it might be thought, will have a greater degree of glory and happiness hereafter; and so some have been of opinion, that these are they that shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years, Re 20:4 But it rather seems, that others will be made equal with them, who have not endured what they have done; for all the dead in Christ, all that have part in the first resurrection, when Christ comes, as all the saints will then rise, will share in that glory; even the innumerable company, chosen, redeemed, and called, out of every nation, tongue, and people, and will be admitted to the same honour and

happiness, Re 7:9 And this character will also agree with many other servants of Christ, who are called to harder and more laborious service than others are, and labour more abundantly in the Lord's vineyard than others do, and are longer employed in it; as for instance, the Apostle Paul; and yet the same crown of righteousness that is laid up for him, and given to him, will be given to all that love the appearance of Christ, though they have not laboured for his name's sake, as he has done.

**Matthew 20:13**

Ver. 13. **But he answered one of them,**

Who was the forwardest and loudest in his complaints, and represented the rest;

**and said, friend, I do thee no wrong;**

by giving all alike, the same privileges and blessings to the last, as to the first, since nothing was withheld from him. And indeed the Lord does no wrong to any, by the distinction which he makes among his creatures: he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works: he does no injury to the evil angels, by choosing the good angels, and confirming them in the estate in which they were created; when the others are reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day; or by choosing fallen men, in Christ, and making provisions of grace for them, and not devils: and so there is no unrighteousness in him, nor does he do any wrong to any, when, like the potter, out of the same clay, he makes one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour; any more than when, in a providential way, he gives riches and wealth to some, and withholds them from others; or sends his Gospel, the means of grace to one, and not to another: and still less can he be thought to do wrong to the sons of men, by giving to them alike the same grace and privileges here, and the same happiness and glory hereafter; since neither have any right to what they have, or shall enjoy, and no one has the less for what is given to the other.

**Didst thou not agree with me for a penny?**

That is, to labour in the vineyard all the day for a penny; yea, this agreement was made personally with him, not with a servant, or messenger of his; though if it had, it ought, according to the Jewish canons, to have been abode by, which run thus <sup>141</sup>:

“A man says to his messenger, or servant, go and hire workmen for me for three pence; he goes and hires them for four pence: if the messenger says to them, your wages be upon me, he gives them four pence, and takes three pence of

141 {b} Maimon. Hilch, Shecirut, c. 9. sect. 3.

the master of the house; he looses one out of his own purse: if he says to them, your hire be upon the master of the house, the master of the house gives them according to the custom of the province: if there are one in the province that hired for three pence, and others that are hired for four pence, he gives them but three pence, “and the murmuring” is against the messenger; in what things? When the work is not known, but when the work is known, and it is worth four pence, the master of the house gives them four pence; but if his messenger does not say to them four pence, they do not labour and do what deserves four pence. The householder says to him, hire me for four pence, and the messenger goes and hires for three pence, though the work deserves four pence, they have but three pence; because that קבלו לִי אָנֹכִי “they took it upon themselves”, (i.e. they agreed for so much,) and their murmuring is against the messenger.”

Thus the argument in the parable proceeds upon the agreement, which ought to be abode by.

#### **Matthew 20:14**

Ver. 14. **Take that thine is,**

By agreement, and go thy way; out of my sight, give me no more trouble on this head; which looks like a dismissal from his service, and after privileges; and was true of many among the Jews, who were only nominal professors, and from whom the Gospel and ordinances of it were taken:

**I will give unto this last**

man that was called, and sent into the vineyard,

**even as unto thee;**

the same outward privileges, besides special grace, and eternal glory, which it looks as if the other had not.

#### **Matthew 20:15**

Ver. 15. **Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?**

External gifts and outward privileges, such as enjoying the word and ordinances, are God’s own; and he may, as he does, bestow them on whom he will, and when and where he pleases; as he gave them to the Jews, and continued them many hundred years, when the Gentiles were utterly with them destitute of them; and as he has bestowed them in a more abundant manner for a long time on the Gentiles, whilst the Jews despise and reject them. Special grace is his own, which he gives to whom he pleases; it is by his own grace, and not the merits of

men, that any are chosen, adopted, justified, pardoned, regenerated, and called; that they have faith, hope, love, repentance, or perform new obedience from a new heart, and new principles. Heaven and glory is his own, of his own preparing and giving; and both grace and glory are disposed of, and that very rightly and lawfully, according to his sovereign good will and pleasure: he chooses, adopts, justifies, pardons, regenerates, calls, and sanctifies whom he pleases; and brings what sons to glory he thinks fit, and bestows it equally upon them: and in so doing, does no wrong, or any injustice to any of his creatures; not to the fallen angels, by choosing some of their species, and confirming them in their original constitution; and by leaving them, the fallen angels, in their apostasy; nor by making provision for fallen man, and not them, nor by punishing them with everlasting destruction; nor do they ever complain of any wrong being done them: nor to non-elect men; for none of Adam’s race have any right to grace or glory, and therefore no wrong is done to any of them, by withholding them from them, whereby nothing is taken from them, and given to others; and by punishing them for sin; nor to any elect men, by making others partners with them; since they are all alike by nature, unworthy of grace and glory, and deserving of wrath: what is enjoyed by any of them, is of mere grace, and not through merit; and one has not a whit the less, for what the other is possessed of; so that there is no room for envy, murmuring, and complaint:

**is thine eye evil because I am good?**

An “evil eye”, is opposed to a good eye, frequently in Jewish writings, as a “good eye” signifies beneficence and liberality; hence it is said <sup>142</sup>

“He that gives a gift, let him give it בְּיַד יָפֶה “with a good eye”; bountifully and generously; and he that devoteth anything, let him devote it with a “good eye”;

cheerfully and freely: so an “evil eye” intends envy and covetousness, as it does here: and the sense is, art thou envious at the good of others, and covetous and greedy to monopolize all to thyself, because I am liberal, kind, and beneficent? Men are apt to complain of God, and charge his procedures in providence and grace, with inequality and injustice; whereas he does, as he may, all things according to his sovereign will, and never contrary to justice, truth, and goodness; though he is not to be brought to man’s bar, and men should

<sup>142</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 65. 1. & 71. 1. & 72. 1.

submit to his sovereignty.

### Matthew 20:16

Ver. 16. **So the last shall be first, and the first last,**

As he had asserted in Mt 19:30 and which is clearly illustrated by this parable, as it may be applied to Jews or Gentiles, or to nominal and real Christians:

**for many be called;**

externally, under the ministration of the Gospel, as the Jews in general were, by Christ and his apostles; but

**few chosen;**

in Christ from all eternity, both to grace and glory; and in consequence, and as an evidence of it, but few among the Jews; as also in the Gentile world, comparatively speaking: and even but a few of those that are outwardly called, are inwardly and effectually called by the powerful grace of God, out of darkness into marvellous light, into the grace and liberty of the Gospel, into communion with Christ, and to the obtaining his kingdom and glory, according to the eternal purpose of God. It is a saying of R. Simeon ben Jochai <sup>143</sup>

“I have seen the children of the world to come (elsewhere {e} it is, of the chamber), והן מוטיני “and they are few”.

Though he vainly thought, that if those few were but two, they were himself and his son.

### Matthew 20:17

Ver. 17. **And Jesus going up to Jerusalem,**

Which was situated <sup>144</sup> in the highest part of the land of Israel: the land of Israel, is said to be higher than any other land whatever; and the temple at Jerusalem, higher than any part of the land of Israel; wherefore Christ's going to Jerusalem, is expressed by going up to it. Whither he came either from the coasts of Judea, from beyond Jordan, Mt 19:1 where he had been some time healing diseases, disputing with the Pharisees, discoursing with the young ruler, and instructing his disciples; or from a country near to the wilderness, from a city called Ephraim, Joh 11:54 where he continued some time with his disciples, after the sanhedrim had took counsel to put him to death; for this was his last journey to Jerusalem.

Took the twelve disciples apart in the way: into some private place, which lay near the road; for it seems that there were others that followed him, besides the twelve; when he was not willing they should hear what he had

<sup>143</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 13. 4. {e} T. Bab. Succa, fol.

45. 2. & Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 2.

<sup>144</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 87. 1.

to say to them, concerning the issue of this, journey; lest either they should be discouraged and desert him, or it should be made public, and methods be used to prevent it: and said unto them; the disciples, whom he thought fit once more to remind of his sufferings and death, and to prepare them for the same; and though they would not so thoroughly understand all that he should say, yet when it was come to pass, they would remember it, and which would be of service to confirm their faith in him, as the true Messiah. See Gill “Mk 10:32”.

### Matthew 20:18

Ver. 18. **Behold, we go up to Jerusalem,**

This is the last time of our going thither; observe, and take notice of what I am about to say; some extraordinary things will come to pass, and, as Luke relates that he said,

**all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man, shall be accomplished;** everything that is recorded in Ps 22:1, and in Isa 53:1, or in any other prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to the ill treatment the Messiah should meet with, to his sufferings and death, and all the circumstances attending them, shall be exactly fulfilled in every point: and that they might not be at a loss about what he meant, he gives an account of various particular things, which should befall him;

**and the Son of man shall be betrayed:**

he does not say by whom, though he knew from the beginning who should betray him, that it would be one of his disciples, and that it would be Judas; but the proper time was not yet come to make this discovery: the persons into whose hands he was to be betrayed, are mentioned;

**unto the chief priests, and unto the Scribes;**

who were his most inveterate and implacable enemies; and who were the persons that had already taken counsel to put him to death, and were seeking all advantages and opportunities to execute their design:

**and they shall condemn him to death;**

which is to be understood not of their declaring it as their opinion, that he was guilty of death, and ought to die by a law of their's, which declaration they made before Pilate; nor of their procuring the sentence of death to be pronounced by him, upon him; but of their adjudging him to death among themselves, in the palace of the high priest; which was done by them, as the sanhedrim and great council of the nation; though either they could not, or did not, choose to execute it themselves, and therefore delivered him up to the Romans; for this act of

condemning him to death, was to be, and was, before the delivery of him up to the Gentiles, as is clear from what follows.

**Matthew 20:19**

Ver. 19. **And shall deliver him to the Gentiles,**

To Pilate, an Heathen governor, and to the Roman officers and soldiers under him; see Joh 18:35.

**To mock him,**

as they did, by putting on him a scarlet robe, plating a crown of thorns, and placing it on his head, and a reed in his hand; and then bowed the knee to him, and cried, hail, king of the Jews!

**and to scourge him:**

as he was by Pilate, at least by his orders: Mark adds, "and spit upon him"; as not only did the Jews in the palace of the high priest, but also the Gentiles, the Roman soldiers, after they had mocked him in the manner before described:

**and to crucify him:**

which, as it was a cruel and shameful death, such as slaves and the worst of malefactors were put to, so it was a Roman one; for which reason, the Jews choose to deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. The Persic version here adds, "and put him into the grave": which though it followed his crucifixion, was not done by the Gentiles, but by Joseph of Arimathea, a Jew, and a disciple of Jesus; and that not in a contemptuous, but honourable manner

**and the third day he shall rise again:**

this he said for the comfort of his disciples; but now, though these things were so clearly and distinctly expressed by Christ, and which show his omniscience, and give proof both of his deity and Messiahship, yet Luke observes of the disciples, "that they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken": the words were plain, the grammatical sense of them was easy, but they could not imagine that they were to be taken literally; which was such a glaring contradiction to their received and rooted principles of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, and the grandeur of it, that they fancied these expressions carried a mystical, secret meaning in them, which they were not masters of: and certain it is, that what our Lord now said, was so far from destroying, or weakening these prejudices of theirs, that it rather confirmed them in them; particularly, what he said about rising again, which seemed to have put them afresh in mind, and to excite their hopes of this external felicity, as appears from the following case.

**Matthew 20:20**

Ver. 20. **Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children,**

Whose name was Salome, as may be concluded from Mt 27:56 compared with Mark 15:40. She is not called the wife of Zebedee, who might be now dead, but the mother of his children, his two sons, as the Arabic version renders it: James and John, and who were the disciples of Christ: it is not certain, that Zebedee was ever a follower of him; and therefore the woman is described by her relation to her children, and not her husband; and the rather, because it was in their name, and on their account, that she came to Jesus. She is said to be the sister of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of our Lord; and if so, might hope to succeed in her request, on the foot of relation; as also, since she herself had been a constant follower of, and attendant on him; and especially, inasmuch as her sons were his favourite disciples;

**with her sons;**

her two sons, James and John, whom Mark mentions by name:

**worshipping**

him,

**and desiring a certain thing of him;**

that is, she came in a very submissive manner to him, either bowed unto him, or kneeled down before him, or threw herself at his feet, and signified that she had a single favour, and a very considerable one, to ask of him. Mark represents the case thus, that her two sons, James and John, came to Christ, and that they themselves spoke to him, and addressed him in this manner: "Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us, whatsoever we shall desire": which was a very odd request, both as to the matter and manner of it; that they should ask; and insist upon everything to be done for them, they desired; and suggest, that they expected that he would promise them this, before they declared the particular favour they had to ask of him. The matter may be reconciled thus. These two disciples, having observed what Christ had said concerning the twelve disciples sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and what he had just related, concerning his rising again the third day, which they might understand of some display of his glory; and concluding from all this, that the setting up of his temporal monarchy was at hand, inform their mother of it, and move to her, to use her interest with Christ, in their favour: and which they did, partly to shun the

envy and ill will of the rest of the disciples; and partly, to conceal their own pride and vanity; as also, they might think a request from her, on their behalf, would be more easily granted: accordingly, she agreeing to the motion, they all three came, as Matthew relates, and the mother is the mouth, and speaks for her sons; so that they may be said to make such a request by her, she representing them; or they joined in the petition with her; or as soon as she had made it, they seconded it, and made it their own.

#### **Matthew 20:21**

Ver. 21. **And he said unto her, what wilt thou?**

Mark says, “he said unto them”; her two sons, James and John, “what would you that I should do for you?” Both is true; what is this singular favour? what business of moment and importance is it, you would have me do for you, you are so eager and pressing for, and so solicitous of? This he said, not as being ignorant of the matter; he knew the corruption of their hearts, the vanity of their minds, their carnal, worldly, and ambitious views; but to lead them on to say all they had to say upon this head; in which may be observed the goodness, humanity, and patience of Christ, in not upbraiding them with their pride and insolence, in bearing with their rashness and folly, and in giving them room to believe, that he should answer their request in every thing that was right and reasonable to be done,

**She saith unto him, grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other the left in thy kingdom:**

or, as in Mark, “in thy glory” that is, in thy glorious kingdom; meaning a temporal one, which would outdo all the kingdoms of the world, in external glory, pomp, and splendour, as they imagined: to sit one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of Christ, when he should be seated, literally, on the throne of his father David, signifies to be nearest to his person; to be next to him in power and authority; to have the highest posts of honour, and places of trust and profit; to be his prime ministers; and, in a word, to have the greatest share next to him of worldly honour, riches, and power. To sit at the right hand, was, with the Jews, reckoned a great mark of honour and affection; see 1Ki 2:19 and so with other nations: with the Egyptians especially, it was accounted a great honour to be placed on the right hand, but the greatest to be in the middle: which was equally observed among the Romans, and the same with the Africans and Numidians; though Xenophon relates, that Cyrus, with

a singular prudence, that he might receive his guests the more honourably, used to place them at the left hand, accounting that part, as nearest the heart, to be the more worthy. <sup>145</sup> These two, the best and most honourable places, this woman was for engrossing for her two sons, who joined with her in the request; for Mark says, that “they said unto him, grant unto us that we may sit, &c.” and Christ’s answer here, which follows, implies as much.

#### **Matthew 20:22**

Ver. 22. **But Jesus answered, and said,**

To her two sons,

**ye know not what ye ask.**

They were ignorant of the nature of Christ’s kingdom, which is spiritual, and not of this world: or they would never have asked such a question, or sued for that which will never be enjoyed by any and supposing that Christ’s kingdom had been such as they imagined, yet in asking for honours and riches, they might not know what they asked for; they might promise themselves much pleasure and happiness in the enjoyment of them, and yet, if indulged with them, might be disappointed, and find unexpected troubles and uneasiness. It would have been much more proper and seasonable, on hearing of Christ’s being mocked, scourged, spit upon, and crucified, if they had put such a question to themselves, Christ here directs to,

**are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with**

the baptism I am baptized with? meaning his reproaches, sorrows, sufferings, and death; which because of the disagreeableness of them, he compares to a bitter cup of vengeance, wrath, fury, and indignation; and because they were appointed to him, and allotted for him, they were his portion, therefore he expresses them by a “cup”; and because they were so many and great, of such an overwhelming nature, that he seemed to be plunged into them, and covered with them, therefore he likens them to a “baptism” and which the ordinance of water baptism, performed by immersion, is a lively representation of. Now Christ suggests to these disciples, that instead of indulging their ambitious desires of worldly grandeur, that they would do well to consider what a bitter cup he had to drink of, and what a sea of sorrows and sufferings he was about to be plunged into, and drenched in; and whether they could think of enduring anything of the like kind, for his sake, which was most likely to be in a short time, what they would be

<sup>145</sup> Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 19.

called unto, and not to honours, ease, and pleasure; and what they must be sure, more or less, to undergo, before they entered the everlasting kingdom of glory:

**they say unto him, we are able;**

not considering the nature of these sufferings, and their own weakness; but partly through ignorance of themselves, and a vain confidence which possessed them; and chiefly through a vehement desire of the places in his kingdom, they asked for, and which they thought drinking his cup, and being baptized with his baptism, were the condition, and the means of enjoying; and so rashly affirm their ability, and which includes their willingness to comply herewith.

**Matthew 20:23**

Ver. 23. **And he saith unto them, ye shall drink indeed of my cup,**

Not of the selfsame, but of what was like unto it; meaning, that they should endure much persecution for his name's sake, as all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect in one shape or another. Thus James, who was one of these persons, was slain with the sword by Herod; John, the other, was imprisoned, and beaten by the order of the Jewish sanhedrim, was banished into the isle of Patmos by Domitian; and, some say, was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, though saved in it: so that these words seem to be a prophecy of what they should suffer for Christ, instead of enjoying places of worldly honour and profit under him, they were seeking for.

**And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with:**

this clause is here, and in the former verse, omitted by the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, and in some Greek copies, and is thought to be transcribed hither out of Mark's Gospel; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions have it, and so has Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and it appears in many Greek copies. James, being bathed in his own blood, when killed with the sword, and John being cast into a vessel of scalding oil, these are fitly expressed by a baptism.

**But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine, to give;**

in the sense in which they asked it, since he was no temporal prince; nor was his kingdom of this world; nor had he any such external favours, or worldly honours: and as to the true and spiritual sense of such a phrase, it was not a point to be fixed now by him, as man, and according to his own will; as who should reign with him in the kingdom of heaven, who should sit down

on the same throne with him, and enjoy all the glories and happiness of the world to come; and though, as mediator, all this glory was given to him, and he had it in his hands to give to others, yet to none

**but**

those **for whom,**

says he, **it is prepared of my Father:**

for this is the true reading and sense of the last clause; signifying, that eternal life, or the heavenly glory, is a kingdom prepared by his Father, from the foundation of the world, and not for anybody, and every person, but for some only, according to his Father's sovereign will and pleasure; and that this is an affair that was fixed by him, in his eternal counsels and purposes, and in the covenant of his grace, and not to be adjusted now; nor was the designation of it to be, nor will the distribution of it be according to the merits of men, but the free grace of God; and though he, as mediator, was appointed to bestow both grace and glory on men, yet only on those the Father had given to him, for whom grace was laid up in him, and glory prepared.

**Matthew 20:24**

Ver. 24. **And when they ten heard it,**

The other ten apostles, who either were within hearing the request made, and Christ's answer, or had by some means information of it:

**they were moved with indignation against the two brethren;**

the two sons of Zebedee, James and John: they were not so much displeased with the mother of them, who asked the favour for them, as with her sons, knowing that they have put her upon making this motion to Christ; nor were they so much moved with indignation at the action, detesting all notions of superiority and preeminence; for they were all tinctured with the same carnal principle, and each was desirous of the chief place for himself; but they were angry, and out of all temper, that these two brethren should move for that, which they thought they had as good a right unto, as any of them: wherefore, as Mark says, "they began to be much displeased with" them, and to show their resentment, not only by their looks and gestures, but by words; and very probably they would have rose to very high words, and a downright quarrel, had not Christ interposed; as, from the following verse, it appears he did.

**Matthew 20:25**

Ver. 25. **But Jesus called them unto him,**

All his twelve disciples, perceiving that the same

ambitious views prevailed in them all: to discourage which, and to prevent their quarrelling one with another, he called them to him, and made use of the following reasonings: and said, ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; appealing to them in a case that was well known by them, what the princes of the Gentiles did; or, as Mark expresses it, "they which are accounted"; or "seem to rule over the Gentiles": who know not God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who neither serve and obey him, or have any dependence on him, but assume a power of governing others, take upon them to rule the nations of the world, and are acknowledged as such by them: these claim a superiority over others, and exercise lordly power over them; and they that are their great ones, their lords, and nobles under them; these also assert a preeminence, and exercise authority on those that are below them; which they have received from those that are above them: this is the usual way and method of the governments of the kingdoms of this world: wherefore, for the apostles to affect and desire a superiority to each other, in the kingdom of Christ, was to imitate the Gentiles, and to act according to worldly forms of government; which is very unsuitable to the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world.

**Matthew 20:26**

Ver. 26. **But it shall not be so among you,**

This is not to be extended to Christian nations, as if there were to be no order of magistracy subsisting in them; but that all must be on a level, and no distinction of princes and subjects, of governors and governed; nor to Christian churches, as if there was no ecclesiastical authority to be used, or any church government and power to be exercised; none to rule, whom others are to obey and submit themselves to; but is to be restrained to the apostles as such, among whom there was an entire equality; being all apostles of Christ, being equally qualified and sent, and put into the selfsame office by him: the same holds good of all pastors of churches, who have no superintendency and pre-eminence over one another, or can, or ought to exercise any lordly power and authority, one, or more, over the rest; being equally invested with the same office power, one as another: for otherwise Christ's kingdom would appear like the nations of the world, and to be of a worldly nature; whereas it is spiritual, and does not lie in worldly pomp and grandeur, and in external superiority and pre-eminence of one

another; but in the spiritual administration of the word and ordinances; which every pastor of a church has an equal right to exercise, and obedience to them lies in a submission to these things:

**but whosoever will be great among you, let him be,**  
or, as in Mark,

**shall be your minister:**

whoever would be reckoned a great man in the kingdom of Christ, or under the Gospel dispensation, must be a minister to others if he is desirous of being truly great in the esteem of God, and of men, he must do great service for Christ, and to the souls of men; and seek to bring great glory to God, by faithfully ministering the word and ordinances, and by denying himself worldly honour and glory, and by serving others, through much reproach, difficulty, and opposition.

**Matthew 20:27**

Ver. 27. **And whosoever will be chief among you,**

Or first, or have the pre-eminence, the first place in the kingdom of the Messiah, let him be your servant; or, as in Mark, shall be servant of all: not only a minister, but a servant; not a servant of some only, but of all. This was verified in the Apostle Paul, who became a servant to all men, though he was free, that he might gain some to Christ; and by so doing was the chief, though he reckoned himself the least of the apostles, yea, less than the least of all saints. The Jews have a saying somewhat like this, that <sup>146</sup>"everyone that makes himself debek, as a servant, for the words of the law in this world, shall be made free in the world to come."

**Matthew 20:28**

Ver. 28. **Even as the son of man,**

Meaning himself, the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham, and of David, according to the flesh; and whom he proposes as an example of humility, and as an argument to draw them off from their ambitious views of worldly grandeur, and from all thoughts of the Messiah's setting up a temporal kingdom; since he

**came not to be ministered unto**

by others; to be attended on in pomp and state, to have a numerous retinue about him, waiting upon him, and ministering to him; as is the case of the princes, and great men of the world; though he is Lord of all, and King of kings;

**but to minister;**

in the form of a servant unto others, going about from

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146 T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 35. 2.

place to place to do good, both to the bodies and souls of men: he “came” forth from his Father, down from heaven, into this world, by his assumption of human nature, to “minister” in the prophetic office, by preaching the Gospel, and working miracles, in confirmation of it; and in the priestly office, one branch of which is expressed in the next clause,

**and to give his life a ransom for many:**

what he came to give was his life, which was his own, and than which nothing is more dear and precious: besides, his life was an uncommon one, being not only so useful to men, and entirely free from sin in itself, but was the life of the man Jesus, who is in union with the Son of God: this he came to “give”, and did give into the hands of men, to the justice of God, and death itself; which giving, supposes it to be his own, and at his own disposal; was not forfeited by any act of his, nor was it forced from him, but freely laid down by him; and that as a “ransom”, or redemption price for his people, to deliver them from the evil of sin, the bondage of Satan, the curses of a righteous law, from eternal death, and future wrath, and, in short, from all their enemies: which ransom price was paid “for” them in their room and stead, by Christ, as their substitute; who put himself in their legal place, and laid himself under obligation to pay their debts, and clear their scores, and redeem them from all their iniquities, and the evil consequences of them: and this he did “for many”; for as many as were ordained to eternal life; for as many as the Father gave unto him; for many out of every kindred, tongue, and people, and nation; but not for every individual of human nature; for many are not all.

**Matthew 20:29**

Ver. 29. **And as they departed from Jericho,**

Which, was distant about ten parasas, or miles, from Jerusalem<sup>147</sup>, through which Christ just passed, and had met with Zacchaeus, and called him, and delivered the parable concerning a nobleman’s going into a far country. The Syriac and Persic versions render the words, “when Jesus departed from Jericho”; and the Arabic, “when he went out of Jericho”; not alone, but “with his disciples”, as Mark says; and not with them only, for a great multitude followed him out of the city; either to hear him, or be healed by him, or to see him, or behold his miracles, or to accompany him to Jerusalem; whither he was going to keep the feast of the passover, and where they might

be in some expectation he would set up his kingdom. The Ethiopic version reads it, “as they went out from Jerusalem”, contrary to all copies and versions.

**Matthew 20:30**

Ver. 30. **And behold, two blind men,**

Mark and Luke make mention but of one; which is no contradiction to Matthew; for they neither of them say that there was but one. A greater difficulty occurs in Luke’s account; for whereas Matthew and Mark both agree, that it was when Jesus came out of Jericho, that this cure was wrought, Luke says it was “when he came nigh unto it”; which some reconcile by observing, that that phrase may be rendered, “while he was near Jericho”; and so only signifies his distance from it, and not motion to it; but this will not solve the difficulty, because we after read of his entrance into it, and passing through it. Some therefore have thought, that Christ met with, and cured one blind man before he entered the city, and another when he came out of it and that Matthew has put the history of both together: but to me it seems, that there were three blind men cured; one before he went into Jericho, which Luke only relates, and two as he came out of Jericho, which Matthew here speaks of; and one of which, according to Mark, was by name Bartimaeus, the son of Timaus; for so Bartimaeus signifies. Tima, or Timaus, was a name in use among the Jews: we often read of R. Judah amynt Nb, Ben Tima<sup>148</sup>, the son of Tima, or Timaus. Origen<sup>149</sup> thinks, he had his name from the Greek word timh, which signifies “honour”; and so תימרי “Time”, with the Jews, is used for honour and profit<sup>150</sup>. This man’s father might have been a very honourable and useful man, though the son was fallen into poverty and distress, through blindness; for which reason he may be mentioned, as being a person well known to the Jews.

**Sitting by the wayside;**

Mark says, “begging”, where such were wont to sit, in order to ask alms of persons, as they passed by;

**when they heard that Jesus passed by;**

who, upon perceiving that there was an unusual concourse of people, might ask the reason of it, when it was told them that Jesus of Nazareth was coming that way: or, without asking, they might hear the people speak of him; and inasmuch as they had heard many

<sup>147</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Taraid, c. 3. sect. 8.

<sup>148</sup> T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 52. 1. Erubin, fol. 19. 4. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 84. 1. Bava Metzgi, fol. 94. 1. Massech. Semachot, c. 9. Juchasin, fol. 159. 2.

<sup>149</sup> Comment. in Matt. vol. 1. p. 428. Ed. Huet.

<sup>150</sup> Targum in Esth. iii. 8. & v. 13. T. Hicros. Peah, fol. 15. 4.



things concerning him, and the miracles he wrought, applied to him for help, and

**cried out, saying, have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David:**

in which may be observed the titles of honour they give him, which declare their faith in him; calling him Lord, expressing their sense of his deity, dominion, and power; and “Son of David”, thereby owning and professing him to be the Messiah, that being a common name of him, well known among the Jews; See Gill on “Mt 1:1”, the petition they make is, that he would “have mercy on them”, who, through blindness, were in a poor, helpless, and miserable condition; and this was made with great vehemency: they “cried” out aloud, that he might hear them, and take pity on them; being eagerly desirous of having their sight, and firmly believing that he was able to restore it to them.

**Matthew 20:31**

Ver. 31. **And the multitude rebuked them,**

Who were either the friends or enemies of Christ: if his friends, they might rebuke them, that they might not be so troublesome to him, and judging it unworthy of him to have anything to do with such mean persons, and supposing that their business was only to ask alms of him; or if they were his enemies, or not so well affected to him, they might chide them for giving him such high characters, as Lord, and Son of David; and therefore being displeased with such encomiums, reproved them,

**because they should hold their peace;**

be silent, and say no more of that kind, lest others should take up the same notion of him, and it should prevail among the people.

**But they cried the more, saying, have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.**

They lifted up their voice higher, and cried the more loudly, that their voice might be above the noise of the people, and be heard by Christ; and renewed their request with more eagerness and importunity, repeating the characters they before gave him, being not in the least intimidated by the rebukes of the people: their faith in Jesus, as the Messiah, being more increased, and their desires of his pity and compassion being more enlarged, they grew bolder, and more resolute, as faith often does by opposition, and trials.

**Matthew 20:32**

Ver. 32. **And Jesus stood still,**

Made a full stop, when he was near, or right against where these blind men sat; which shows the strength of

faith, the force of prayer, and the great regard Christ has to both:

**and called them:**

himself, being near unto them, and within the reach of his voice; or he commanded them to be brought to him, as Mark says: he ordered others to call them, or let them know, that it was his will they should come to him; upon which they threw away their garments, their long upper garments, which were some hindrance to a quick motion, at least Bartimaeus did; that they might be the sooner with him: and when they were come to him, he said,

**what will ye that I shall do unto you?**

is it alms you want? or would you have your sight restored? This question he put, not as being ignorant of their desires, but to show both his power and willingness to do anything for them they should ask; and that their faith in him might be made manifest, and the people have their expectations raised, and they prepared to attend the miracle now to be wrought.

**Matthew 20:33**

Ver. 33. **They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.**

That is, that their sight might be restored to them; for being deprived of that, it was all one as if their eyes were so closed, that they could not open them; and so the recovery of it is expressed by an opening of them. The opening of the eyes of the blind was prophesied of, as what should be done in the days of the Messiah, and by him, as an evidence of his being that person, Isa 35:5 which prophecy these blind men might be acquainted with, and be an encouragement to their faith to expect a cure from him. They do not ask for alms, but for the recovery of their sight; which being granted, they would be able to get their bread in another way; for they were not like some idle persons that choose rather to be under such a calamity, or any other, that they might not be obliged to work with their hands for a livelihood. Their request shows, that they made no doubt of it, but firmly believed that Christ was able to do this for them, though the thing was impossible to be done by man; who therefore must conclude that he was not a mere man, but the Son of the living God.

**Matthew 20:34**

Ver. 34. **So Jesus had compassion on them,**

His bowels moved towards them as a man; he pitied their miserable and distressed condition, and discovered the tenderness of his heart towards them by some

outward sign, by his looks, or by some gesture or another: and touched their eyes; with his bare hand, without the use of any instrument or medicine. The Ethiopic version adds; “and said unto them, according to your faith shall it be unto you”; which seems to be taken out of Mt 9:29. The Evangelist Mark relates, that “Jesus said unto him (Bartimaeus) go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole”: not that the virtue of healing came from the act of faith, but from the object of it; his faith was not the cause of, nor the reason why, but the way and means in and by which he received the cure:

**and immediately their eyes received sight;**

or, as the Syriac and Persic versions render the words, “that moment their eyes were opened”: the cure was wrought at once, directly; a clear proof of the omnipotence of Christ, and of his true and proper deity: the words, “their eyes”, are not in some copies: and are omitted by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, which read thus, “they immediately saw”. The Persic version adds, and they saw the world; the men and things of it, which they either had never seen before, or, at least, for a considerable time; which must be a very surprising and agreeable sight to them.

**And they followed him;**

in a corporal sense they joined the multitude, and went after him to Jerusalem; partly to express their gratitude for such a wonderful favour bestowed upon them; and partly that they might be witnesses of the power of his deity, and the truth of his Messiahship, as they went along, and at Jerusalem: and in a spiritual sense; they became his disciples, they embraced his doctrines, believed in him as the Messiah, submitted to his ordinances, imitated him in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of duty: for, at the same time he restored their bodily sight, he gave them a spiritual one to look to him, and follow him, the light of the world, that they might enjoy the light of life in another world.

**CHAPTER XXI**

*1 Christ rideth into Jerusalem upon an ass. 12 driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple. 17 curseth the fig tree. 23 putteth to silence the preists and elders. 23 and rebuketh them by similtude of the two sons. 33 and the husbandmen, who slew such as were sent unto them.*

Matthew 21

[1] And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

- [2] Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.
- [3] And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.
- [4] All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,
- [5] Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.
- [6] And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,
- [7] And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.
- [8] And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.
- [9] And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.
- [10] And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?
- [11] And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.
- [12] And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,
- [13] And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.
- [14] And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.
- [15] And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,
- [16] And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?
- [17] And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.
- [18] Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.
- [19] And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and

- said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.
- [20] And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!
- [21] Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.
- [22] And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.
- [23] And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?
- [24] And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.
- [25] The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?
- [26] But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.
- [27] And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.
- [28] But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.
- [29] He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.
- [30] And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.
- [31] Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.
- [32] For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.
- [33] Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:
- [34] And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.
- [35] And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.
- [36] Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.
- [37] But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.
- [38] But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.
- [39] And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.
- [40] When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?
- [41] They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.
- [42] Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?
- [43] Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.
- [44] And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.
- [45] And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.
- [46] But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

### JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW CHAPTER XXI

#### Matthew 21:1

Ver. 1. **And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem,....**

The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "when he drew nigh, or was near"; but not alone, his disciples were with him, and a multitude of people also; as is evident from the following account. They might well be said to be near to Jerusalem, since it is added,

**and were come to Bethphage;**

which the Jews say <sup>151</sup> was within the walls of the city of Jerusalem, and was in all respects as the city itself,

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<sup>151</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 14. 2. & Pesach. fol. 91. 1.

and was the outermost part of it <sup>152</sup>; and that all within the outward circumference of the city of Jerusalem was called Bethphage <sup>153</sup>: it seems to me to be part of it within the city, and part of it without, in the suburbs of it, which reached to Bethany, and that to the Mount of Olives. Various are the derivations and etymologies of this place: some say it signifies “the house”, or “place of a fountain”, from a fountain that was in it; as if it was a compound of “Beth”, an house, and phgh, “pege”, a fountain: others, “the house of the mouth of a valley”; as if it was made up of those three words, בֵּית פִּי נֵיא because the outward boundary of it was at the foot of the Mount of Olives, at the entrance of the valley of Jehoshaphat: others say, that the ancient reading was “Bethphage, the house of slaughter”; and Jerom says <sup>154</sup>, it was a village of the priests, and he renders it, “the house of jaw bones”: here indeed they might bake the showbread, and eat the holy things, as in Jerusalem <sup>155</sup>; but the true reading and signification of it is, בֵּית פִּי פֵאנִי “the house of figs”; so called from the fig trees which grew in the outward limits of it, near Bethany, and the Mount of Olives; hence we read of <sup>156</sup> פִּנֵי בֵּית הַיְנִי “the figs of Bethany”; which place is mentioned along with, Bethphage, both by Mark and Luke, where Christ, and those with him, were now come: the latter says, they were come nigh to these places, for they were come

**to the Mount of Olives;**

near to which were the furthest limits of Bethany, and Bethphage, from Jerusalem. This mount was so called from the abundance of olive trees which grew upon it, and was on the east side of Jerusalem <sup>157</sup>; and it was distant from it a sabbath day’s journey, Ac 1:12 which was two, thousand cubits, or eight furlongs, and which made one mile: then sent Jesus two disciples; who they were is not certain, perhaps Peter and John, who were afterwards sent by him to prepare the passover, Luke 22:8.

**Matthew 21:2**

Ver. 2. **Saying unto them, go into the village over**

152 Gloss. in T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 63. 2. & 91. 1.

153 Gloss. in T. Bab. Sota, fol. 45. 1. & Bava Metzia fol. 90. 1.

154 In loc. & ad Eustoch, fol. 59. 3. Tom. 1.

155 Misn. Menachot, c. 11. sect. 2. T. Bab. Menachot fol. 63. 1. & 78. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Pesul. Hamukdash, c. 12. sect. 16. Gloss. in Pesach. fol. 63. 2.

156 T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 53. 1. & Erubin, fol. 28. 2.

157 Zech. xiv 4. Targum in Ezek. xi. 23. & Bartenora in Misn. Mid. dot. c. 1. sect. 3.

**against you,**

Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads, “before you”; not Jerusalem, as some have thought, for that would never be called a village; though the Ethiopic version reads it, “the city”; but rather Bethany, which was near to Bethphage, and is mentioned with it; though the Jews say <sup>158</sup>, the name of the village was Nob, and was near to Jerusalem, and own, that Christ had an ass from hence, on which he rode to Jerusalem, and applied to himself the prophecy in Zec 9:9. And it is very likely this was the village; for Nob was very near to Jerusalem; it was over against it, within sight of it, and from thence might be taken a view of the whole city, according to the Jews; who say <sup>159</sup>, that Sennacherib stood in Nob, a city of the priests, over against the walls of Jerusalem, and saw the whole city, and it was little in his eyes; and he said; is not this the city of Jerusalem, &c.

**and straightway,**

or, as in Mark, “as soon as ye be entered into it”; and in Luke, “at your entering”, at the town’s end, at one of the first houses in it, at the door thereof,

**ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her.**

The other evangelists only make mention of the colt, or young ass; but, no doubt, both were spoken of by Christ, and both were found by the disciples, the ass, and the colt by her, and both were brought away by them; and on both of them, very probably, Christ rode; first on one, and then on the other, as the prophecy hereby fulfilled seems to require, and as the sequel of the account shows. The ancient allegorical sense of the ass and colt is not to be despised: that the ass may signify the Jews, who had been used to bear the burdensome rites and ceremonies of the law; and the colt, the wild and untamed Gentiles, and the coming of Christ, first to the one, and then to the other:

**loose them, and bring them unto me,**

both ass and colt. So the Arabic version reads it, “loose both, and bring them, both to me”.

**Matthew 21:3**

Ver. 3. **And if any man say ought unto you,**

As, what business have you with the ass and colt? why do you loose them? as certain persons, the owners of them did, as Mark and Luke relate; ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them: he that is our Lord, and your Lord, and the Lord of these creatures, and of all things

158 Toldos Jesu, p. 9.

159 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 1. Targum, Jarchi, & Kimchi in Isa. x. 32.

else, wants them for his present service; and straightway he will send them: which is either a continuation of what the disciples should say to any that should ask them the reason of their loosing the ass and colt, in order to make them easy: that the Lord who had need of them, as soon as he had done with them, would send them back to their proper owners, safe and well: or they are spoken for the encouragement of the disciples to go, and not be disheartened, though they should be thus examined; for immediately upon saying, that the Lord stood in need of them, and had an use for them at that time, the owner thereof, without any more words, would immediately send them along with them; which latter rather seems to be the sense of the clause; and which is confirmed by Mark: a very clear proof is this of the omniscience of Christ. He knew, that there were an ass, and a colt, in such a village, fastened to such a door, just at the entrance into the town: he knew the owners of it would examine the disciples about loosing and taking them away, and prepares them to give an answer; and he knew that the minds of these owners would be immediately wrought upon, and inclined to let them go directly and quietly.

#### Matthew 21:4

Ver. 4. **All this was done,**

The disciples were sent to the neighbouring village for the ass and colt, and they brought them, and Christ rode upon them; not because of the distance of the place from Jerusalem, for he was just at it; or because he was weary, or it would be very fatiguing to him to walk thither on foot; for he had been used to travelling, and had gone through most parts of Galilee and Judea; but that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: the Ethiopic version adds, Isaiah; for the former part of the following citation stands in Isa 62:11 as the latter does in Zec 9:9. It was usual with the Jews to cite Scripture in this manner, by taking a part from one writer, and another from another, and joining them together: saying, the following words.

#### Matthew 21:5

Ver. 5. **Tell ye the daughter of Zion,**

These words seem to be taken out of Isa 62:11 where it is said, “say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh”, or “thy Saviour cometh”; meaning, without doubt, the Messiah: by the daughter of Zion is meant, not the city of Jerusalem, but the inhabitants thereof, the Jewish synagogue; or as the Targum renders it, כְּנִישָׁתָא דְּזִיּוֹן “the congregation of Zion”, the people of the Jews; particularly the elect of God among them, those

that embraced the true Messiah, and believed in him:

**behold, thy king cometh unto thee:**

this, and what follow, are cited from Zec 9:9 and to be understood of the king Messiah, who, in a little time after this prophecy was given out, was to come to Zion, and redeem Jacob from all his iniquities, and was now come. One of the Jewish commentators says<sup>160</sup>, that interpreters are divided about the sense of this prophecy; but observes, that there are some that say this is the Messiah: and another<sup>161</sup> of them affirms, that it is impossible to explain it of any other than the king Messiah; and that it can be understood of no other, I have elsewhere<sup>162</sup> shown. “Meek”; in the prophecy of Zechariah it is, yne, “poor”, as the Messiah Jesus was, in a temporal sense; but the word, both by the Septuagint, and our evangelist, is rendered

**meek;**

as it is by the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, who all explain it by נִיָּוִי, “lowly, humble, or meek”: and a character it is, that well agrees with Jesus, who, in the whole of his deportment, both in life and in death, was a pattern of meekness and lowliness of mind: and

**sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.**

This is applied to the Messiah by the Jews, both ancient<sup>163</sup> and modern<sup>164</sup>, who consider this as an instance and evidence of his humility: they suppose, this ass to be a very uncommon one, having an hundred spots on it; and say, that it was the foal of that which was created on the eve of the sabbath<sup>165</sup>; and is the same that Abraham and Moses rode upon: and they own, as before observed, that Jesus of Nazareth rode on one to Jerusalem, as is here related. Their ancient governors, patriarchs, princes, and judges, used to ride on asses, before the introduction and multiplication of horses in Solomon’s time, forbidden by the law of God: wherefore, though this might seem mean and despicable at this present time, yet was suitable enough to Christ’s character as a king, and as the son of

<sup>160</sup> Aben Ezra in Zech. ix. 9.

<sup>161</sup> Jarchi in ib.

<sup>162</sup> {z} Prophecies of the Messiah literally fulfilled in Jesus, c. 9. p. 151, &c.

<sup>163</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 98. 1. & 99. 1. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 66. 2. & 85. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 127. 3. & in Num. fol. 83. 4. & in Deut. fol. 117. 1. & 118. 3. Raya Mehimna in Zohar. in Lev. fol. 38. 3. & in Num. fol. 97. 2.

<sup>164</sup> Jarchi in Isa. xxvi 6. Baal Hatturim in Exod. fol. 88. 2. Abarbimel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 15. 4.

<sup>165</sup> {w} Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Captor, fol. 81. 2. **Matthew 21:6**

David, and king of Israel; strictly observing the law given to the kings of Israel, and riding in such manner as they formerly did.

**Matthew 21:6**

**And the disciples went,**

The two disciples, as the Arabic version reads, to the village over against them; and, as Mark says, “found the colt tied to the door without, in a place where two ways met”: the house was just at the entrance of the village, at the door of which, on the outside in the street, was the colt fastened, where were two ways of going into, and coming out of the town; so that it was a public place; the colt was easily seen, nor could it well be taken away without being observed, as it was by the owners of it: and

**did as Jesus commanded them;**

they loosed the colt; and whereas whilst they were loosing it, the owners of it asked them, what they meant by so doing? they returned for answer what Christ had directed them to say; upon which they were satisfied, and let them go with it; see Mark 11:4. This is a very considerable instance of the faith of the disciples in Christ, and their ready and cheerful obedience to him; who might have objected the appearance of theft, the scandal that might be brought upon them, and the trouble they might be exposed to hereby; but they make no hesitation, but go and do as he had ordered them; and in which, they are worthy of the imitation of all the followers of Jesus.

**Matthew 21:7**

**Ver. 7. And brought the ass and the colt,**

To Jesus, as Mark and Luke add, and who only make mention of the colt: both were undoubtedly brought; the colt being unloosed and taken away, the ass, its dam, followed after: and put on them their clothes; their loose upper garments, to be instead of saddles and trappings, and that Christ might sit thereon with ease and decency: the other evangelists say, that they cast their garments on the colt; and the Syriac version here reads,

**“they put their garments on the colt,**

and Jesus rode upon it”: but as both were brought, it is clear from hence, that their clothes were put upon both; not knowing which Christ would choose to ride on. And it should seem, that it was not unusual to put garments on asses to ride on; for the Targumist on Jud 5:10 represents the princes of Israel as riding upon asses, strewed or saddled with all kind *קורי*, of “painted garments”. The Persic version, without the least colour of authority from the original text, renders it, “and Jesus put

his own garment on the colt, and sat thereon”; which is ridiculous, as well as contrary to truth:

**and they sat him thereon,**

or “on them”: meaning either on the ass and colt, that is, on one of them, or both successively, or on the clothes they put upon them.

**Matthew 21:8**

**Ver. 8. And a very great multitude,**

Which consisted partly of the great multitude which followed Christ from Jericho, and partly of the much people that were come up to the feast of the passover from divers parts, and met him from Jerusalem; see Joh 12:12. These, many of them, for it cannot be thought to be done by them all,

**spread their garments in the way;**

either in the middle of the road, instead of carpets, to ride upon; the Persic version adds, “that he might pass over them”: this they did, in honour to him as a king. So when Jehu declared to the princes of Israel, that he was anointed king of Israel, they hastened, and took every man his garment, and put it under him, 2Ki 9:13 that is, to tread upon; though the Jewish writers<sup>166</sup> say, it was done that he might be higher than them all, suitable to the dignity of a king: and it is reported<sup>167</sup> of Cato Uticensis, the emperor, that his soldiers strewed their garments for him to walk upon: or these garments were spread by the way side. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, that little tents might be raised by them along the road, upon which they spread their garments to make a show, in imitation of the feast of tabernacles, to which there is a very great resemblance in many things which occur in this account; when they used to spread linen cloth, garments, and fruits, over their booths, for decoration and ornament; as appears from their traditions about these things:

“פיר ליה דינ”, “if a man spreads a linen cloth over it”, (his booth,) because of the sun, or under it, because of the falling of leaves, &c. or spreads it over a canopy, it is not right; but he may spread it over the bedposts<sup>168</sup>.”

That is, for ornament, as the commentators observe<sup>169</sup>. Again,

“פרש ליה בגד”, if a man spreads a garment over it,

166 {x} R. Levi ben Gersom, & R. Samuel Laniado in loc.

167 Plutarch in Aleibiade.

168 Misn. Succa, c. 1. sect. 3.

169 Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

(his booth,) or if he spreads it under it, because of what falls it is not right; but if he spreads it so as that it is, htwanl, “for ornament”, it is right; and so if he covers it according to the tradition of it, and encompasses it with various kinds of fruits, and precious things, and vessels which hang upon it, whether on its walls, or on its covering, so they be for ornament, it is right <sup>170</sup>.”

In like manner, the multitude might hang their garments, to make the show the greater, either on such booths, or on the houses and trees, that were upon the road, as they went along.

**Others cut down branches from the trees;**

from the olive trees, as the Persic version expresses it, which grew in great plenty hereabout; and also from the palm trees, the branches of which, with the boughs of other trees, were what the Jews used to carry in their hands on the feast of tabernacles; see Le 23:40 and the Evangelist John expressly says, that the people which met Christ from Jerusalem at this time, did take branches of palm trees in their hands,

Joh 12:13. And though this was not the time of the feast of tabernacles, but of the passover, yet it was common with the Jews to signify their joy upon any occasion, by such ways and methods they used at that least: so upon the cleansing of the tower of Jerusalem, by Simon Maccabeus, the Jews entered into it with thanksgiving, and branches of palm trees:

“And entered into it the three and twentieth day of the second month in the hundred seventy and first year, with thanksgiving, and branches of palm trees, and with harps, and cymbals, and with viols, and hymns, and songs: because there was destroyed a great enemy out of Israel.” (1 Maccabees 13:51)

Likewise upon purifying the temple, which had been polluted by Antiochus, they kept eight days with gladness as in the feast of tabernacles, and bare branches and fair boughs, and palms also, as in the Apocrypha: 6 And they kept the eight days with gladness, as in the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts. 7 Therefore they bare branches, and fair boughs, and palms also, and sang psalms unto him that had given them good success in cleansing his place. (2 Maccabees 10) But here it is said,

**and they strowed them in the way:**

170 Maimon. Hilch. Succa, c. 5. sect. 17.

not in the middle of the road, which would have been an hindrance to riding; but by the way side, upon, the booths, or houses in the road, in honour of him; just as the Jews <sup>171</sup> say,

“the streets were strowed with myrtles, and the courts with purple, when Mordecai went out of the king’s gate.”

**Matthew 21:9**

Ver. 9. **And the multitudes that went before,**

That is, that went before Christ; accordingly the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, read, “that went before him”: these seem to be the much people that met him from Jerusalem,

**and that followed him;**

which were perhaps those that came from Jericho, and other parts;

**cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David:**

by calling Jesus the Son of David, they owned and proclaimed him to be the Messiah; this being the usual title by which the Messiah was known among the Jews; see the note on Mt 1:1 and by crying and saying Hosanna to him, which was done with loud acclamations, and the united shouts of both companies, before and behind; they ascribe all praise, honour, glory, and blessing to him, and wish him all prosperity, happiness, and safety. The word is an Hebrew word, and is compounded of נָא, and הוֹשִׁיָּעָה which signifies, “save I beseech”; and which words stand in Ps 118:25 to which the multitude had reference, as appears from what follows; and are formed into one word, anevwh, “Hosana”, or “Hosanna”, in which form it frequently appears in the Jewish writings; and because of the often use of it at the feast of tabernacles, that feast was called “Hosanna”, and the seventh day of it was called רֶבֶה הוֹשָׁנָה, “the great Hosanna” <sup>172</sup>. Moreover, the “Lulabs”, or the bundles made of branches of palm trees, and boughs of willow and myrtle, which they carried in their hands at the feast of tabernacles, often go by this name: it is said <sup>173</sup>,

“the Egyptian myrtle is right or fit להוֹשָׁנָה, “for the Hosanna”.

That is, to be put into the “Lulab”, or bundle of boughs

171 Targum in Esther viii. 15.

172 Seder Tephillot. fol. 298. 2.

173 T. Bab. Succa, fol. 33. 1.

and branches, which was carried about, and shaken at the above feast. Again <sup>174</sup>,

“it is a tradition of R. Meir, that it was the practice of the honourable men of Jerusalem, to bind their “Lulabs” with golden threads says Rabbah, these are they מגרלי הושנא, “that bind the Hosanna”: the gloss on it is, “that bind the Lulabs”, of the house of the head of the captivity; for in binding the Hosanna of the house of the head of the captivity, they leave in it an hand’s breadth and says the same Rabbah, a man may not hold an Hosanna in a linen cloth.”

Once more <sup>175</sup>,

“says R. Zera, a man may not prepare anevwh, “an Hosanna” for a child, on a good day.”

Sometimes the Hosanna seems to be distinguished from the “Lulab”, and then by the “Lulab” is meant, only the branches of palm tree; and by the Hosanna, the boughs of willow and myrtle; as when <sup>176</sup>,

“Rabbah says, a man may not fix the “Lulab”, בהושנא, “in the Hosanna””

And a little after says the same,

“a man may not bind the “Lulab” with the “Hosanna””

Now these bundles might be so called, because they were lifted up and shaken, when the above words out of Ps 118:25 were recited: for thus it is said <sup>177</sup>,

“when do they shake, that is, their “Lulabs”, or “Hosannas?” At those words, “O give thanks unto the Lord”, Ps 118:1 the beginning and end; and at those words, “Save now I beseech thee”, Ps 118:25. The house of Hillell, and the house of Shammai say also at those words, “O Lord I beseech thee, send now prosperity”: says R. Aki-ba, I have observed Rabban Gamaliel and Rabbi Joshua, that all the people shook their Lulabs, but they did not shake, only at those words, Save now I beseech thee, O Lord.”

Hence some have thought, that these are meant by the Hosanna in this text; and that the sense is, that the multitude cried, saying, These branches of palm trees

we carry in our hands, and strow by the way side, are in honour to the Son of David, the true Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth: but then this sense will not agree with the following clause, “Hosanna in the highest”: it may therefore be further observed, that certain prayers and songs of praise, were called “Hosannas”: hence we read <sup>178</sup> of הושנות של שבת, “the Hosannas of the sabbath”; which consisted of various sentences in praise of the sabbath, and thanksgiving to God for it, and are concluded with this word “Hosanna”; and of various petitions that God would save them, as he had done others; and at the end of each petition, is this word. As also of <sup>179</sup> של הושנא רבה הושנא “the Hosannas of the great Hosanna”; which are certain words of prayer and praise, used on the seventh day of the feast of tabernacles: and whereas at that feast the “Hallel”, or hymn, was sung, which concluded with the 118th Psalm where the words, “Save now I beseech thee, O Lord”, stand, from whence this word is formed; the true sense and meaning of it here appears to be this; that the multitude that attended Christ to Jerusalem, as they went along, sung songs of praise to him, as the true Messiah; particularly, applying the above passage to him, and earnestly wished him all success and prosperity; and importunately prayed for salvation by him; adding,

**Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:**

which words are taken also out of Ps 118:26 and is an ascription of blessing and praise to Jesus, the Messiah; who being sent by God, came from him with his authority, as his apostle, and as representing him; and contains another petition for him, that he might be crowned with the blessings of divine goodness, for his people; and be blessed and praised by them, for all the spiritual blessings they are blessed with in him. And very properly and pertinently were those words used and applied to Christ, since the Psalm from whence they are taken belongs to him: the whole of it is, by some Jewish interpreters <sup>180</sup>, said to be spoken concerning him; and particularly, he is designed in Ps 118:22 by the stone the builders refused, as is clear from Mt 21:42 of this chapter, and from Ac 4:11 and 1Pe 2:7 and which is allowed by some Jewish writers, ancient and modern <sup>181</sup>; and Ps 118:27 the words following these, are by them interpreted of the days of the Messiah, the times

<sup>174</sup> Ib. fol. 37. 1.

<sup>175</sup> Ib. fol. 45. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Lulab, c. 8. sect. 10.

<sup>176</sup> Maimon. Hilch, Lulab, fol. 37. 2.

<sup>177</sup> Misn. Succ, c. 3. sect. 9.

<sup>178</sup> Seder Tephillot, fol. 297. 1.

<sup>179</sup> Ib. fol. 298. 2.

<sup>180</sup> Vid. Kimchi in Psal. cxviii. 1.

<sup>181</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 3. Jarchi in Mic. v. 2.



of Gog and Magog, and the future age<sup>182</sup>. And others of them said, as Mark observes, Mark 11:10. "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord";

See Gill on "Mark 11:10". Moreover, as it may be thought others of the people said, as Luke relates, Luke 19:38.

**Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord;**

See Gill on "Luke 19:38". To which is added,

**Hosanna in the highest;**

that is, let songs of praise be sung to God, who is in the highest heavens, for all his grace and goodness vouchsafed to the sons of men, through Christ his beloved Son; or let not only all salvation, happiness, and prosperity attend the Messiah, David's son, here on earth, but all glory and felicity in the highest heavens, above which he will be exalted. {d} Seder Tephillot. fol. 298. 2.

**Matthew 21:10**

Ver. 10. **And when he was come into Jerusalem.....**

The metropolis of the nation, the seat of the ancient kings of Judah, and of his father David, entering into it in this very public manner; as he never did before; riding in the manner the ancient judges and kings of Israel did, attended with a numerous retinue, shouting as they went along, and singing their "Hosannas" to him:

**all the city was moved;**

as Bethlehem was, when Naomi with Ruth returned thither; and of which the same phrase is used, as here, Ru 1:19.

**all the city was moved about them;**

which the Chaldee paraphrase renders,

"all the inhabitants of the city were gathered in troops about them."

And so here the sense is, that the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem were in general alarmed at the uncommon apparatus, and shouting, and ran in great numbers to inquire what was the matter:

**saying, who is this?**

They knew him not; for though he had preached unto them, and wrought miracles among them, yet they had never seen him in any such pomp and state; and could not devise who he should be, that entered their city in such a manner, amidst the shouts and acclamations of so great a multitude: it seemed greatly to affect them, and fill them with concern, astonishment, and fear.

**Matthew 21:11**

Ver. 11. **And the multitude said,**

Or the people, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; the common people, that went before, and followed after him: these knew Christ better than the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Scribes and Pharisees, and rulers of the people.

**This is Jesus the prophet:**

that prophet Moses spoke of, in De 18:15 and the nation of the Jews in general expected: of Nazareth of Galilee; who, though he was not born there, yet being educated, and having lived much in that place, is said to be of it; and which was the common opinion of the people.

**Matthew 21:12**

Ver. 12. **And Jesus went into the temple of God,**

At Jerusalem, which was built by his order, and dedicated to his worship, and where the Shechaniah, or the divine presence was. Christ went not to the tower of David, the strong hold of Zion, the palace of his father David; for he entered not as a temporal king; but he went to the house of his heavenly Father, as the lord and proprietor of it, to preach in it, and purge it; whereby the glory of the latter house became greater than that of the former; and so several prophecies had their accomplishment, particularly Hag 2:7 though this was not the first time by many, of Christ's being in the temple; yet this his entrance was the most public and magnificent of any: after, he had alighted from the colt, and sent back that and the ass to their proper owners, as is very probable, he went by the eastern gate, called the king's gate, 1Ch 9:18 into the temple;

**and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple:**

not in the holy of holies, nor in the holy place, nor in the court of the priests, nor in the court of the Israelites, but in the court of the Gentiles, and in the mountain of the house, in which were shops, where various things were sold, relating to sacrifices. What these persons bought and sold, whom Christ cast out, is not said, but may be collected from Joh 2:14 where besides "doves", of which hereafter, mention is made, of "sheep" and "oxen"; which were brought to be sold, on account of the passover, for it was then near their time of passover as now; for besides the lambs and kids, which were here also sold and bought for the passover supper, sheep and oxen were here also killed and sold for the Chagiga, or

<sup>182</sup> T. Hicros. Megilla, fol. 73. 1.

feast <sup>183</sup>, which was the day following: here likewise the drink offerings were bought and sold, of which take the following account.

There were fifteen presidents במקדש, “in the sanctuary”: Jochanan ben Phinehas was over the tickets, and Ahijah over the drink offerings, &c.--He that inquired for drink offerings, went to Jochanan, who was appointed over the tickets: he gave him the money, and took a ticket; he then went to Ahijah, that was appointed over the drink offerings, and gave him the ticket, and received from him the drink offerings; and in the evening they came together, and Ahijah produced the tickets, and took for them the money <sup>184</sup>.

”This was one way of buying and selling in the temple; **and overthrew the tables of the money changers;**

of which sort were they, who sat in the temple at certain times, to receive the half shekel, and change the money of such, who wanted one, by which they gained something, to themselves. It was a custom in our Lord’s time, for every Israelite, once a year, to pay half a shekel towards the temple charge and service, which was founded upon the orders given by God to Moses in the wilderness; that upon his numbering the people, to take of everyone that was twenty years of age and upwards, rich or poor, half a shekel, Ex 30:13 though this does not seem to be designed as a perpetual rule. However, it now obtained, and was annually paid:

”On the first day of Adar (which answers to our February) they proclaimed concerning the shekels <sup>185</sup>.

”That is, they gave public notice, in all the cities in Israel, that the time of paying the half shekel was near at hand, that they might get their money ready, for everyone was obliged to pay it: the Jews <sup>186</sup> say,

”it is an affirmative command of the law, that every man in Israel should pay the half shekel every year; even though a poor man that is maintained by alms, he is obliged to it, and must beg it of others, or sell his coat upon his back and pay it, as it is said, Ex 30:15. The rich shall not give more, &c.--All are bound to give it, priests, Levites, and

Israelites, and strangers, and servants, that are made free; but not women, nor servants, nor children.

”Notice being thus given <sup>187</sup>,

”on the fifteenth day (of the same month), חנוכה שול, “tables” were placed in the province, or city (which Bartenora <sup>188</sup> interprets of Jerusalem; but Maimonides <sup>189</sup> says, the word used is the name of all the cities in the land of Israel, excepting Jerusalem), and on the twenty fifth they במקדשם “in the sanctuary”.

The same is related by Maimonides <sup>190</sup>, after this manner:

”On the first of Adar they proclaim concerning the shekels, that every man may prepare his half shekel, and be ready to give it on the fifteenth; השולחנימ “the exchangers” sit in every province or city, and mildly ask it; everyone that gives them it, they take it of them; and he that does not give, they do not compel him to give: on the twenty fifth, they sit in the sanctuary to collect it; and henceforward they urge him that does not give, until he gives; and everyone that does not give, they oblige him to give pledge, and they, take his pledge, whether he will or not, and even his coat.

”This gives us a plain account of these money changers; of their tables, and of their sitting at them in the temple, and on what account. Now these exchangers had a profit in every shekel they changed <sup>191</sup>.

”When a man went to an exchanger, and changed a shekel for two half shekels, he gave him an addition to the shekel; and the addition is called קלבוני, “Kolbon”; wherefore, when two men gave a shekel for them both, they were both obliged to pay the “Kolbon”.

Would you know what this “Kolbon”, whence these exchangers are called, κολλυβισται, “Collybistae”, in this text, or the gain which these men had, take this question and answer in their own words <sup>192</sup>.

”How much is the “Kolbon?” A silver “meah”,

187 Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3.

188 In ib.

189 In ib

190 Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 9.

191 Ib c. 3. sect. 1.

192 Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 7.

183 Vid. R. Sol. Jarchi, in Deut. xvi. 2.

184 Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 4. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect, 10, 11, 12.

185 Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1

186 Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1. 7.

according to. R. Meir; but the wise men say, half an one.

”Or as it is elsewhere expressed <sup>193</sup>,

”what is the value of the “Kolbon?” At that time they gave two pence for the half shekel, the “Kolbon” was half a “meah”, which is the twelfth part of a penny; and since, “Kolbon” less than that is not given.’

’Now a “meah” was the half of a sixth part of the half shekel, and the twenty fourth part of a shekel, and weighed sixteen barley corns: half a “meah” was the forty eighth part of a shekel, and weighed eight barley <sup>194</sup> corns; a “meah” was, of our money, the value of somewhat more than a penny, and half an one more than a halfpenny. This was their gain, which in so large a number that paid, must amount to a great deal of money. There seems to be nothing lie against these men being the very persons, whose tables Christ overturned, unless it should be objected, that this was not the time of their sitting; for it was now within a few days of the passover, which was in the month Nisan; whereas it was in the month Adar, that the half shekel was paid: but it should be observed, according to the above account, that they did not begin to sit in the temple to receive this money, until the twenty fifth of Adar; and it was now but the tenth of Nisan, when Christ entered the temple and found them there: so that there was but fifteen days: between the one and the other; and considering the large numbers that were obliged to pay, and the backwardness and poverty of many, they may reasonably be thought to be still sitting on that account: and what Maimonides before relates deserves notice, and will strengthen this supposition; that on the twenty fifth: of Adar, they sat in the temple to collect this money; and that henceforward they urged and compelled persons to pay it. Moreover, these men had other business, in a way of exchange, than this to do; and especially at such a time as the passover, when persons came from different parts to attend it; and who, might want to have their foreign money changed for current coin; or bills of return, to be changed for money: add to all this the following account, which will show the large and perpetual business of these men <sup>195</sup>.

”In the sanctuary there were before them, dymt, “continually”, or “daily”, thirteen chests (and

193 Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 3. sect. 7.

194 Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Shekalim, c. 1, sect. 7. & Cholin, c. 1. sect. 7.

195 Maimon. Hilch. Shckalim, c. 2. sect. 2.

there were as many tables )<sup>196</sup>; every chest was in the form of a trumpet: the first was for the shekels of the present year, the second for the shekels of the year past; the third for everyone that had a “Korban”, or vow upon him to offer two turtledoves, or two young pigeons; the one a burnt offering, the other a sin offering: their price was, cast into this chest: the fourth for everyone that had the burnt offering of a fowl only on him, the price of that was cast into this chest. The fifth was for him, who freely gave money to buy wood, to be laid in order on the altar; the sixth, for him that freely gave money for the incense; the seventh, for him that freely gave gold for the mercy seat; the eighth, for the remainder of the sin offering; as when he separated the money for his sin offering, and took the sin offering, and there remained of the money, the rest he cast into this chest; the ninth, for the remainder of the trespass offering; the tenth, for the remainder of the doves for men and women in fluxes, and women after childbirth; the eleventh, for the remainder of the offerings of the Nazarite; the twelfth, for the remainder of the trespass offering of the leper: the thirteenth, for him that freely gave money for the burnt offering of a beast.

”**And the seats of them that sold doves,**

which were the offerings of the poor sort after child bearing, and on account of running issues: which cases were very frequent, and sometimes raised the price of doves very high, of which what follows is an instance <sup>197</sup>.

”It happened at a certain time, that doves were sold in Jerusalem for a golden penny each; said Rabban ben Simeon Gamaliel, by this habitation (or temple which he swore by) I will not lodge (or lie down) this night, until they are sold for a silver penny each: he went into the council house and taught, that if a woman had five certain births, or five certain issues, she should bring one offering, and eat of the sacrifices, nor should there remain any debt upon her; and doves were sold that day for two fourths.”

That is, for a silver penny; now a golden penny was the value of twenty five silver pence <sup>198</sup>; so that the price, by this means, was sunk very much: but not only doves

196 Misn. Shekalim, c. 6. sect 1.

197 Misn. Cerithot, c. 1. sect. 7. {

198 Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

were sold in the markets in Jerusalem, but in the temple itself<sup>199</sup>.

”There was a president over the doves, which was he with whom they agreed, who sold doves for the offerings, so and so by the shekel; and everyone that was obliged to bring a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, brought the price of them, v<sub>d</sub>q<sub>m</sub>l, “to the sanctuary”; and the president gave the doves to the masters of the offerings, and made up the account with the treasurers.’

’Now at a feast time as this was, there was a greater demand for doves than usual; for women who had lain in, and such as had fluxes, whether men or women, who lived in distant parts, reserved their offerings till they came up to the feast<sup>200</sup>; and which in consequence must occasion a greater call for these creatures, and furnishes out a reason, why there should be so many sitting at this time in the temple to sell doves. Some have thought, that those persons are here meant, which are often mentioned by the Jewish doctors<sup>201</sup>, as an infamous sort of men, who are not admitted as witnesses in any case; and are reckoned among thieves, robbers, usurers, and players at dice; who מפרוהי יונימ, “teach doves to fly”, either to decoy other doves from their dove houses, or to out fly others for money, or to fight one against another; and these sat in the temple to sell this sort of doves, which was still more heinous; but the other sense is more agreeable.

#### **Matthew 21:13**

Ver. 13. **And said unto them, it is written,**  
in Isa 56:7.

**My house shall be called the house of prayer.**

These are the, words of God, calling the temple his house, which was built according to the plan he gave; and was the place of his worship, and where he dwelt, and vouchsafed his presence to his people; and signifying, that in time to come, it should be an house of prayer; not for the Jews only, but for the Gentiles also: “for all people”, as it is expressed by the prophet, and cited by Mark; and particularly this part of it, in which were the money changers and sellers of doves; for that was the court of the Gentiles, where they were admitted to pray,

and perform other parts of worship. These words are rightly applied by Christ to the temple; nor can the Jews themselves deny it; for their own Targum paraphrases it thus, y<sub>v</sub>d<sub>q</sub>m tyb, “the house of my sanctuary shall be called an house of prayer”; or shall be one; for the meaning is not that it should go by such a name, but should be for such use, and not for buying and selling, and merchandise, to which use the Jews now put it: hence it follows,

**but ye have made it a den of thieves.**

These are the words of Christ, affirming what is complained of in Jer 7:11 and applying it to the present case, on account of the wicked merchandise, unlawful gain, avarice and extortion, of the priests and other officers of the temple, who had a considerable share in these things; and to whom the temple was, and by them used, as a den is to and by thieves and robbers, where they shelter themselves; for these persons robbed both God and man, and the temple was a sanctuary to them: here they screened themselves, and, under the appearance of religion and devotion, devoured widows’ houses, plundered persons of their substance, and were full of extortion and excess.

#### **Matthew 21:14**

Ver. 14. **And the blind and the lame came to him,**

The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, “they brought unto him the blind and the lame”. The blind could not come to him unless they were led, nor the lame, unless they were carried: the sense therefore is, they came, being brought to him:

**in the temple;**

that part of it, the court of the Gentiles, and mountain of the house, out of which he had cast the buyers and sellers, &c. and in the room of them, were brought in these objects of his pity: and he healed them; to the blind he restored sight, and caused the lame to walk; which miracles he wrought in confirmation of the doctrine he preached: for all the other evangelists relate, that he taught in the temple.

#### **Matthew 21:15**

Ver. 15. **And when the chief priests and Scribes,**

The inveterate enemies of Christ; who upon hearing the shouts of the people at Christ’s entrance into the city, and passage through it to the temple; and understanding that it was Jesus of Nazareth that was come thither, they came also to awe the people, and pick up what they could against him: who, when they

**saw the wonderful things that he did;** as the

<sup>199</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 9.

<sup>200</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 1.

<sup>201</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 82. 1. T. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Misn. Sanhedrin. c. 3. sect. 3. Maimon Bartenora, & Ez. Chayim in lb. & Edayot, c. 2. 7. & Bartenora in ib. Maimon. Hilch. Gazela veabada, c. 6. sect. 7. Toen unitan, c. 2. sect. 2. & Eduth, c. 10. sect. 4.

overturning the tables of the money changers, and the seats of those that sold doves, without any opposition, when these traders were so many, and in great power, and he a single person, and unarmed; and that the blind received their sight, and the lame were cured,

**and the children crying in the temple;**

who came from the various parts of the city, with their parents, to see the sight; who, when the multitude had done, they began the same ditty:and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; proclaiming Jesus to be the Messiah, and ascribing praise and glory to him, and wishing him all happiness and prosperity: the form they had taken up from the people, and might be encouraged by their parents; and which they pronounced without fear of the high priests, and Scribes, being disposed, directed, and overruled hereunto by the providence of God. It was indeed no unusual thing for children to sing the “Hosanna” at the feast of tabernacles; for, according to the Jewish canons <sup>202</sup>,

”a child that knew how to shake, was obliged to carry the “Lulab”

or bundle of myrtle, and willow boughs, and palm tree branches, at the shaking of which “Hosanna” was said: but that they should cry “Hosanna” to Jesus, as David’s son was very extraordinary, and what the high priests, and Scribes, took notice of with great resentment:

**they were sore displeased;**

at the children, that so said, at their parents that suffered them, and especially at Christ, who did not forbid them. The Persic version renders it, “it displeased the priests”; the Arabic reads, “they murmured”; and the Ethiopic has it, “it was not pleasant to them”.

**Matthew 21:16**

Ver. 16. **And said unto him, hearest thou what these say?**

Suggesting, that if he did, he ought to reprove them, or else he would be a very vain, as well as a weak man, to take such things to himself, which did not belong to him, and that from such poor, little, silly creatures, so void of knowledge and understanding:

**and Jesus said unto them, yea:**

signifying he did hear, and well approved of what they said, and was ready to vindicate it; and did, by putting the following question to them,

**have ye never read;**

that passage of Scripture in Ps 8:2out of the mouth

202 T. Bab. Succa, fol. 42. 1. Erachin, fol. 2. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Lulab, c. 7. sect. 19.

of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? in the original text it is, “thou hast ordained”, or “founded strength”; and which is rendered by the Septuagint, as it is by Matthew here; and glory and strength are mentioned together, as being to be given to God, Ps 29:1 and so “strength” and “praise” by the Targumist in Isa 13:3 by which is meant strong glory, or glory and praise expressed with a strong voice, or in a very vehement manner, as it was by these babes and sucklings; and this owing to God’s disposing them hereunto, putting it into their mouths, and strengthening them to declare it in a very strong and powerful manner; so that his strength was made perfect in their weakness, and his praise the more glorious. In the Psalm it is added, “because of thine enemies, that thou might still the enemy, and the avenger”: by whom are meant the high priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, the mortal enemies of Christ, who were full of enmity against him, and wanted to revenge themselves on him for spoiling their market at this time; but were stilled by the “Hosannas” of the children, and Christ’s defence of them. The Jews themselves seem to be conscious, that these words relate to the Messiah; for they say <sup>203</sup>, that”babes and sucklings, יהבני הוקפא, shall give strength to the king Messiah”manifestly referring to this passage.

**Matthew 21:17**

Ver. 17. **And he left them,**

The high priests and Scribes, confounded and put to silence, and as unworthy of his company and conversation;

**and went out of the city;**

of Jerusalem, partly to prevent being apprehended by his enemies before his time, and partly to remove all suspicion of seizing the city and government, and setting himself up as a temporal prince;

**to Bethany;**

which was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, or almost two miles, Joh 11:18. Hither he went to converse with his dear friends, Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, who were all of this place, and where he could lodge and rest quietly. The name of the town is variously interpreted: according to some ancient writers <sup>204</sup>, it signifies “the house of obedience”; so Christ went from the disobedient and faithless city, to a place of obedience, where he had some faithful and obedient disciples: others read it, and so Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, ביה ניה,

203 Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 2.

204 Jerom. in loc. Origen. in Joan. p. 131. T. 2. & in Matt. p. 435, 446, 447. T. 1. Ed. Huet.

“the house of affliction”; a suitable place for Christ to go to, who was about to suffer for the sins of his people. The Syriac version renders it *בית ניא*, and which is interpreted “an house”, or “place of business”, as this town of Bethany was. We read <sup>205</sup> of *בית היני של*, “the shops of Bethany”, which were destroyed three years before Jerusalem, because they made their affairs to stand upon the words of the law; that is, as the gloss explains it, they found that what was forbidden by the wise men, was free by the law: a great trade might be drove here for olives, dates, and figs, which grew hereabout in great plenty: mention is made in the Talmud of <sup>206</sup> *בני בית היני*, “the figs of Bethany”: hence, as Christ departed from this place, the next morning he saw a fig tree. But the true etymology and signification of the name is *בית אהיני* “the house”, or “place of dates”, the fruit of the palm tree: hence they that came from Jerusalem to meet Christ, might have their palm tree branches. One part of Mount Olivet abounded with olives, from whence it had its name; another part bore palm trees, and that was called “Bethany”, from whence this town over against it had its name; and another part had great plenty of fig trees growing on it, and this called “Bethphage”; and that part of Jerusalem which was nearest to it went by the same name. We read <sup>207</sup> also of *מרת של בית היני* “the washing place of Bethany”; which seems to me to be not a place for the washing and purification of unclean men and women, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, but for washing of sheep; for the story is, that”

a fox tore a sheep in pieces at the washing place of Bethany, and the affair came before the wise men;”

that is, at Jerusalem, to know whether that sheep might be eaten or no, since that which was torn was forbidden. And some have interpreted “Bethany, an house”, or “place of sheep”: but so much for this town, and what account is given of it.

#### **And he lodged there;**

either in the house of Lazarus, and his two sisters, or in that of Simon the leper; for it was eventide when he went out of Jerusalem, as Mark observes. The Ethiopic version adds, “and rested there”; and so Origen <sup>208</sup>, reads it, and, according to Harpocratian <sup>209</sup>, the word used by the evangelist signifies to lie down, and sleep, and take

one’s rest. Christ lodged here all night.

#### **Matthew 21:18**

Ver. 18. **Now in the morning,**

Greek “in the first”, or morning light, in the dawn, or break of day, the first spring of light; so the Latins <sup>210</sup> use “prima luce” for early in the morning, as soon as ever day breaks: so early did Christ rise, and return from Bethany to Jerusalem; and as he returned to the city. The Persic version renders it, “they returned”; which, though not a good version, gives a true sense; for, as Christ went with the twelve to Bethany, as Mark affirms, so these returned with him, as is clear from what follows. Thus Christ, day after day, went to and from Jerusalem: in the evening he went to Bethany, or to some part of the Mount of Olives, and there abode all night, and returned in the daytime to Jerusalem, and taught in the temple; for it does not appear that he was one night in Jerusalem, before the night of the passover. He hungered, rising so early before his friends were up, he had eaten nothing that morning, and so before he had got far from Bethany, found himself hungry; which proves the truth of his human nature, which was in all respects like to ours, excepting sin.

#### **Matthew 21:19**

Ver. 19. **And when he saw a fig tree,**

In the Greek text it is “one fig tree”, one remarkable fig tree: he must see a great many, as he went along; for a large tract of the Mount Of Olives was full of fig trees, and therefore called “Bethphage”: and notice has been taken already of the figs of Bethany: but he saw none that had such large and spreading leaves as this; for it was the time when the fig tree was just budding, and putting forth its leaves: wherefore he took notice of it; and though it was “afar off”, as Mark says, yet being hungry, he made up to it, expecting, from its promising appearance, to find fruit on it. This fig tree was “in the way”; by the road side, and probably had no owner; was common to anybody, and so no injury was done to any person by losing it: he came to it,

#### **and found nothing thereon but leaves only:**

Mark says, “he came, if haply he might find anything thereon”; which must be understood of him as man; for as he hungered as man, so he judged and expected as man, from the appearance of this fig tree, that he might find fruit upon it; and which is no contradiction

<sup>205</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 88. 1.

<sup>206</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 53. 1. & Erubin, fol. 28.

<sup>207</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 88. 1

<sup>208</sup> In Matt. p. 447

<sup>209</sup> Lexic. Decem Orator. p. 55.

<sup>210</sup> Caesar. Comment. 1. 1. p. 14. & passim. Curtius, 1. 5. c. 5. passim. Apulei Metamorph. 1. 9. p. 134.

to his deity, and his having the Spirit of God, as the Jew <sup>211</sup> objects; and especially since, as Bishop Kidder <sup>212</sup> observes, such an expectation is attributed to God himself, in Isa 5:2 and it may be added, and with regard to that people, of which this fig tree was an emblem, and designed by Christ to be considered as such in what he did to it. The same evangelist further observes, “and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not yet”. The word “yet” is not in the original text; which last clause is a reason, either why he found no fruit, or nothing but leaves upon it, because it was not a time, or season of figs: it was not a good fig year, so Dr. Hammond interprets it; and yet though it was not, since this tree was so very flourishing, fruit might have been expected on it: and also, it furnishes out a reason why Christ took so much pains to go to it, seeing there were very few figs to be had elsewhere, and this bid very fair to supply him with some in this time of scarcity: or else, as a reason why, besides its promising appearance, he expected fruit upon it, because the time of figs, that is, of the gathering of the figs, was not come: in which sense the phrase is used in Mt 21:34; and is Bishop Kidder’s interpretation of the passage: and since therefore the time was not come for the in gathering of the figs, none had been taken off of it, the more might be expected on it. This sense would be very probable, did it appear that figs were usually ripe about this time; but the contrary seems manifest, both from Scripture, which represents the fig tree putting forth its leaves, as a sign the summer is nigh, Mt 24:32 and from the Talmudists, who say <sup>213</sup>, that the beginning of leaves, or putting forth of the leaves of trees, is in the month Nisan, the month in which the passover was kept, and so the then present time of the year; and who, from this time, reckon three times fifty days, or five full months before the figs are ripe <sup>214</sup>: so that these words are rather a reason why Christ did not expect to find figs on other trees, which he saw in great abundance as he passed along, because the time of common, ordinary figs being ripe, was not come; and why he particularly expected to find some on this tree, because it being full of leaves, appeared to be of a different kind from other fig trees: and was either of that sort which they call בנות שווא, “Benoth Shuach”, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures which were a kind of white figs

that were not ripe till the third year <sup>215</sup>. This tree put forth its fruit the first year, which hung on it the second, and were brought to perfection on the third: so that when it was three years old, it had fruit of the first, second, and third year on it: this being such a tree, by its being full of leaves, when others had none, or were just putting out, fruit, of one year, or more might have been expected on it, when it had none at all, and therefore was cursed: or it might be one of that sort which brought forth fruit twice a year; for of such sort of fig trees we read in the Jewish writings <sup>216</sup>: and therefore though it was not the time of the common figs being ripe, yet this being one of the seasons, in which this tree bore ripe fruit, and being so very flourishing, might reasonably be expected from it: but there being none,

**he said unto it, let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever;**

or, as it is expressed in Mark, “no man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever”: for if none grew on it henceforward, no man could hereafter eat of it. Both expressions design the same thing, the perpetual barrenness of the fig tree: and presently the fig tree withered away: immediately, upon Christ’s saying these words, its sap was dried up, it lost its verdure; its leaves were shrivelled and shrunk up, and dropped off, and the whole was blasted. This tree was an emblem of the Jews: Christ being hungry, and very desirous of the salvation of men, came first to them, from whom, on account of their large profession of religion, and great pretensions to holiness, and the many advantages they enjoyed, humanly speaking, much fruit of righteousness might have been expected; but, alas! he found nothing but mere words, empty boasts, an outward show of religion, an external profession, and a bare performance of trifling ceremonies, and oral traditions; wherefore Christ rejected them, and in a little time after, the kingdom of God, the Gospel, was taken away from them, and their temple, city, and nation, entirely destroyed. {**Matthew 21:20**

Ver. 20. And when the disciples saw it,... The next day in the morning, as Mark says: they had, heard what Christ had said to it the day before, as the same evangelist observes; but did not take notice of the immediate withering of the tree; but the next morning, as they returned from Bethany, they saw it dried up from the roots: they marvelled; not that Christ should curse

211 R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 30. p. 421.

212 Demonstration of the Messiah, par. 2. p. 38.

213 Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Sheviith, c. 4. sect. 10. {

214 T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 35. 4.

215 Misn. Sheviith, c. 5. sect. 1. & Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

216 Misn. Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. in ib. T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 18. 1.

it, but that it should wither away so soon, and upon his saying what he did; which was a considerable instance of his power and Godhead, all creatures, animate and inanimate, being at his command and disposal: saying, how soon is the fig tree withered away? This was said by Peter, in the name of the rest, who recollecting what Jesus had said to it the day before, and observing how the event had answered his words so soon, addressed Christ after this manner: “master, behold the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away”; expressing his wonder at it, and ascribing, it to the power of Christ; of which this was an amazing proof and evidence.

**Matthew 21:21**

Ver. 21. **Jesus answered and said unto them,**

His disciples wondering at his power, in causing the fig tree to wither so suddenly:

**verily I say unto you, if ye have faith;**

that is, in God, in his power, which reaches to all things: the object of faith is expressed in Mark, and by way of exhortation, “have faith in God”, that he will enable you to perform whatsoever ye shall desire; which must be understood, not of spiritual faith in the promises of God, and person of Christ, but of, the faith of miracles, or faith in the power of God to perform things that are above the strength of nature:

**and doubt not;**

either of the power, or will of God to do for you, and by you, the thing desired; for this kind of faith would not admit of the least degree of doubting: there must be no hesitation in the mind, no reasoning upon the thing, how it can be performed; the mind must not be divided between the power and will of God, and the difficulties and discouragements which attend the case, but must believe in hope against hope, with a full persuasion of accomplishment: for want of this faith, without doubting, the disciples could not cure the child that was lunatic.

**Ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree;**

cause one to be dried up, and wither away by a word, as Christ had done to this, which, comparatively speaking, was but a lesser sort of miracle;

**but also, if ye shall say to this mountain;**

the Mount of Olives, where Christ and his disciples now were, and were passing over, or, at least, were very near it; or any other mountain wherever they might be, to which they should, upon any occasion, think fit to say,

**be thou removed, and cast into the sea;**

which was many miles off from Mount Olivet, and

must be a very surprising performance for a mountain to be rooted up, so large as that was, and be carried several miles from its former situation, and be thrown into the sea; and yet, as difficult and amazing as this may seem,

**it shall be done:**

that is, provided the person doubts not; or, as it is said in Mark, “shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things, which he saith, shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith”: for this must not be confined to the particular instances of drying up a fig tree, or removing a mountain, but the doing of any sort of miracle, how great soever. Nor is it our Lord’s meaning that they should do these particular things; nor is it certain that they ever did: but his sense is, that, had they faith, they should be able not only to do such lesser miracles, as, comparatively speaking, the withering of the fig tree was, but they should be able to perform things much more difficult and surprising, whenever the good of the souls of men, the propagation of the Gospel, and the glory of God required them.

**Matthew 21:22**

Ver. 22. **And all things whatsoever,**

Not only miracles, but any other thing which may be for the honour of God, the interest of religion, the spreading of the Gospel, the enlargement of the kingdom, of Christ, their own spiritual good, and the welfare of immortal souls,

**ye shall ask in prayer, believing.**

Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads it, “in prayer, and in faith”; and the Arabic version renders it, “in prayer with faith”; both to the same purpose, and aptly express the sense of the words, which design the prayer of faith; or that prayer which is put up in the strength of faith; and is of great avail with God: for whatever is asked in faith, agreeable to the will of God, which is contained in his covenant, word, and promises, and makes for his glory, and the good of his people, shall be given, be it what it will; though to carnal sense and reason it may seem impracticable and impossible:

**ye shall receive;**

of God, through Christ, freely and fully, and shall have and enjoy them, either they themselves, if asked for themselves, or others, for whom they are asked.

**Matthew 21:23**

Ver. 23. **And when he was come into the temple,**

The day following the cursing the fig tree: for the withering of it, and the notice the disciples took of it,



and our Lord's discourse with them about it, were not in one and the same day, as is clear from the account the Evangelist Mark gives; but on the morning that Christ had conversed with his apostles by the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, concerning the strength of faith in prayer, and the success of it; when they were come into the city, and to the temple, whither he directly went, and entered upon his work of preaching to the people,

**the chief priests and elders of the people came unto him.**

The "chief priests" were not the high priest, and his "sagan", or deputy, but the principal of the priesthood, who were chosen from the rest of their brethren, to sit in the sanhedrim; and "the elders of the people" were the laity that were chosen from among the people, to be members of the same grand council: in this sense the Jewish writers interpret the word "elders", in De 21:2 "thy elders, and thy judges"; that is,

"thy elders, who are thy judges: it is a tradition,

R. Eliezer ben Jacob says, זקניב זת בית דינ הגדול, "thine eiders; this is the great sanhedrim"<sup>217</sup>?

The other Evangelists Mark and Luke add to these, Scribes, who also were a part of this great assembly; so that the principal members of it, if not the whole sanhedrim, came in a body together, if possible, by their presence and authority, to daunt Christ, discourage his ministry, bring it into contempt with the people, and stop his proceedings and success. And this they did

**as he was teaching;**

the people, that is, preaching the Gospel to them, as Luke explains it: he was instructing them in the things relating to himself, and his kingdom, dispensing the mysteries of his grace, the doctrines of regeneration, justification, and salvation. Mark says, it was "as he was walking in the temple": and at the same time teaching the people, who flocked about him in like manner, as the Peripatetic philosophers taught their scholars walking: whence they had their name.

**And said, by what authority**

dost thou these things? that is, drive out the buyers and sellers out of the temple, which greatly provoked them, their own gain and interest being concerned therein; and perform these miracles of restoring sight to the blind, and causing the lame to walk; which he had very lately wrought in the temple; and particularly preach these doctrines, the work in which he was then engaged: and who gave thee this authority? They do not

object to his doctrines, or dispute whether they were true or false; nor examine his miracles, whether they were of God, or of the devil: in these points they might fear he would be able to put them to silence and confusion, of which some of them had had an experience before; but they proceed in another way, in which they might hope for success, and attack him about his commission and authority under which he acted, whether he pretended to derive his authority from God, or from men: by this they designed to ensnare him and hoped they should gain their point, let him answer in what form he would. Should he say that God gave him the authority to do these things, they would charge him with enthusiasm and blasphemy, urging, that it was wickedness and presumption any man to pretend to be sent immediately from God; since the order of the priesthood, and of teaching was fixed, and none were to take upon them the office of a priest, or of a teacher of the people, but by their appointment; or none were called and sent, but through them, or by their means: and if he should say, that he had his authority from men, they would confront him, and absolutely deny that he had any from them, who only had the power of giving men an authority of preaching in the temple; wherefore he must be an usurper of this office, and a turbulent, seditious person, that sought to destroy all order, civil and ecclesiastical.

**Matthew 21:24**

Ver. 24. **And Jesus answered and said unto them,**

Not by replying directly to their question, but by putting another question to them, whereby he escaped the snare he saw they laid for him: I also will ask you one thing, word, or question, which if ye tell me; honestly, and plainly answer to it, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: which was putting the thing upon such a foot, and in such a form, as they could not well object to; for Christ promises, that if they would return a plain answer to the question he had to put to them, and which was no unreasonable, nor impertinent one, he would thoroughly satisfy them in this point; and expressly declare his commission and authority, what it was, and from whence he had it. The question is as follows:

**Matthew 21:25**

Ver. 25. **The baptism of John, whence was it?....**

By the baptism of John, is meant the ordinance of water baptism, which was first administered by him; from whence he took the name of John the Baptist: and the doctrine which he preached concerning it, and

217 T. Hieros Sota, fol. 23. 3. Jarchi in Deut. xxi. 2.

previous to it, and even the whole of his ministry; which is denominated from a principal part of it, and which greatly distinguished his ministry from all others: and the question put by Christ concerning it is, whence it was? by what authority did John administer the ordinance of water baptism, which had never been administered before by any? who sent him to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, a doctrine the world had never heard of before? who gave him a commission to discharge the several parts of his ministry, which he performed in such a wonderful and powerful manner? did he receive his authority

**from heaven, or of men?**

that is, from God or man? as the opposition requires; and as it was usual for the Jews to call God by the name of "heaven": in this sense it is used by them, when they say <sup>218</sup>, that such have no part in the world to come, who affirm, that the law is not *מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם*, "from heaven", that is, from God; which is exactly the phrase here: and when they observe <sup>219</sup>, that care should be taken that a man does not pronounce *שֵׁם שָׁמַיִם*, "the name of heaven", that is, God, in vain: and when they tell <sup>220</sup> us of a certain man that built large buildings by the way side, and put food and drink there, so that everyone that came went in and eat, and drank, *וּבֵרַךְ לַשָּׁמַיִם*, "and blessed heaven"; that is blessed, or gave thanks to God; and when they speak of <sup>221</sup> *מוֹתָה לַשָּׁמַיִם*, "death by heaven"; that is, death which is immediately inflicted by God. So when Christ here asks, whether John's baptism was from heaven, or of men, his meaning is, whether it was of divine institution, and that John acted by divine authority, and commission; or whether it was an human device of his own, or of other men, and that he took the office of preaching and baptizing upon himself of his own head, or by some human appointment: to this he requires a direct answer, as is said in Mark, "answer me"; whether it was from the one, or from the other;

**and they reasoned with themselves;**

either "within themselves", as the Arabic version renders it, "in their own minds", as the Syriac; or they took some little time and privately conferred together, what answer they should return; when they argued the point among themselves,

<sup>218</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 3. Vid. ib. fol. 19. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

<sup>219</sup> {c} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1.

<sup>220</sup> Abot. R. Nathan, c. 7. fol. 3. 2.

<sup>221</sup> Ib. c. 11. fol. 4. 1. Vid. ib. c. 14. fol. 4. 4. & 5. 1. & c. 27. fol. 7. 1.

**saying, if we shall say from heaven;**

if we shall return for answer, that the baptism and ministry of John were of divine appointment, and that he acted by a divine authority,

**he will say unto us, why did ye not believe him?**

why did not ye believe the doctrine that he preached? and receive the testimony that he gave concerning the Messiah? and why were ye not baptized by him? why did ye reject the counsel of God against yourselves? They saw plainly, that if they owned the divine authority of John's baptism and ministry, they must allow Jesus to be the true Messiah, John bore witness to; and consequently, that it was by a divine authority he did what he did; and then there was an end of the question, and is the very thing that Christ had in view.

**Matthew 21:26**

Ver. 26. **But if we shall say of men,....** They reasoned with themselves, that should they give their answer in this form, and say, that the ministry and baptism of John, were merely human, and what he took up of himself, or which he performed by an authority derived from men,

**we fear the people;**

that were then upon the spot, in the temple; who, as many of them were now the followers of Christ, more of them had been the admirers of John, and probably had been baptized by him: wherefore the sanhedrim were afraid of them, lest if they should affirm, that the authority by which John acted was human, they would immediately rise up against them; and, as Luke says, "stone" them: so high a veneration had they for him, and so dear was his memory still unto them.

**For all held John as a prophet.**

These are the words of the high priests and elders, and not of the evangelist, expressing the reason of their fears from the people, who, in general, were thoroughly persuaded, as Luke expresses it, and firmly believed that John was a prophet, that was raised up, and sent immediately by God; and did not derive his authority and commission to preach and baptize from any man, or set of men, whatever.

**Matthew 21:27**

Ver. 27. **And they answered Jesus and said, we cannot tell,**

They saw the dilemma they were brought into; they chose rather therefore to speak against their own consciences, and tell a wilful lie, and incur the reproach of ignorance: who, at other times, took upon them

to judge of a prophet, whether he was a true or a false one, and by what authority he acted, whether of God, or man: but now being reduced to this wretched condition, contrary to their office and character, declare they did not know, and could not tell from whence John had his commission, and who gave him his authority:

**and he said unto them, neither tell I you by what authority I do these things:**

since, according to the proposal of Christ, and the agreement he entered into with them, they did not give him a direct answer to his question, he looked upon himself under no obligation to inform them, what was his authority, and from whence he had it; though by the question he put to them he tacitly suggests, that he had his authority not from man, but from God; and by this his answer signifies, that since John preached and baptized without their authority and approbation, so might he; nor was he dependent on them, or accountable to them.

**Matthew 21:28**

Ver. 28. **But what think you?**

See Gill on "Mt 18:12"

**a certain man had two sons.**

This is a parable; the design of which is to show the hypocrisy and deceit of the Scribes and Pharisees, in pretending to works of righteousness, and not doing them; and to reprove them for their disbelief and rejection of John's ministry; and to make it appear, that the worst of sinners in the Jewish nation were preferable to them; and that many of them were, and would be, happy, when they would be miserable. By the "certain man", in the parable, God is designed; who, though he is not a man, nor to be represented by any human form; yet, as man is the image of God, he is therefore, in an improper and figurative sense, compared to man, and set forth by him; which may be allowed in a metaphorical and parabolical way: and though the Son of God only assumed human nature, and really became man; yet God, the Father, seems rather to be here intended, who is sometimes compared to a husbandman and a vine dresser; see Joh 15:1 and as appears from the relation of the "two sons" unto him; by whom are meant not Jews and Gentiles; for the latter can never be intended by the first son; for these were not sons in such sense as the Jews were, nor were upon an equal foot of sonship with them, as the parable supposes; much less were they called first, and bid to work in the vineyard: but, on the contrary John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, were first, and only sent to the Jews; and God, as yet, was not come even

in the external ministry of the word to the Gentiles; nor were they brought to repentance and obedience: but by them are meant two sorts of people, among the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, and publicans and sinners; as the application of the parable, by our Lord himself, most clearly shows: these were both the sons of God; not only by creation, as all men are, all having, in this sense, but one common father, whose offspring they be; but also by national adoption; for to all, who were Israelites, according to the flesh, whether good men, or bad men, alike belonged the general privilege of adoption, Ro 9:4. This publicans and sinners had an equal right to, as well as the Scribes and Pharisees, though they were not all the sons of God by special grace, or spiritual adoption:

**and he came to the first;**

the publicans and sinners among the Jews, by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his disciples, who first and chiefly preached to such sort of persons;

**and said, son, go work today in my vineyard:**

by the "vineyard", is meant the kingdom of God, or of heaven, the Gospel church state, the then present dispensation of things, which was set up, and which men were called to embrace and enter into; the doors of which the Pharisees, who pretended to have the key of knowledge, did all they could to shut up, and hinder persons going in, as they refused to do themselves: this is called it a "vineyard"; See Gill on "Mt 20:1". To work in it signifies to hear the word preached, to believe in the Messiah, embrace his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances, particularly the ordinance of baptism, which was the then principal ordinance of that dispensation. The time of working in it is "today"; directly, immediately, and whilst it is day; for the hour cometh when no man can work, and when all these means and ordinances will be at an end, and attending on them will be over: the argument used to engage hereunto, is taken from the relation the person stood in as a "son", highly favoured by God, with the blessing of national adoption, besides that of natural sonship common to all mankind.

**Matthew 21:29**

Ver. 29. **He answered and said, I will not,**

Which answer fitly expresses the language and practice of openly profane and unregenerate sinners, who will not come to Christ, that they may have life; nor will they serve the Lord, but are bent upon indulging their lusts; nor will they be subject to the law of God; nor will they hear and receive the Gospel of Christ, or submit to his ordinances, and are averse to every good

work: where is man's free will? this is the true picture of it; man has no will naturally to that which is good.

**But afterward he repented, and went:**

a change of mind was wrought in him, and this produced a change of life and conversation: so, many of the publicans and sinners repented of their sins of disobedience, and rebellion against God, under the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; not of themselves, men do not naturally see their sin, or need of repentance; their hearts are hard and obdurate; nor have they any spiritual sense and feeling: nothing will bring them to repentance, not the most powerful ministry, the severest judgments, or the kindest mercies, without the grace of God: but it was of God, and owing to his powerful and efficacious grace, that they repented: it was his will they should come to repentance: he called them to it, and gave it to them, as a free grace gift of his: and they repented not in a mere legal way, with a legal repentance, which lies in a mere conviction of the outward acts of sin; in an external sorrow for it, in horror and terror of mind about it, and in shedding tears for it, accompanied with a cessation from the grosser acts of sin, and an outward reformation of life and manners: but they repented in an evangelical manner, as such do, who are really converted, and spiritually instructed; who are true believers in Christ, have views, and, at least, hopes of pardoning grace and mercy; and have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit: the repentance of such lies in a spiritual sight and sense of sin, of the evil nature of indwelling sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it, as well as of the outward actions of life; in a hearty, godly sorrow for it, because committed against a God of purity, grace, and goodness; in a loathing it, and themselves for it; in a holy shame, and blushing, on account of it; and is attended with an ingenuous confession of it, and forsaking it: the consequence of which is, that such go readily and cheerfully into the Lord's vineyard; hear the word with all diligence, receive it with gladness; walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; and are taught, by the grace that has appeared to them, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world.

**Matthew 21:30**

Ver. 30. **And he came to the second,**

The Scribes and Pharisees, by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles also:

**and said likewise;**

the same things as to the other son, the publicans and sinners; calling them into the Gospel dispensation,

to hear the word, embrace truth, attend on ordinances, and labour in promoting the kingdom, and interest of the Messiah, whilst they had the light of the Gospel with them. Urging also the relation they stood in to God, as a part of the Jewish body; to whom, among other external privileges, the adoption belonged:

**and he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not:**

the word "go" is not in the generality of the Greek copies; the phrase is only "I sir", though it is rightly enough supplied as to the sense. Beza says, it was in his most ancient copy; and so it is in the Arabic and Persic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; though it is not in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions. So, the Scribes and Pharisees seemed pleased with the ministry of John for a while, and at first were forward to submit to his baptism, and were very inquisitive about the Messiah: yet, when he was declared in John's ministry, and by his own doctrine, and miracles, they refused to give in to the belief of him; they would neither enter into the Gospel kingdom, embrace the doctrines, and obey the commands of it themselves, nor suffer others to enter in; but, as much as in them lay, by their reproaches, menaces, and excommunications, deterred them from it. They, were like some other persons, who promise fair, and talk much of doing good works, but do none; teach the people to do them, but do not perform them themselves, though they would seem to do them; make great pretensions to them, boast of them, and trust in them; and therefore, of all men, ought to be careful to maintain them, and yet do the least.

**Matthew 21:31**

Ver. 31. **Whether of them twain did the will of his father?**

This is the question put by Christ, upon the preceding parable to the chief priests, elders, and Scribes;

**they say unto him, the first:**

an answer which natural reason, and common sense, directed them to; and therefore they give it out at once, directly, without staying upon it, and demurring about it; though they seemed not to be aware of the application of it to themselves, which follows:

**Jesus saith unto them, verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots;**

that is, such who had been so; See Gill on "Mt 9:10".  
**go into the kingdom of God before you.**

They are signified by the first son, who repenting went, and did the will of his father: these repented under John's ministry, were called, and brought to

repentance by the preaching of Christ, and his apostles: these justified God, their Father, by being baptized with John's baptism: these embraced the Messiah, believed in him, and were the first in his kingdom, and set an example to the chief among the Jews to follow: and it is easy to observe, that a poor profane sinner may, by the grace of God, be brought to repentance, that before was obstinate, rebellious, and disobedient, and be made willing to go and work in the Lord's vineyard here, and be at last glorified; when a self righteous person, notwithstanding all his fair promises and resolutions to do good, his professions of, and pretensions to religion, neither repents of his sins, nor believes in Christ; has no share in the kingdom of grace here, nor will he enter into the kingdom of glory.

**Matthew 21:32**

Ver. 32. **For John came unto you in a way of righteousness,**

He had a commission from God; he was no impostor; the doctrine he taught was true, and which he faithfully delivered; his life and conversation were unblamable; there was nothing in his credentials, ministry, and conduct, that could justly be found fault with:

**and ye believed him not;**

to be the forerunner of the Messiah, or the Elias that was to come; nor attended to the doctrine of repentance preached by him, nor were subject to the ordinance of baptism he administered; nor gave any assent, or credit, to the Messiah he so manifestly pointed out:

**but the publicans and harlots believed him;**

what he said concerning the wrath to come, and the miserable state and danger they were in; and they repented of their sins, and confessed them, and were baptized of him in Jordan; believing the testimony he gave of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, and Son of God:

**and ye, when ye had seen it;**

the repentance and faith of these persons, and what a wonderful reformation was wrought in them,

**repented not afterwards;**

of their disobedience, impenitence, and unbelief, after they had seen the effects of John's ministry on these very profligate sinners, and after, the death of John; who, by his constancy, zeal, and faithfulness, had shown himself to be a true, and upright minister of the word; and afterwards under the ministry of Christ, and his apostles, by, whom the same doctrines were preached, and the same ordinances administered,

**that ye might believe him;**

the testimony he has left behind him concerning the Messiah.

**Matthew 21:33**

Ver. 33. **Hear another parable,**

Which, though Luke says was spoken to the people, who, were gathered round about him, yet was directed to, and against the chief priests; who continued with him till it was delivered, and the application of it made; when they perceived it was spoken of them. The design of it is, to set forth the many favours and privileges bestowed on the Jewish nation; their unfruitfulness, and the ingratitude of the principal men among them; and their barbarous usage of the servants of the Lord, and particularly of the Son of God himself: the consequence of which would be, the removal of the Gospel from them, and the miserable destruction of them. So that this parable is partly a narrative, of some things past, and partly a prophecy of some things to come:

**there was a certain householder:**

by whom the great God of heaven and earth is meant; who may be so called, either with respect to the whole world, which is an house of his building, and the inhabitants of it are his family, who live, are nourished, and supplied by him; or to the church, the house of the living God, the family in heaven and in earth, called the household of God, and of faith; or to the people of Israel, often called the house of Israel, the family, above all the families of the earth, God took notice of, highly favoured, and dwelt among.

**Which planted a vineyard:**

of the form of a vineyard, the manner of planting it, and the size of it, the Jews say many things in their Misna<sup>222</sup>.

"He that plants a row of five vines, the school of Shammai say, "it is a vineyard"; but the school of Hillel say, it is not a vineyard, unless there are two rows--he that plants two vines over against two, and one at the tail or end, *הָרִי זֶה כַּרְמִי* "lo! this is a vineyard"; (it was a little vineyard;) but if two over against two, and one between the two, or two over against two, and one in the midst, it is no vineyard, unless there are two over against two, and one at the tail or end."

Again<sup>223</sup>,

a vineyard that is planted with less than four cu-

<sup>222</sup> Misna Kilaim, c. 4. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 7. sect. 7.

<sup>223</sup> Ib. c. 5. sect. 2. Maimon ib. sect. 1.

bits (between every row), R. Simeon says, is no vineyard; but the wise men say it is a vineyard.”

And the decision is according to them. Now by this vineyard is meant, the house of Israel and the men of Judah, the nation of the Jews, as in Isa 5:7 from whence our Lord seems to have taken many of the ideas expressed in this parable; who were a people separated from the rest of the world, and set with valuable plants, from whom fruit might reasonably be expected: the planting of them designs the removing them out of Egypt, the driving out the natives before them, and settling them in the land of Canaan, where they were planted with choice vines, such as Joshua, Caleb, &c. and where they soon became a flourishing people, though for their iniquities, often exposed to beasts of prey, the neighbouring nations, that were suffered at times to break in upon them. The Jews often speak<sup>224</sup> of the house of Israel, as the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, and even call their schools and universities vineyards: hence we read<sup>225</sup> כרם ביבנהש, the vineyard in Jabneh, where the scholars were placed in rows, as in a vineyard.

**And hedged it round about;**

as it was usual to set a hedge, or make a wall round a vineyard, which according to the Jewish writers, was to be ten hands high, and four broad; for they ask<sup>226</sup>;

רדך זה גדר “what is a hedge?” That which is ten hands, high.

”And elsewhere<sup>227</sup>,

”An hedge that encompasses a vineyard, which is less than ten hands high, or which is ten hands high, but not four hands broad, it has no circuit (or void place between that and the vines)--an hedge which is ten hands high, and so a ditch which is ten hands deep, and four broad, lo! this is lawful to plant a vineyard on one side of it, and herbs on the other; even a fence of reeds, if there is between the reeds the space of three hands, lo! this divides between the vineyard and the herbs, as an hedge.

”By this “hedge” is designed, either the law, not the oral law, or the traditions of the elders, which the Jews<sup>228</sup> call hrwtl gyo, “an hedge for the law”, which was none of

224 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 2. 1. 1078 T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 42.

2.

226 Misn. Kilaim, c. 4. sect. 3.

227 Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 7. sect. 14, 15.

228 Pirke Abot. c. sect, 1.

God’s setting, but their own; but either the ceremonial law, which distinguished them from other people, was a middle wall of partition between them, and the nations of the world, and kept them from coming among them, and joining together; or the moral law, which taught them their duty to God and man, and was the means of keeping them within due bounds; or else the protection of them by the power of God, which was an hedge about them, is here intended; and which was very remarkable at the time of their three feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; when all their males went up to Jerusalem, and the whole country was, left an easy prey to the nations about them; but God preserved them, and, according to his promise, suffered not their neighbours to have any inclination or desire after their land.

**And digged a winepress in it;**

which is not חרץ, “the ditch”, that went through a vineyard; for this cannot be said of a winepress, and is Dr. Lightfoot’s mistake<sup>229</sup>; but נת “the winefat”, in which they squeezed the grapes and made the wine, and this used to be in the vineyard: the rule about it is this,

”הנת שבכרם, the winepress that is ten hands deep and four broad, R. Eliezer says, they may set in it; but the wise men do forbid it<sup>230</sup>.”

By this may be meant, the altar where the drink offerings of wine were poured forth; and so the Targumist<sup>231</sup> renders it מרבחי יב, “my altar I have given them, to atone for their sins”: though one of their commentators<sup>232</sup>, by it, understands the prophets, who taught Israel the law, that their works might be good before God and men; they urged and pressed them to the performance of them, as grapes are squeezed in the winepress:

**and built a tower;**

the same the Jews call שומרה, “the watch house”; which was an high place, in which the watchman stood to keep<sup>233</sup> the vineyard, and which was built in the vineyard; of this they say,

”שומרה שבכרם, the “watch house which is in the vineyard”, that is ten hands high and four broad,

229 Horae in Mark xii. 1.

230 Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. sect. 3.

231 Targum Jon. in Isa. v. 2. Vid. T. Hicros. Succa, fol. 54. 4.

232 R. David Kimchi in loc.

233 Maimon. in Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. sect. 3. Aben Ezra in Isa. v. 2.

they set in it <sup>234</sup>.

”By this is meant, either the city or Jerusalem, which stood in the midst, and on the highest part of the land of Israel; or the temple, which stood on the highest part of Jerusalem, where the priests and Levites kept their watch every night; and so the Targumist <sup>235</sup> interprets it, מִקְדָּשִׁי יב, “my sanctuary I built among them”: that is, the temple: and let it out to husbandmen; of which there were different sorts, as there were different methods of hiring and letting out fields and vineyards among the Jews: one sort was called הַשִּׁכָּר and such was he, who hired of his neighbour a field to sow in it, or a vineyard to eat of the fruit of it, for a certain sum of money yearly; see So 8:11 another sort was called rkwxh, and this was one that hired a field, or a vineyard, and agreed to give the proprietor of it yearly, so many measures of the fruit thereof, whether it yielded more or less; and there was a third sort, called oyra, or lbqm, and such was he, who agreed to give the owner half, or a third, or a fourth part of the increase of the field, or vineyard <sup>236</sup>. Now it is not of the former, but of the latter sort of letting out and farming, that this is to be understood; not of letting it out for money, but for fruit, as appears from Mt 21:34 and by the husbandmen are meant, the rulers of the Jews, civil and ecclesiastical, especially the latter; the priests, Levites, and Scribes, who were intrusted with the care of the Jewish people, to guide and instruct them, and cultivate the knowledge of divine things among them, that they might bring forth fruits of righteousness; and to offer their gifts and sacrifices, and the like, which are meant by letting out the vineyard to them: and went into afar country; which must be interpreted consistent with the omnipresence of God, who is every where, and cannot be said properly to move from place to place; but fills heaven and earth with his presence, and cannot be contained in either: but this phrase seems to design his taking up his residence in the thick darkness, in the tabernacle and temple, when the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews was settled, and God did not appear to them in that visible manner he had done before; but having fixed their order of government, worship, and duty, left them to themselves and their rulers; for many years; in which he expressed

<sup>234</sup> Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 7. sect. 22.

<sup>235</sup> Targum Jon. in Isa. v. 2.

<sup>236</sup> T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 25. 1. Gloss in T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 11. 2. & in Bava Metzia, fol. 103. 1. in Avoda Zara, fol. 21. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Shecirut, c. 8. sect. 1, 2. Bartenora in Misn. Pea, c. 5. sect. 5. & in Demai, c. 6, sect. 1.

much longsuffering and patience towards them.

#### Matthew 21:34

Ver. 34. **And when the time of the fruit drew near,**

Of gathering the fruit, when it was ripe, and might be eaten, or profit made of it, according to the law in Le 19:23. The fruit of all manner of trees, for the first three years, was uncircumcised; it was not to be eaten, nor any profit made of it, and on the fourth year it was to be holy to praise the Lord with; being either given to the priests, or eaten by the owners before the Lord at Jerusalem; and on the fifth year it might be eaten, and made use of for profit, and henceforward every year; which law regarded the fruit of the vine, as any other fruit: hence it is said <sup>237</sup>, that”

the grapes of the vineyard of the fourth year, the sanhedrim ordered that they should be brought up to Jerusalem, a day’s journey on every side, so that they might crown or adorn the streets with fruits.”

To this time of fruit, and the custom of bringing it up to Jerusalem, the allusion seems to be here. Thus, God after a long time, after he had waited a great while for fruit from the Jewish nation, from whom much might have been expected, by reason of the advantages they enjoyed; he sent his servants to the husbandmen: by his servants are meant, the prophets of the Old Testament; who were sent by God from time to time, to the kings, priests, and people of the Jews; to instruct them in their duty, to exhort them to the performance of it, to reprove them for their sins, to stir them up to repentance, and to bring forth fruits meet for it, signified in the next clause:

**that they might receive the fruits of it;**

of the vineyard from the husbandmen, for the use of the owner; for fruits of justice and judgment, of righteousness and holiness, might be justly expected and demanded of such persons, to be brought forth by them, to the honour and glory of God.

#### Matthew 21:35

Ver. 35. **And the husbandmen took his servants,**

They seized and laid hold of them in a rude and violent manner: so far were they from treating these servants with respect, as they ought to have done; considering whose they were, from whom they came, and upon what account; and also so far from delivering to them the fruit due to their master, or excusing their inability to make a suitable return, as might be expected, they use them very

<sup>237</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Maaser. Sheni, c. 9. 5. Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 59. sect. 2.

roughly:

**and beat one;**

either with the fist, as Jeremiah was struck by Pashur, the son of Immer, the priest, one of these husbandmen, Jer 20:1 and as Micaiah was smitten on the cheek by Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, the false prophet, 2Ch 18:23 or with a scourge, and may refer to the punishment of beating with forty stripes, save one, by which the skin was flayed off; as the word here signifies; for some of these servants had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, Heb 11:36. And killed another; that is, with the sword. There were four kinds of death in the power of the sanhedrim, of which this is one, and what follows is another; and were these, stoning, burning, killing (i.e. beheading with the sword), and strangling; the manner of executing this punishment here expressed, was this:

”They cut off the person’s head בייב, “with a sword”, in the manner the government orders it. R. Judah says, this is indecent (i.e. to cut off his head standing, they do not do so), but they put his head upon a block, and cut it off with an axe; they reply to him, there is no death more abominable than this <sup>238</sup>.”

So the prophets, in the time of Elijah, were killed with the sword, 1Ki 19:14 see also Da 11:33.

**And stoned another;**

as they did Zechariah, 2Ch 24:21 and doubtless many others; since Jerusalem had the character of killing the prophets, and stoning them that were sent unto her, Mt 23:37 these seemed such that were stoned, but not killed; but as Mark says, were wounded in the head with the stones thrown at them, and shamefully handled, and sadly abused

**Matthew 21:36**

Ver. 36. **Again he sent other servants,**

Meaning, perhaps, such as suffered in the times of the Maccabees: more than the first; their number was greater, though their office was the same, at least not higher: and they did unto them likewise; they beat them with rods, they killed them with the sword, and stoned them, Heb 11:36.

**Matthew 21:37**

Ver. 37. **But last of all,**

In the last times, in the last days, in the end of the world, the Jewish world, at the close of their ecclesiastic and civil state; after all the prophets had been sent, and

finished their course, came the greatest prophet of all, to seal up the vision and prophecy:

**he sent unto them his son;**

not a servant as before, but a son; his own son, his only begotten son, the son of his love, his dearly beloved one; him he sent to these husbandmen the Jews. The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, was sent only to the house of Israel: he was the minister of the circumcision; he was the great prophet raised up among them, and was sent to bless them, by turning them from their iniquities; he came to them, to his own, to them of his own nation, but they received him not:

**saying, they will reverence my son.**

The Son of God is to be revered equally as his Father, since he is in nature and glory equal to him; and it is the will of his Father he should be so revered, as he is by the angels in heaven, and by the saints, both in heaven and in earth; but did these husbandmen reverence him? no; they despised and rejected him; they reproached and traduced him, as the vilest of men, and used him in the most cruel and barbarous manner. And did not his Father know this? yes; this is certain from his omniscience, which reaches to all future events, the most minute and contingent; and from the predictions of the usage of these persons of him, delivered long before it came to pass. Luke says, “it may be they will reverence him”: so that it was not a positive affirmation, that they would do it, and which also is to be understood after the manner of men: that humanly speaking, it might be expected that they would give him reverence, in consideration of the dignity of his person, his character, and relation to God, which was his due and their duty; but he had a very different treatment from them.

**Matthew 21:38**

Ver. 38. **But when the husbandmen saw the son,**

Whom many of them knew, though some did not: some were entirely ignorant of him; some knew him, but durst not confess him, yet were not injurious to him; others acted against light and conscience, with spite and malice, as did these men. They expected the Messiah about this time; they knew, by prophecy, it could not be long ere he appeared: when they saw Jesus of Nazareth, they knew by various circumstances, by all the characters of the Messiah meeting in him, and by his miracles, that he must be the same.

**They said among themselves;**

privately, not openly to the people,

238 Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 1, 3.



**this is the heir;**

as indeed he is of all things, as the Son of God, and as the mediator of the new covenant: he is heir of all that his Father has, as he is his natural, essential, and only begotten Son; and as mediator, he is heir of all things, natural, spiritual, and eternal, for the use and benefit of his church and people, who are also his portion and inheritance: but here it seems to denote, his being heir to the throne of Israel, the government of the Jewish nation, as he was the son of David; and the Jews confess <sup>239</sup>, that because it was said that Jesus of Nazareth was (למלכות) (קרוב) , “near to the kingdom”, therefore they put him to death:

**come let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance:**

concluding, that could they be rid of him, their nation would be in peace, their temple would stand, and temple worship and service continue, and they remain in their office and authority undisturbed; the contrary of which they feared, should he be suffered to live; though what they feared from his life, befell them upon, and in consequence of his death, quite beyond all their counsels and expectations.

**Matthew 21:39****And they caught him**

Seized and laid hold of him, in a rude and violent manner, as they had some of the servants before. This regards their apprehending of Christ in the garden, by a band of soldiers and officers, sent by the chief priests and Pharisees, who with swords and staves took him, bound him, and led him away:

**and cast him out of the vineyard;**

which is not to be understood of their casting him out of the synagogue, which is never said of them; nor does it so much relate to the leading of him without the gates of Jerusalem, where they crucified him, though this is a sense not to be despised and rejected; but rather, to the delivery of him to those, that were without the vineyard of the Jewish church and nation, to the Gentiles; to be mocked, scourged, and put to death by them:

**and slew him:**

for though the sentence of death was pronounced on him by Pilate, an Heathen governor, and was executed by the Roman soldiers; yet it was through the instigation and at the pressing importunity of these husbandmen, the Jewish rulers; and who were afterwards frequently charged by the apostles with the murder of him.

**Matthew 21:40**

239 5 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

**When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh**

In a way of providence, to call these husbandmen to an account; not only for the fruit they were to bring to him; but for their barbarity to his servants, the prophets, time after time; and especially, for the inhuman usage and murder of his own son;

**what will he do unto those husbandmen?**

This question is put to the chief priests, elders, and Scribes: and they themselves, who are designed hereby, are made judges in this case, just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah are, in ( Isaiah 5:4 ) which passage of Scripture our Lord had greatly in view when he spake this parable.

**Matthew 21:41****They say unto him**

Either the common people that were about him; or rather the chief priests, scribes, and elders, to whom he put the question; little thinking then, that they were the persons intended in this parable:

**he will miserably destroy those wicked men:**

in saying which, they own that persons guilty of such crimes, as beating, killing, and stoning, servants sent to them by the proprietor of the vineyard, to receive his due and proper fruit, and at last murdering his son and heir, were very wicked persons, and deserved the severest punishments to be inflicted upon them, and that without mercy; nor could it be thought, but this must and would be unavoidably their case, when the Lord of the vineyard should come: thus tacitly did they condemn themselves as wicked men, and as deserving the worst of deaths, who in a few days after this, were concerned in the death of the Son of God:

**and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen;**

allowing it to be a very just thing, not only to put these men to the most miserable and tormenting death that could be devised, but to take the vineyard out of the hands of their posterity, and let it out to other persons; as it was a righteous thing with God, to remove the church state, Gospel and ordinances from the Jews, and deliver them to the Gentiles:

**which shall render him the fruits in their seasons;**

that is, his due, and that in proper time. The other evangelists relate these words, as spoken by Christ: for the reconciliation of which let it be observed, that they were first spoken by the Jews, as is here signified; and after that were spoken by Christ, confirming what they said, and applying it to them; upon which they said, “God forbid”;

that we should ever be guilty of such crimes, incur such punishment, and this should be our case: but in proof of it, that so it would be, our Lord alleges the following words.

**Matthew 21:42**

Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read the Scriptures, &c.] The passage which stands in ( Psalms 118:22 Psalms 118:23 ) .

**The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.**

Very appropriately is this Scripture cited, and applied to the present case; which expresses the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish builders, priests, and scribes: the whole Psalm may be understood of the Messiah. R. David Kimchi owns <sup>240</sup>, that there is a division among their Rabbins about it: some say that the Psalm is spoken of David, and others, that it is spoken of the days of the Messiah; and these are certainly in the right; and as for this particular passage, it is applied by some of them to the Messiah: so on mentioning ( Hosea 3:5 ) they <sup>241</sup> say,

“David was king in this world, and David shall be king in the time to come: wherefore it is said, the stone which the builders refused”

And one of their noted commentators <sup>242</sup> on those words, “though thou be little among the thousands of Judah”, has this note:

“It is fit thou shouldst be little among the families of Judah, because of the impurity of Ruth the Moabitess, which is in thee: out of thee shall come forth unto me, Messiah, the son of David; for so he saith, “the stone which the builders refused””

Christ is often in Scripture compared to a stone, and is called the stone of Israel; is said to be a stone of stumbling to some, and a precious tried stone to others: is represented as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and on which are seven eyes: and is fitly compared to one, for his usefulness in the spiritual building the church, where he is as both the foundation and corner stone, and for his strength and duration. Christ is the sure, firm, and everlasting foundation, which God has laid in Zion, and the only one of any avail; nor can any other be laid to any purpose; and if he is neglected, and

laid aside, in the ministration of the word, the building which men endeavour to rear, or exhort unto, will come to nothing. Whoever build on him are safe, and on nothing else: Christ is the foundation, on which the church, and every believer, are built, and therefore will abide; for the gates of hell cannot prevail against them: the covenant of grace is immovable, being established in him; its mercies are sure, and its promises yea and amen: the salvation of immortal souls is certain, resting upon him; the faith and hope of the saints fail not, being directed to, and settled on him: the house not made with hands, which is in heaven, is an eternal one; and the city, which has foundations, is a continuing one, because of the concern that Christ has in it; and though he is of such eminent use and importance in the building, yet, as such, the “builders rejected” him: by the builders are meant, the Jewish rulers, both political and ecclesiastical, especially the latter, who pretended to instruct, and build up the people in knowledge and understanding; but in a very bad way did they do it, and upon a very sandy foundation, upon their fleshly privileges, their moral righteousness, and the observance of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders. The Jews used to call their doctors and their scholars “builders” <sup>243</sup>: says R. Jochanan,

“the disciples of the wise men are called (Nyanb) , “builders”, because they study in the building of the world all their days, which is the law.”

These rejected the Messiah, refused to receive, and acknowledge him as such: they disallowed and disapproved of him, as base and vile, and the most contemptible of mortals, and set him at nought, and had him in the utmost scorn and derision. And so he is rejected by some who bear the characters of builders among Christians: as when his proper deity, and eternal sonship are denied, and he is treated as a mere creature; when his satisfaction and atoning sacrifice are either wholly rejected, or little regarded, lessened, and depreciated, and repentance and good works are put in the room of them; when his imputed righteousness is opposed, and laid aside, and the righteousness of men preferred unto it, and cried up as the matter of justification in the sight of God; when his efficacious grace is represented as unnecessary to regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, and to the

<sup>240</sup> In Psal. cxviii. 1.

<sup>241</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 3.

<sup>242</sup> Jarchi in Mic. v. 2.

<sup>243</sup> T. Bab. Subbut, fol. 114. 1. Vid. En Israel, fol. 64. 3. & Juchasin, fol. 80. 2. & 81. 1.

performance of good works; and when he is left out of public ministrations, as the way of life and salvation, as the fountain of all grace, and foundation of all happiness, and human power, free will, and moral righteousness are put in his room. But notwithstanding the former and present rejection, and ill treatment of him, he is

**become the head of the corner:**

he is the corner stone in the building which knits and cements it together, angels and men, Jews and Gentiles; Old and New Testament saints; saints above, and saints below, and in all ages and places, all meet, and are united together in this corner stone; which also strengthens and supports the building, and holds it together, and is the ornament and beauty of it: he is the chief corner stone; he is higher than the kings of the earth; he is superior to angels, and the chiefest among ten thousands of his saints; he is exalted above all creatures, angels, and men, who, by the Jewish builders, was despised and rejected, and scarce allowed to be worthy the name of a man:

**this is the Lord's doing;**

this stone is laid in the building by him: the rejection of him is according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge; and the exaltation of him, above every name, is owing to him, and he is by, and at his own right hand: and

**is marvellous in our eyes;**

in the eyes of all the saints; there being in all this such, a wonderful display of the wisdom, grace, mercy, power, and faithfulness of God.

**Matthew 21:43**

**Therefore I say unto you**

This is the application of the parable; and the words are directed to the chief priests, elders, scribes, and people of the Jews; and are delivered as what would be in consequence of the builders, rejecting the Messiah, the foundation and corner stone of the building.

**The kingdom of God shall be taken from you:**

by which is meant, not their political estate, their civil government, which was of God, and in a short time was to depart from them, according to ancient prophecy, and which is come to pass, as the event shows; nor their legal national church state and ordinances only, or the priesthood, and the appendages of it; all which, in a little while, were shaken and removed; but the Gospel, which had been preached among them by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; so called because it treats of the kingdom of God, and things pertaining to it, and shows men both their right and meetness for it; the one as in the

righteousness of Christ, and the other in the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit, which Gospel may be taken away from a people, as from the Jews, because of their contempt of it, and opposition to it, or lukewarmness and indifference about it, or unfruitfulness under it; and when God has no more souls to gather in by it in such a place, and which is a very unhappy case, whenever it is the case of any people: for when the Gospel is taken away, the riches of a people are gone; the glory of a nation is departed; the light of it is put out; the spiritual bread of a people is no more; the means of conversion and spiritual knowledge cease: all which have a melancholy aspect on posterity. Moreover, the Gospel church state, which was set up in Judea, may be here meant; which, though it continued and flourished a while, in process of time was to be removed: and which may be done elsewhere, as it has been in Judea, by God's suffering persecution to arise, as he did against the church of Jerusalem, whereby the ministers of the Gospel are driven into corners, or scattered abroad; or by ordering his ministers to preach no more unto such a people, as the apostles were ordered to turn from the Jews to the Gentiles; or by taking away ministers and members of churches by death, and not raising up others in their room; or by withholding a blessing from the word; or by permitting the growth of errors and heresies, which, in course of time, must issue in the dissolution of the church state in such a place, and which necessarily follows upon the removing of the Gospel:

**and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**

Though God may take away the Gospel from a people, as he did from the Jews; yet he does not, nor will he, as yet, take it out of the world: he gives it to another "nation"; to the Gentiles, to all the nations of the world, whither he sent his apostles to preach and where it must be preached before the end of the world comes, in order to gather his elect out of them: for not one particular nation is meant, unless the nation of God's elect, among all nations, can be thought to be designed. It may be observed, that the Gospel, wherever it comes, it comes as a gift; it is "given": to have it only in the external ministration of it, is a favour; and more especially to understand it spiritually; this is an unmerited gift; as is also ability to preach it: and it is likewise a national mercy wherever it comes; for though it comes in power only to a few in a nation, yet it is more or less a blessing to the whole: nor is it easy to say what temporal advantages a nation enjoys through the ministration of the Gospel in it: and where it is given,

and comes in power, it brings forth fruit, as it did in all the world of the Gentiles; even the fruits of grace, and righteousness, and every good work; all which come from Christ, under the influence of his Spirit, and by the word and ordinances, as means, and highly become the Gospel, and the professors of it; and for want of which it is removed sometimes from one nation to another: for this cause it was taken from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles. One of the Jewish commentators <sup>244</sup> on these words, in ( Jeremiah 13:17 ) “my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride”, has this note;

“because of your grandeur, which shall cease; because of the excellency of “the kingdom of heaven”, ( שנתנתו לפילימ ) , “which shall be given to the profane”;

i.e. the nations of the world.

#### **Matthew 21:44**

##### **And whosoever shall fall on this stone**

This is not to be understood of believing in Christ, or of a soul's casting itself on Christ, the foundation stone; relying on him, and building all its hopes of happiness and salvation on him; which is attended with contrition and brokenness of heart, or repentance unto life, which needed not to be repented of nor of a believer's offending Christ by evil works, whereby his conscience is wounded, his soul is grieved, and his faith shaken; and though he is hereby in great danger, he shall not be utterly destroyed, but being recovered by repentance, shall be preserved unto salvation; but of such to whom Christ is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence: for as he is the foundation and corner stone to some, and is set for the rising of them, and to whom he is precious; so he is a stone set for the fall of others, and at which they stumble and fall, and fall upon it: and such are they who are offended at Christ's state of humiliation on earth; at the manner of his birth, the meanness of his parentage, and education; the despicable figure he made in his person, disciples, and audience; and at his sufferings and death: and these “shall be broken”: as a man that stumbles at a stone, and falls upon it, breaks his head or his bones, at least bruises himself, does not hurt the stone, but the stone hurts him; so all such as are offended at Christ, injure their own souls, being filled with prejudices against him, and contempt and disbelief of him, which if grace prevents not will issue in their everlasting destruction: but whilst there is life, the means of grace continue, the kingdom of God is not taken away; there is hope that such may be

<sup>244</sup> Jarchi in Jer. xiii. 17

recovered from their impenitence and unbelief: “but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder”. Just as if a millstone, or any stone of such like weight and bulk, was to fall upon an earthen vessel; or, as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, by which the Messiah and his kingdom, are designed, brake in pieces the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so that it became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. As the former part of this verse expresses the sin of unbelievers, and the danger they are exposed unto by it, this sets forth their punishment; and has respect both to the vengeance of Christ, on the Jewish nation, at their destruction, which would fall heavy from him in his state of exaltation, for their evil treatment of him in his state of humiliation; and to his severe wrath, which will be executed at the day of judgment on all unbelievers, impenitent Christless sinners, who have both offended him, and been offended at him; when their destruction will be inevitable, their salvation irretrievable, and their souls irrecoverably lost, and ruined. Some have thought, that there is an allusion in these words to the manner of stoning among the Jews, which was this <sup>245</sup>:

“the place of stoning was two men's heights; one of the witnesses struck him on his loins, to throw him down from thence, to the ground: if he died, it was well; if not, they took a stone, which lay there, and was as much as two men could carry, and cast it, with all their might, upon his breast: if he died, it was well; if not, he was stoned by all Israel.”

Maimonides observes <sup>246</sup>, that

“stoning, or throwing down from the high place, was that he might fall upon the stone, or that the stone might fall upon him; and which of them either it was, the pain was the same.”

#### **Matthew 21:45**

##### **And when the chief priests and Pharisees**

Which latter, though not before mentioned, were many of them of the grand sanhedrim, as well as the chief priests, scribes, and elders: “had heard his parables”; that of the two sons being sent into the vineyard, and that of the letting out the vineyard to husbandmen,

##### **they perceived that he spake of them:**

they plainly saw that they were designed by the son,

<sup>245</sup> Misu. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 45. 1, 2. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 15. sect 1. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. Affirm. 99.

<sup>246</sup> In Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

that promised to go into the vineyard, but did not; only talked of works, but did not do them: and that they were the husbandmen that acted the ungrateful part to the householder, and the cruel one to his servants, and would to his son, their own consciences told them they were the men. They knew that the whole was levelled against them, and designed for them, and exactly hit their case.

**Matthew 21:46**

**But when they sought to lay hands on him**

Not that they attempted by any outward action to apprehend him, and carry him off, or by any immediate act of violence to take away his life; but they secretly wished, and earnestly desired to do it: they were so irritated and provoked, that they could scarcely keep their hands off of him, and could have been glad of an opportunity of satiating their revenge upon him: and whereby they would but have fulfilled what he in this parable had prophetically said of them: and yet so hardened were they, though they understood his meaning, they were not deterred thereby, but on another account:

**they feared the multitude;**

which were now about Christ, lest there should be a tumult, and they should take the part of Christ against them, to which they seemed inclined; when their lives, had they attempted anything of this nature, would have been in a great deal of danger:

**because they took him for a prophet;**

by the doctrines which he taught, by the boldness and freedom of speech he used, and by the miracles he wrought: wherefore, though they might not all of them believe that he was the Messiah, or that prophet Moses spoke of; yet, since it was exceeding manifest, that he was a teacher sent of God, and endowed with very wonderful gifts; and from whom many of them had received singular benefits, if not for their souls, yet for their bodies; being healed by him of their lameness, or blindness, or other diseases; therefore would not suffer him to be abused, and ill treated by them: so that, as Mark says, "they left him, and went their way"; to consult together what was proper to be done, and wait for a better opportunity to seize him.

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

**CHAPTER XXII**

*1 The parable of the marriage of the king's son. 9 The vocation of the Gentiles. 12 The punishment of him that wanted garment. 15 Tribute ought to be paid to Ceaser. 23 Christ comforteth the sadducees for the resurrection. 34 answereth the lawyer*

*which is the first and great commandment.41 and  
poseth the Pharisees anout the Messiah*

Matthew 22

- [1] And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,
- [2] The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,
- [3] And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.
- [4] Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.
- [5] But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:
- [6] And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.
- [7] But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.
- [8] Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.
- [9] Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.
- [10] So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.
- [11] And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:
- [12] And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.
- [13] Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- [14] For many are called, but few are chosen.
- [15] Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.
- [16] And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.
- [17] Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?
- [18] But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

- [19] Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.
- [20] And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?
- [21] They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.
- [22] When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.
- [23] The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,
- [24] Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.
- [25] Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:
- [26] Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.
- [27] And last of all the woman died also.
- [28] Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.
- [29] Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.
- [30] For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.
- [31] But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,
- [32] I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.
- [33] And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.
- [34] But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.
- [35] Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,
- [36] Master, which is the great commandment in the law?
- [37] Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
- [38] This is the first and great commandment.
- [39] And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- [40] On these two commandments hang all the law and

the prophets.

- [41] While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,
- [42] Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.
- [43] He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,
- [44] The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?
- [45] If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?
- [46] And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

### JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW CHAPTER XXII

#### Matthew 22:1

Ver. 1. And Jesus answered and spake unto them again,.... Not to the multitude only, but to the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees: for though Mark seems to intimate, that upon the delivery of the last parable of the vineyard, they left him, and went their way; yet since he does not relate the following parable, they might not leave him until they had heard that, which is spoken with much the same design as the former, and might increase their resentment the more: or if the chief priests and elders did go away, the Pharisees remained behind, as is clear from Mt 22:15 to whom he spake

#### by parables,

similitudes, and comparisons, taken from earthly things, and against whom he directed the following one;

#### and said,

as hereafter related.

#### Matthew 22:2

Ver. 2. **The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king,....** The Gospel dispensation which had now taken place, the methods of divine grace in it, and the behaviour of men under it, may be fitly illustrated by the following simile, or parable; the design of which is to express the great love of God the Father, who is represented by this

#### certain king,

in espousing any of the children of men to his own son: as, that he a king, who is the King of kings, and Lord of Lords, should concern himself in this manner; and especially, that he should espouse such mean and unworthy creatures to his own, his only, and beloved son, his equal, and his heir: also, the view of it is to set

forth the plenteous provisions of grace made under the Gospel dispensation in the word and ordinances; the great neglect and contempt of these by the Jews, who were externally called unto them; the wrath of God upon them for their abuse of them, and ill usage of his servants; the calling of the vilest among them, or of the Gentiles, and how far persons may go in a profession of religion without the wedding garment, and at last be lost:

**which made a marriage for his son:**

which may be understood either of contracting and bringing him into a marriage relation, or of making a marriage feast on that account: in the former sense, the persons concerned are the Father, the bridegroom, and the bride: the parties contracted are the Son of God and sinful creatures. The bridegroom is no other than the only begotten of God the Father, his only Son and heir, the Maker and Governor of the universe, who has all the, perfections of the Deity, and fulness of the Godhead in him; and, as mediator, has all accomplishments and excellencies; he has all the riches of grace and glory; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; all loveliness, beauty, and amiableness in his person, and everything to recommend him as the chiefest among ten thousand: on the other hand, the bride is the church, which consists of a set of persons chosen by God, in Christ, before the foundation of the world; who were considered as sinless creatures, and viewed as such when first betrothed to Christ in the everlasting covenant: but for the further demonstration of his love to them, were suffered to fall in Adam, with the rest of mankind, and to be scattered abroad; when they lost the image of God, came short of his glory, passed under a sentence of condemnation, became liable to the curse of the law, and eternal death; were defiled and polluted in their nature, and in their estate became bankrupts and beggars; and yet this hindered not the consummation of the marriage between Christ and them. The person that contracted this relation between them, is the Father of Christ, who chose them for him to be his spouse and bride; brought and presented them to him, as he did Eve to Adam before the fall; and gave them to him, and made them one body and flesh with him, in the everlasting covenant; and draws them, and brings them to him by his powerful grace, in the effectual calling; there was a secret betrothing of all these persons to him in eternity, at his own request, and the full consent of his Father, who had the disposal of them; there is an open espousal of them, as particular persons, at conversion; and there will be a more public and general consummate marriage of them, at the last

day, when they are all called by grace, and brought home: moreover, this may be understood of the marriage feast which the Father makes on this extraordinary account. So the Syriac version renders the word by atyvm, “a feast”; and in this sense is it used by the Septuagint in Ge 29:22 by which is meant, not the latter day glory, or marriage feast of the Lamb, to which only saints will be invited, and partake of; nor the ultimate glory, when all the elect shall go with Christ into the marriage chamber, and spend an eternity in endless and unspeakable felicity with him; nor the spiritual blessings of grace enjoyed by believers now; but the external ministry of the word and ordinances, which are a feast of fat things, a rich entertainment, the particulars of which are after given; which many are invited to, who never partake thereof, and others do, and yet destitute of the grace of God; for both good and bad were guests at this feast. The allusion is to the custom of the Jews, and of other nations, in making feasts and grand entertainments at such times. The Jews used to make feasts both at espousals, and at marriage: hence we <sup>247</sup> read of נֶדְחַת אִירֵינִי, “a feast of espousals”, and of נֶדְחַת נִישְׂאֵינִי, “a marriage feast”: the reference here is to the latter; and which used to be made at the charge of the father: for so runs one of their canons <sup>248</sup>:

“a father marries his son, וְשָׂה לּוֹ מִשְׁתָּה, “and makes a feast for him”, and the expense is the father’s &c.”

**Matthew 22:3**

Ver. 3. **And sent forth his servants,**

The ministers of the Gospel, who are the servants of the most high God, of his choosing and ordaining, of his calling and sending, and of his qualifying and employing, and who voluntarily and cheerfully serve him; and may intend John the Baptist, and the twelve apostles of Christ, who were sent

**to call them that were bidden to the wedding;**

הַקְרוּאִים, “those that were called”, as in 1Sa 9:13 by whom are meant the Jews, who were the “bidden”, or “called ones”; called of God, and therefore styled “Israel my called” Isa 48:12 and by the Targum interpreted מִיִּמִּי, “my bidden”. They were called by the name of God, and called the people of God, and the children of God, and were the children of the kingdom; and were called to many valuable and external privileges; and had previous notice of the Gospel dispensation by the prophecies

<sup>247</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 43. 1, 2.

<sup>248</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 9. sect. 13. Vid. Misn. Sheviith, c. 7. sect. 4. & Juchasin, fol. 88. 1.

concerning Christ, and the blessings of his grace under the former dispensation; and by the ordinances and sacrifices of it, which in a very significant manner set him forth to that people; and now were called to embrace him, to receive his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances, by the ministry of John the Baptist, and the disciples of Christ. It seems, it was sometimes customary to give two invitations to a feast, or to send a second time to the persons bidden to the feast <sup>249</sup>; to which the allusion is here;

**and they would not come:**

which shows the insolence and ingratitude of men, their natural aversion to the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; the depravity of the will of man, with respect to things spiritual and evangelical; the insufficiency of outward means, to work with effect, upon the minds of men; and the necessity there is of efficacious and unfrustrable grace to bring men to believe in Christ, cordially to receive his truths, and be subject to his commands. There is a two fold call by the ministry the word; the one is internal, and that is, when the word comes not in word only, but in power; is the power of God unto salvation, and the savour of life unto life; for by the Gospel are the elect of God called to the obtaining of the glory of Christ; 2Th 2:14. This call is of grace; it springs from the free grace and favour of God, and it is effected by the mighty power of his grace; and it is to special blessings of grace; it is a fruit of God's everlasting love, and an evidence of it; and is according to the eternal purpose of God, which is never frustrated: it is a call to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings, as peace, pardon, righteousness, and everlasting happiness; by it men are called to light and liberty, to the grace of Christ, and communion with him; to all the privileges of God's house here, and eternal glory hereafter; to which he that calls them, gives them a right and meetness, and infallibly brings them to it: and therefore it is styled an heavenly calling, and the high calling of God in Christ; for this call is ever effectual, and the ends of it are always answered; it is unchangeable, irreversible, and never repented of. But besides this, there is a bare external call to the sons of men, through the preaching of the word; which is not to make their peace with God, a thing impossible to be done by them, and which is contrary to the Gospel, and reflects dishonour on Christ, the peacemaker; nor to get an interest in him, which, wherever possessed, is given, and not gotten; nor to regenerate themselves; this is the work of the Spirit of God, and in which men are as passive, as the infant in

its natural generation, conception, and birth; nor to the exercise of evangelical grace, as faith, love, &c. which are not in them, and no man can exercise that which he has not, nor should he be called to it; nor to any spiritual vital act, since men are dead in trespasses and sins, and cannot put forth any: but this call in the word, is to the natural duties of religion, as to hear, read, and pray; to attend on the word, to wait at Wisdom's gates, and watch at the posts of her door, and so lie in the way of being effectually called by the grace of God; but this call may be where election does not go before, and where sanctification does not follow, and where there may be no salvation, Mt 20:16 and is often slighted, neglected, and of no effect, which is the case here.

**Matthew 22:4**

**Ver. 4. Again he sent forth other servants,**

The seventy disciples, and other ministers of the Gospel, as Barnabas and Saul, and others that were joined to, and were helpers of the apostles, who were sent, and preached to the Jews, any time before the destruction of Jerusalem:

**saying, tell them which are bidden;**

for these preachers of the word were first sent to the Jews, and preached unto them, until they by their carriage and conduct, showed themselves to be unworthy of the blessing. These men had notice of the Gospel feast by the prophets, and were invited to it, by the forerunner of Christ, by him, and his disciples, and again by them, and others; which strongly expresses the goodness, grace, and condescension of God to these people, and aggravates their stupidity, ingratitude, and wickedness:

**behold, I have prepared my dinner.**

The ministry of the word and ordinances under the Gospel dispensation, is signified by a "dinner"; of God's preparing and providing; which is a full meal at noon, and in it is plenty of food, and of that which is wholesome to the souls of men, sweet and savoury to a spiritual taste, and very nourishing and satisfying; and this dinner is a feast, a rich banquet, a grand entertainment; in which are a variety of provisions, suited to all sorts of persons, and plenty of the richest dainties, attended with the largest expressions of joy; and this feast is a marriage one, and that not for an ordinary person, but for the king's son, the son of the King of kings; it is large, grand, and noble, rich and costly, and yet all free to the guests; it is kept in the king's palace, the banqueting house, the church, is common to

249 via. Joseph. apud Grotium in loc.



all, and of long continuance, it will last unto the end of the world. What privileges the patriarchs and prophets, and the people of the Jews enjoyed, in the morning of the world, before the coming of Christ, who made the bright and full day of the Gospel, were but as a “breakfast”, a short meal; the means of grace were not so rich and plentiful, and their knowledge of spiritual things not so large; they had but, as it were, a taste of what is plentifully bestowed under the Gospel dispensation, and therefore that is called a “dinner”; grace and truth in all their fulness, coming by Jesus, by whom God has delivered at once his whole mind and will; whereas, before, it was delivered piecemeal, at sundry times and divers manners; and this is distinguishable from the “supper” of the Lamb, in the evening of the world, in the latter day, when the Jews will be converted, and will not act the part they are represented to do in the parable; and the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, and the Gospel will have a general spread all over the world. The dinner is the same with the feast of fat things, which God is said to make for all people, Gentiles as well as Jews, in his holy mountain the church, Isa 25:6 and the table which wisdom has furnished, Pr 9:2 with all sorts of suitable food, proper to persons of every age: here’s milk for babes, even the sincere milk of the word, that their souls may grow thereby, who are newborn babes, and have tasted of the grace of God; namely, the plainer and more easy truths of the Gospel, to be taken in, understood, fed upon, and digested; and meat for strong men, the more sublime doctrines of it, which such as are strong in faith, receive, relish, and live upon, and are greatly refreshed and edified with: here’s the wine of God’s everlasting love set forth, in the election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and salvation of his people; and fruits served up both new and old, for their comfort, delight, and pleasure; in the ordinances of the Gospel, are the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, and fatted calf, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed: here is everything for delight and nourishment, for faith to feed and live upon; and therefore may well be called a dinner, and what is worthy of him, who is the maker of it, and exceedingly well suited to the persons who are to partake of it.

**My oxen and my fatlings are killed;**

in allusion to feasts and large entertainments, when oxen and fatted calves, and the best of the flock were killed and dressed; or to the sacrifices of oxen and other creatures, under the law, as typical of the sacrifice of Christ; and may here represent Christ as crucified

and slain, held forth in the ministry of the word and ordinances; who as such, is suitable food for believers, is spiritual, solid, and substantial, and greatly to be desired; is nourishing and strengthening, comforting and quickening, delightful and satisfying:

**and all things are ready;**

for upon the crucifixion and death of Christ, and after the renewed commission of Christ to his disciples, to preach the Gospel, beginning at Jerusalem, it might be justly represented in the ministry of the word, that all things were now ready. Redemption was obtained by Christ; an everlasting righteousness was wrought out and brought in; pardon of sin was procured; peace and reconciliation were made; the sacrifice of Christ was offered up, and full satisfaction given to law and justice; the covenant of grace, with all the blessings and promises of it, were ratified and confirmed; and all were ready in Christ’s hands to distribute, to as many as came to him; in whom are life and salvation, and everything necessary for peace and comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter. This shows the completeness and perfection of the Gospel dispensation, this being that better thing, which God has provided for his people in the last times, that former saints might not be perfect without them, See Gill “Heb 11:40”. The law made nothing perfect; there was nothing got ready by that; the works, sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies of it, could not justify men’s persons, nor sanctify their hearts, nor purge the consciences of the worshippers, nor take away sin, nor pacify God, or give satisfaction to his justice, or procure peace, pardon and salvation; but now all these things are declared to be ready in the Gospel: but this is not owing to man, it is all of God; it is of his providing and preparing; and he is a rock, and his work is perfect; and nothing can be brought by the Creature to be added to it, nor does it need it; there is everything exhibited in the Gospel that a poor sinner stands in need of, or can desire, even that can make him comfortable here, and happy hereafter.

**Come unto the marriage;**

the marriage feast; come into the Gospel dispensation, attend the word and ordinances: the invitation is pressing, the arguments are strong and moving, but the persons invited were averse, self-willed, stubborn, obstinate, and inflexible.

**Matthew 22:5**

Ver. 5. **But they made light of it,**

The invitation. They neglected the ministry of the Gospel; they did not care for it, nor showed any regard

to it: and this is the ease, when either it is not attended on, though there is an opportunity, yet having no heart to embrace it, and no value for it, neglect attendance on it; and which often arises from loving of the world too much: or when it is attended on, but in a very negligent and careless manner; when men pull away the shoulder, or stop their ears; when they do not mind what they hear, let it slip and forget it; when they are unconcerned for it, and their thoughts are employed about other things: or when the Gospel and the ordinances of it are looked upon as things of no importance; not knowing the real worth and value of them; seeing no wisdom in them, having never tasted the sweetness, or felt the power of them, or seen the need of the things revealed by them: as also when there is an aversion to the Gospel, a loathing of it, as a novel, upstart doctrine, received but by a few, and these the meanest and most illiterate; as contrary to reason, and tending to licentiousness; and especially, when it is contradicted and blasphemed, as it was by the Jews, and its ministers despised: some men make light of it, because of the loss of time from worldly employments; because of the charge attending it; because it teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and because they prefer their bodies to their souls, and things temporal, to things eternal. The aggravations of their sin, in slighting and neglecting the Gospel and Gospel ordinances, are, that this is a grand entertainment, a very expensive provision, as well as a very plentiful one; that it was a wedding dinner, a feast of love, they were invited to; that it was prepared by so great a person as a king, and who is the King of kings, and the only potentate; who provided this dinner of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, in the everlasting council and covenant of grace and peace: for the things of which it consists, there was a scheme so early contrived to bring them about; and that this was made on the account of the marriage of his Son, the Messiah, who had been so often spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament, these men professed a value for; one so long expected by their forefathers, and is the messenger of the covenant, whose coming they themselves desired and sought for; and that they should be invited to it again and again, and one set of servants sent after another, and the most striking and moving arguments made use of; and yet they slighted and made light of all this, and were careless and unconcerned; to which may be added, that the things they were invited to, were such as concerned their immortal souls, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of them; in short, it was no other than the great salvation, wrought out by the great

God, and our Saviour, for great sinners, at the expense of his blood and life, which they neglected; See Gill “Heb 2:3”.

**And went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:**

they all turned their backs on the Gospel, and the ministration of it, and pursued their own worldly inclinations, ways, and methods of life: those that were brought up in a rural way, lived a country life, and were concerned in meaner employments, went everyone to their “village”, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel read it, and to their farms, there to manage their cattle, and till their ground; and others, that lived in larger towns and cities, and were concerned in greater business of life, betook themselves to trade at home, or traffic abroad; placing their happiness in the affluence of this life, which they preferred to the word and ordinances of Christ. Such a division of worldly employment is made by the Jews <sup>250</sup>;

“the way of that host is like to a king, who makes a grand entertainment, and says to the children of his palace, all the rest of the days ye shall be everyone in his house; this shall do his business, *hytrxob lyza adw*, “and this shall go about his merchandise”, *ודא אזיל בחקליה*, “and this shall go to his field”, except on my day.”

**Matthew 22:6**

Ver. 6. **And the remnant took his servants,**

They that went to their several worldly callings and occupations of life, troubled themselves no further about the Messiah, his doctrines and ordinances; but others of them were more spiteful and injurious: they not only slighted the message, and took no notice of the invitation, but also abused the messengers; some of the servants they laid hold upon, and put them in the common prison, and detained them there a while; as they did the apostles quickly after our Lord’s ascension, particularly Peter and John:

**and entreated them spitefully;**

gave them very hard words, and reproachful language; menacing and threatening them what they would do to them, if they did not forbear preaching in the name of Jesus; though they were not intimidated hereby, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame on such an account; and even their malice and wickedness proceeded so far, as to take away the lives of some of them:

<sup>250</sup> Zohar in Lev. fol. 40. 2

**and slew them:**

thus they stoned Stephen to death, the first martyr for Christ; and killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; which last, though he was put to death by Herod, yet with the consent and approval of the Jews.

**Matthew 22:7**

Ver. 7. **But when the king heard thereof,**

Of this maltreatment, and barbarous usage of his servants, their cries coming up into his ears, and their blood calling for vengeance at his hands; and he full well knowing what they did unto them, and upon what account, being the omniscient God; and observing their malignity and wickedness,

**he was wroth:**

who, though slow to anger, bears much, and suffers long; yet was now highly incensed and provoked, and stirred up all his wrath, determining to take vengeance on such a vile generation of men. Christ, when he was here on earth, was sometimes provoked by the Jews, through their unbelief, their obstinacy, and the hardness of their hearts and was angry with them, being grieved for them, Mark 3:5, but then was not the proper time to execute his wrath; he then appeared as the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world; he came to save men, and not to destroy their lives, nor to condemn the world: when his martyr Stephen was suffering, he was seen by him standing at the right hand of God, being risen from his seat, as one incensed at the usage his servant met with from the wicked Jews; but the time of his vengeance was not yet come, more patience and forbearance were to be exercised towards them: but now his kingdom came with power, and he appears as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and pours out his wrath to the uttermost upon them, destroys their city and temple, and puts an end to their civil and ecclesiastical state, and cuts them off from being a nation; and now it was, that he ordered these his enemies, who would not have him to rule over them, brought before him, and slain in his presence; and in all this, he showed his kingly power and authority; and by removing the sceptre from them, and all show of dominion and government, made it fully appear that he, the Messiah, was come. Well had it been for them, had they taken the advice of the Psalmist, "Kiss the Son", the Son of God, believe in him as such, embrace him as the Messiah, yield subjection and obedience to his word and ordinances, "lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little", Ps 2:12. But now his wrath was kindled very much, and was poured

out like fire, and there was no standing before it; the day of the Lord burned like an oven, and destroyed the Jews root and branch: the manner and means, in and by which this utter ruin was brought about, are as follow:

**and he sent forth his armies;**

not the angels, who are the armies and hosts of heaven; nor desolating judgments only, as pestilence and famine, though the latter was severely felt by the Jews, but chiefly the Roman armies are here meant; called "his", because they came by the Lord's appointment and permission; and were used by him, for the destruction of these people:

**and destroyed those murderers;**

of Christ and his apostles, as their fathers had been of the prophets before them:

**and burnt up their city;**

the city of Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Jews, and where the principal of these murderers dwelt; and which was burnt and destroyed by the Roman army, under Titus Vespasian. And a worse punishment than this, even the vengeance of eternal fire, may all the neglecters of the Gospel, and persecutors of the ministers of it expect, from him, whose vengeance is, and who will repay it; for if judgment began at the house of God, the people of the Jews who were so called, what will be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of Christ? How sore a punishment shall they be thought worthy of, who trample under foot the Son of God, count his blood a common thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace? If the law, when transgressed; demanded a just recompense of reward, or inflicted deserved punishment, how shall the neglecters of the great salvation revealed in the Gospel escape?

**Matthew 22:8**

Ver. 8. **Then saith he to his servants,**

That were preserved from their rage and malice, and outlived their implacable enemies, and saw their utter ruin and destruction:

**the wedding is ready;**

meaning not the marriage contract, which was secretly performed in eternity; or the calling of God's elect among the Jews, and their open espousal to Christ, which for the present was now over; but the marriage feast, or the Gospel dispensation, which was ushered in, and the ministry of it, to which nothing was wanting; all the promises, prophecies, types, and shadows, of the former dispensation, were now accomplished; the Lamb of God was slain, and all things to be done by him, were now finished; the ministers of the Gospel, the apostles,

were called, their commission enlarged, and they qualified with a greater measure of the Spirit, and were sent to preach both to Jews and Gentiles:

**but they which were bidden were not worthy;**

that is, the Jews, who had notice of this dispensation by the prophets, were told by John the Baptist, that it was at hand; were once, and again externally called unto it by the ministry of the apostles; but they were not only unworthy in themselves, as all men are, of such a blessing and privilege, but they behaved towards it in a very unworthy manner; they were so far from attending on it in a diligent and peaceable way, as becomes all such persons that are blessed with the external ministry of it; who when they do so, may be said to behave worthily, and, in some sense, to be worthy of such a privilege being continued with them; see Mt 10:13 compared with Luke 10:6 that they contradicted and blasphemed it, and by their own outrageous carriage, showed plainly that they were unworthy of it; and were so judged by Christ and his apostles, who ordered them to turn from them, and go to the Gentiles, and which may be intended in the following words.

**Matthew 22:9**

Ver. 9. **Go ye therefore into the highways,**

Either of the city, which were open and public, and where much people were passing to and fro; or of the fields, the high roads, where many passengers were travelling; and may design the Gentile world, and Gentile sinners, who, in respect of the Jews, were far off; were walking in their own ways, and in the high road to destruction; and may denote their being the vilest of sinners, and as having nothing to recommend them to the divine favour, and to such privileges as this entertainment expresses:

**and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage;**

to the marriage feast, not the marriage supper, but the dinner, Mt 22:4, their orders were to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, Jew or Gentile, high or low, rich or poor, outwardly righteous, or openly profane, greater or lesser sinners, and exhort them to attend the Gospel ministry, and ordinances.

**Matthew 22:10**

Ver. 10. **So these servants went out into the highways,**

Turned from the Jews, and went among the Gentiles, preaching the Gospel to them; particularly the Apostle Paul, with Barnabas, and others:

**and gathered together all, as many as they found, both good and bad:**

the Persic version reads it, "known or unknown". The Gospel ministry is the means of gathering souls to Christ, and to attend his ordinances, and into his churches; and of these that are gathered by it into churches, and to an attendance on outward ordinances, some are good and some bad, as the fishes gathered in the net of the Gospel are said to be, in Mt 13:47 which may either express the character of the Gentiles before conversion, some of them being outwardly good in their civil and moral character; closely adhering to the law and light of nature, doing the things of it, and others notoriously wicked; or rather, how they proved when gathered in, some being real believers, godly persons, whose conversations were as became the Gospel of Christ; others hypocrites, empty professors, having a form of godliness, and nothing of the power of it; destitute of grace in their hearts, and of holiness in their lives; and the whole sets forth the diligence of the servants, in executing their master's orders, with so much readiness and exactness:

**and the wedding was furnished with guests;**

that is, the wedding chamber, or the place where the wedding was kept, and the marriage dinner was prepared, and eat; so the Syriac renders it,

atytvm tyb, "the house of the feast", or where the feast was kept; and so the Ethiopic version: the Persic version reads it, "the house of the nuptial feast": which designs the house and church of God, into which large numbers of the Gentiles were brought, by the ministry of the apostles; so that it was filled with persons that made a profession of Christ and his Gospel.

**Matthew 22:11**

Ver. 11. **And when the king came in to see the guests,**

Professors of religion, members of churches, whom God takes particular notice of; he is an omniscient being, and his eyes are upon all men and their actions, and especially on such as are called by his name: he takes notice how they behave in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and distinguishes hypocrites from real believers; the latter of which he has a special affection for, makes rich and large provisions for them, and protects and defends them; he knows them that are his, and gives them marks of respect; and he spies out such as are not, and will in his own time discover them, to their utter confusion and ruin. There are certain times and seasons, when God may be said to come in to see his guests; as sometimes in a way of gracious

visits to his dear children, when he bids them welcome to the entertainment of his house, and invites them to eat and drink abundantly: and sometimes in a way of providence, against formal professors and hypocrites; and at the last judgment, when he will separate the sheep from the goats, and discern between the righteous and the wicked:

**he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment;**

by which is meant, not good works, or a holy life and conversation, nor any particular grace of the Spirit, as faith, or charity, or humility, or repentance, or any other, nor the whole work of sanctification, nor the Holy Ghost, but the righteousness of Christ: for though good works are the outward conversation garments of believers, and these greatly become them and adorn the doctrine of Christ, yet they are imperfect, and have their spots, and need washing in the blood of Christ, and cannot in themselves recommend them to God; and though the Holy Spirit and his graces, his work of holiness upon the heart, make the saints all glorious within, yet not these, but the garment of Christ's righteousness, is their clothing of wrought gold, and raiment of needlework, in which they are brought into the king's presence: this, like a garment, is without them, and put upon them; and which covers and protects them, and beautifies and adorns them; and which may be called a wedding garment, because it is that, in which the elect of God were betrothed to Christ; in which they are made ready and prepared for him, as a bride adorned for her husband: and in which they will be introduced into his presence, and be by him presented, first to himself, and then to his Father, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This man had not on this garment, this robe of righteousness; it was not imputed to him; he had no knowledge of it; or if he had any, it was only a speculative one; he had no true faith in it; he had never put on Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; he had got into a church state without it, though there is no entrance into the kingdom of heaven but by it.

**Matthew 22:12**

Ver. 12. **And he saith unto him, friend,**

Either in an ironical way, or because he professed to be a friend of God and Christ:

**how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?**

Which way didst thou come in hither? since he did not come in by faith, in the righteousness of Christ; intimating, that he climbed up some other way, and was

a thief and robber; or with what face, or how couldest thou have the assurance to come in hither in such a dress, having nothing but the filthy rags of thine own righteousness? How couldest thou expect to meet with acceptance with me, or to be suitable company for my people, not being arrayed with the garments of salvation, and robe of righteousness, as they are?

**And he was speechless:**

or muzzled: his mouth was stopped, he had nothing to say for himself: not but that there will be pleas made use of by hypocrites, and formal professors, another day; who will plead either their preaching and prophesying in Christ's name; or their attendance on outward ordinances; or the works they have done, ordinary or extraordinary; but then these will all be superseded and silenced, their own consciences will condemn them, their mouths will be stopped, and they will have nothing to say in vindication of themselves; their righteousness will not answer for them in a time to come. The Jews have a tradition <sup>251</sup>, that

“Esau the wicked, will veil himself with his garment, and sit among the righteous in paradise, in the world to come; and the holy blessed God will draw him, and bring him out from thence, which is the sense of those words, Ob 1:4. “Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.””

**Matthew 22:13**

Ver. 13. **Then said the king to his servants,**

By whom are meant, either the ministers of the Gospel, and pastors of churches, who by the order of Christ, and in the name of the churches, cast out all such as appear, by their bad principles and evil practices, to be without the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ; or rather, the angels, who will bind up the tares in bundles, and burn them, and gather out of Christ's kingdom all that offend and do iniquity; and sever the wicked from the just, and use them in the manner here directed to: **bind him hand and foot;**

as malefactors used to be, to denote greatness of his crime, his unparalleled insolence, and the unavoidableness of his punishment; such methods being taken, that there could be no escaping it:

**and take him away;**

from hence, to prison; a dreadful thing, to go out of a church of Christ to hell. This clause is not in the Vulgate

<sup>251</sup> T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 38. 1.

Latin, nor in the Syriac and Arabic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, but is in all the ancient Greek copies;

**and cast him into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;** See Gill "Mt 8:12"

**Matthew 22:14**

Ver. 14. For many are called, but few chosen. See Gill "Mt 20:16"

**Matthew 22:15**

Ver. 15. **Then went the Pharisees,**

After they had heard the parables of the two sons being bid to go into the vineyard, of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, and of the marriage feast; for it is clear from hence, that these stayed and heard the last of these parables, in all which they saw themselves designed; and though they were irritated and provoked to the last degree, they were obliged to hide their resentments, nor durst they use any violence for fear of the people; wherefore they retired to some convenient place, to the council chamber, or to the palace of the high priest, or where the chief priests were gone, who seem to have departed some time before them:

**and took counsel;**

among themselves, and of others, their superiors; not how they should behave more agreeably for the future, and escape due punishment and wrath to the uttermost, which the King of kings would justly inflict on them, very plainly signified in the above parables; but

**how they might entangle him in his talk,**

or "take hold of his words", as in Luke; or "catch him in his words", as in Mark: they consulted to draw him into a conversation, on a dangerous and ensnaring subject; when they hoped a word might drop unwarily from him, which they might catch at, lay hold on, and improve to his disadvantage; either with the common people, or the government, and especially the latter; as is to be learned from Luke, who expressly says their end was,

**that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor;**

the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, should he say any thing against Caesar, which they endeavoured to ensnare him into; by which means, they doubted not of setting the populace against him, and of screening themselves from their resentments; and of gaining their main point, the delivery of him up into the hands of the civil government, who, for treason and sedition, would put him to death.

**Matthew 22:16**

Ver. 16. **And they sent out unto him their disciples,**

Who were trained up in the same way of thinking with themselves, had imbibed the same tenets, and were strenuous defenders of them; and no doubt they selected the most crafty and artful among them; and who were the best versed in their principles and sophistic method of arguing: these they the rather sent, imagining they would not be known, as they themselves were: and from their age and air of simplicity, might be taken for innocent persons, who in great sincerity, came to be instructed by him,

**with the Herodians:**

learned men are very much divided in their sentiments about these men; some think they were Gentiles under the government of Herod; but it is not likely that the Pharisees would join themselves with such, whose company they carefully shunned; others, that they were Gentile proselytes, as Herod was; but that on either of these accounts, they should be called by his name, there seems to be no reason: others say, they were Greeks, whom Herod brought out of a desert into his own country, and formed a sect, which from him were called Herodians: this way went Drusus, in which he was followed by several learned men, until the mistake was detected; who took it from a passage in the Hebrew Lexicon, called "Baal Aruch", mistaking the word יוני, for "Greeks", which signifies "doves": the Jewish writer referring to a passage in the Misna<sup>252</sup>, which speaks of יוני חרדיאות, "Herodian doves"; that is, tame ones, such as were brought up in houses: for that these are meant, is clear from the Misnic and Talmudic writers, and their commentators<sup>253</sup>; and were so called, because that Herod was the first that tamed wild doves, and brought up tame ones in his own palace; and so Josephus<sup>254</sup> says, that he had many towers stored with tame doves, which was a new thing in Judea. Others, that they were Sadducees, which carries some appearance of truth in it; since what is styled the leaven of the Sadducees, in Mt 16:6 is called the leaven of Herod, in Mark 8:15 And very probable it is, that Herod was a Sadducee, and that his courtiers, at least many of them, were of the same sect; but yet it is certain, that the Sadducees are spoken of, as distinct from these Herodians, in Mt 22:23 of this chapter. Others, that they were a set of men, that formed

<sup>252</sup> Cholin, c. 12. sect 1.

<sup>253</sup> T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 139. 1. & Betza, fol. 24. 1. & 25. 1. Misn. Sabbat. c. 24. 8. & Cholin, c. 12. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>254</sup> De Bello Jud. 1. 6. c. 13. {p} Juchasin, fol. 19. 1.

a new scheme of religion, consisting partly of Judaism, and partly of Gentilism, approved and espoused by Herod, and therefore called by his name; and others, that they were such as held, that Herod was the Messiah; but it is certain, that Herod did not think so himself, nor the people of the Jews in common; and whatever flatterers he might have in his life time, it can hardly be thought, that this notion should survive his death, who was odious to the Jewish nation: others think, that they were such, who were not for paying tribute to Caesar, but to Herod, and were encouraged and defended by him and his courtiers, as much as they could; since he and his family looked upon themselves to be injured by the Romans, and secretly grudged that tribute should be paid unto them: others, on the contrary, say, that these were such, who pleaded that tribute ought to be paid to Caesar, by whose means Herod enjoyed his government, and was supported in it; and were just the reverse of the Pharisees, with whom they are here joined, in their attempts on Christ. The Syriac version renders the word by *odwrh tybd*, “those of the house”, or “family of Herod”, his courtiers and domestics: in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, they are called *owdri הַרְוִי*, “the servants of Herod”; and certain it is, that Herod was at Jerusalem at this time, Luke 23:7 We read {p} of Menahem, who was one while an associate of Hillel, who with eighty more clad in gold, went *לְבוֹדֵהַמֶּלֶךְ* “into the service of the king”, that is, Herod, and hence might be called Herodians. Wherefore these seem rather to be the persons designed, whom the Pharisees chose to send with their disciples, though they were of Herod’s party, and were on the other side of the question from them; being for giving tribute to Caesar, by whom their master held his government; that should Christ be ensnared by them, as they hoped he would, into any seditious or treasonable expressions against Caesar, these might either accuse him to Herod, or immediately seize him, and have him before the Roman governor. Luke observes, that these men, the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians, were sent forth as “spies, which should feign themselves just men”; men of religion and holiness, and who were upright and sincere in their question, and who had strong inclinations to become his disciples: the Jews themselves own, that they sent such persons to Jesus, whom they mention by name, in such a disguised manner to deceive him: their words are these <sup>255</sup>;

”They (the Sanhedrim) sent unto him Ananiah

and Ahaziah, honourable men of the lesser sanhedrim, and when they came before him they bowed down to him--and he thought that they believed in him, and he received them very courteously.”

**Saying, master:**

as if they were his disciples, or at least were very willing to be so: however, they allow him to be a doctor or teacher, and a very considerable one:

**we know that thou art true;**

a true and faithful minister, that teachest truth, and speakest uprightly; one of great integrity, and to be depended upon:

**and teachest the way of God in truth;**

rightly opens the word of God, gives the true and genuine sense the law of God, faithfully instructs men in the worship of God; and with great sincerity, directs men to the way of coming to God, and enjoying eternal happiness with him; having no sinister ends, or worldly interest in view:

**neither carest thou for any man;**

be he ever so great and honourable, in ever so high a station, be he Caesar himself; signifying, that he was a man of such openness and integrity, that he always freely spoke the real sentiments of his mind, whether men were pleased or displeased; being in no fear of man, nor in the least to be intimidated by frowns and menaces, or any danger from men: for thou regardest not the person of men; as he had not the persons of the high priests and elders, the grand sanhedrim of the nation, who had lately been examining him in the temple: and seeing therefore he made no difference among men, whether learned or unlearned, rich or poor, high or low; whether they were in exalted stations and high offices, or not he feared no man’s face, and accepted no man’s person, but gave his sense of things, without fear or flattery; they hoped he would give a direct answer to the following question, though Caesar himself was concerned in it.

**Matthew 22:17**

Ver. 17 **Tell us therefore what thinkest thou,**

Since, as they suggested he was a person of great understanding and sincerity, they earnestly desire that he would be pleased, according to his usual frankness and openness, to give them his opinion; in which they intimate, they should sit down satisfied and contented:

**whether is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?**

Meaning, according to the law of God: this was a

<sup>255</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 8.

question among the Jews: the Herodians were for it, the Pharisees were against it, at least secretly; and, indeed, this latter was the general sense of the nation, who looked upon themselves to be, or however ought to be, a free people, being the children of God, and the seed of Abraham; and who urged, that according to their law, none but one of their own brethren, who was of their own nation and religion, was to be set as king over them; whereas Caesar, the Roman emperor, was a stranger, one of another nation, and an idolater; and some openly refused it, and made mutinies and insurrections on account of it, as Theudas, and Judas of Galilee: now by putting this question to Christ, in the presence of different parties, they hoped to get an advantage of him either way; for had he been silent, they would have reproached him, as not being the honest, faithful, frank, and open man, they pretended to take him to be; and if he had answered either in the affirmative or negative, they were prepared to make use of it to his injury; had he said that it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar, this being contrary to the general notions of the people, they would have improved it to draw them from him, and to set them against him; and had he affirmed it was not lawful to do it, they would then have accused him to the Roman governor, and delivered him up into his hands, to judge and condemn him, according to the Roman laws; which latter was what they were wishing for.

**Matthew 22:18**

Ver. 18. **But Jesus perceived their wickedness,**

Luke says, "their craftiness"; and Mark says, "knowing their hypocrisy"; for there was, a mixture of malice, hypocrisy, and artfulness, in the scheme they had formed; but Christ being the omniscient God, saw the wickedness of their hearts, knew their hypocritical designs, and was well acquainted with all their artifice: he judged not according to the outward appearance of their affection for him, and opinion of him, of religion, righteousness, and holiness in themselves, and of a sincere desire to have their conscience satisfied about this matter; the snare they laid was visible to him, the mask they put on could not screen them from him, nor impose upon him:

**and said, why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?**

as he might well call them, who feigned themselves just persons, pretended a great deal of respect for him, call him master, compliment him with the characters of a faithful, sincere, and disinterested preacher; yet by putting the above question, designed no other than to

ensnare him, and bring him into disgrace or trouble.

**Matthew 22:19**

Ver. 19. **Shew me the tribute money,**

Not any money, or any sort of coin that was current among them; but that in which the tribute was usually paid, which was Roman money: and they brought unto him a penny; not as, being what was the usual sum that was paid for tribute at one time, but as a sample of what sort of money it was paid in, in Roman pence; one of which was seven pence halfpenny of our money.

**Matthew 22:20**

Ver. 20. **And he saith unto them,**

Having the penny in one hand, and pointing to it with the other,

**whose is this image and superscription?**

or inscription? for the penny that was, brought him had an image upon it, the form of a man's head struck on it, and round about it an inscription, or writing, showing who it was the image of, and whose money it was, and when it was coined: this is enough to show, that this penny was not a Jewish, but a Roman one; for the Jews, though they put inscriptions, yet no images on their coin; and much less would they put Caesar's thereon, as was on this: it is asked <sup>256</sup>,

"What is the coin of Jerusalem? The answer is, David and Solomon on one side, and Jerusalem the holy city off the other side, i.e. as the gloss observes, David and Solomon were "written" on one side, and on the other side were written Jerusalem the holy city."

It follows,

"and what was the coin of Abraham our father? an old man and an old woman, (Abraham and Sarah,) on one side, and a young man and a young woman, (Isaac and Rebekah,) on the other side."

The gloss on it is,

"not that there was on it the form of an old man and an old woman on one side, and of a young man and a young woman on the other, for it is forbidden to make the form of a man; but so it was written on one side, an old man and an old woman, and on the other side, a young man and a young woman."

**Matthew 22:21**

Ver. 21. **They say unto him, Caesar's,**

<sup>256</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 97. 2. Vid. Bereshit Rabbas sect. 39. fol. 34. 4. & Midrash Kohelet, fol 95. 4.



Either Augustus Caesar's; for there was a coin of that emperor's, as Dr. Hammond reports, from Occo, which had his image or picture on it, and in it these words written, Augustus Caesar, such a year, "after the taking of Judaea"; which if this was the coin, was a standing testimony of the subjection of the Jews to the Romans; and this being current with them, was an acknowledgment of it by them, and carried in it an argument of their obligation to pay tribute to them; or it might be Tiberius Caesar's, the then reigning emperor, in the nineteenth year of whose reign, Christ was crucified; and seeing he had reigned so long, it is reasonable to suppose, his money was very common, and most in use: we read in the Talmud <sup>257</sup>, of קיראנה דינרא, "a Caesarean penny", or "Caesar's penny", the same sort with this: now this penny having Caesar's image and inscription on it, our Lord tacitly suggests, that they ought to pay tribute to him; since his money was allowed of as current among them, which was in effect owning him to be their king; and which perfectly agrees with a rule of their own, which runs thus <sup>258</sup>:

"A king whose "coin" is "current" in any country, the inhabitants of that country agree about him, and it is their joint opinion, אדוניהם והם לו בדינם, "that he is their Lord, and they are his servants".

This being the case now with the Jews, Christ's advice is,

**render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God,**

the things that are God's: give Caesar the tribute and custom, and fear, and honour, and obedience, which are due to him; which may be done without interfering with the honour of God, and prejudicing his interest and glory, when care is taken, that all the worship and obedience due to God are given to him: subjection to civil magistrates is not inconsistent with the reverence and fear of God; all are to have their dues rendered unto them, without entrenching upon one another. And the Jews themselves allow, that a king ought to have his dues, whether he be a king of Israel, or of the Gentiles:"

"a publican, or tax gatherer (they say <sup>259</sup>,) that is appointed by the king, whether a king of Israel, or of the Gentiles, and takes what is fixed by the order of the the government; it is forbidden to

<sup>257</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 6. 2.

<sup>258</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Gerala, c. 5. sect. 18.

<sup>259</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Nedarim. c. 3. sect. 4. & Maimon. Hilch. Gezala, c. 5. sect. 11.

refuse payment of the tax to him, for דמלכות דינא, "the right of a king is right"

Just and equitable, and he ought to have his right.

**Matthew 22:22**

Ver. 22. When they had heard these words,

This answer returned unto them, this advice which was given them, which they could not gainsay or deny to be good, they marvelled: were amazed and astonished, at his prudence and wisdom, in answering them, in such an unexpected and cautious manner: they left him: being silenced, confounded, and disappointed: and went their way: not being able to get any advantage against him, neither to bring him into contempt with the people, and alienate their affections from him; nor to charge him with sedition or treason to the Roman governor; and so had but a very indifferent account of their success, to report to them that sent them.

**Matthew 22:23**

Ver. 23 **The same day came to him the Sadducees,**

Quickly after the Pharisees and Herodians had left him; and which shows, that the Herodians and Sadducees were not the same; but that the Sadducees were a distinct sect, both from the Pharisees and the Herodians. These understanding that the former had not succeeded, came with a knotty question, with which they had often puzzled the Pharisees, and hoped they should nonplus Christ with it, showing the absurdity of the doctrine of the resurrection, an article which they denied; as it follows, which say,

**that there is no resurrection of the dead:**

they denied that there were angels and spirits, and the immortality of the soul; they affirmed, that the soul died with the body, and that there was no future state: the rise of this sect, and of these notions of their's, was this, as the Jews relate <sup>260</sup>.

"Antigonus, a man of Socho, used to say, be not as servants, that serve their master on account of receiving a reward, but be as servants that serve their master, not on account of receiving a reward; and let the fear of heaven (God) be upon you, so that your reward may be double in the world to come: this man had two disciples, who altered his words, and taught the disciples, and the disciples their disciples, and they stood and narrowly examined them, and said, what did our fathers see, to say this thing? Is it possible, that

<sup>260</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 5. fol. 3. 1.

a labourer should work all day, and not take his reward at evening? But if our fathers had known that there is another world, and that there is Mytmh tyht, “a resurrection of the dead”, they would not have said thus: they stood and separated from the law, and of them there were two parties, the Sadducees and Baithusites; the Sadducees on account of Sadoc, and the Baithusites on account of Baithus.’

’The Syriac version reads, “and they said” and the Ethiopic version also, “saying, there is no resurrection of the dead”; taking the sense to be, that they at this time declared their sense of this doctrine, and according to a settled notion of their’s, affirmed before Christ, that there was no such thing; that never any was raised from the dead, nor never will; and they were desirous of entering into a controversy with him about it:

**and asked him;**

put the following question to him, in order to expose the weakness and absurdity of such a doctrine.

**Matthew 22:24**

Ver. 24. **Saying, master,**

Rabbi, or doctor, as he was usually called Moses said, in De 25:5

**if a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother;**

which, though not expressed in the self same words, yet is the sense of the passage referred to, and was a practice in use before the times of Moses, as appears from the case of Er and Onan; the design of which was, to preserve families, and keep their inheritances distinct and entire. This law only took place, when a man died without children; for if he left any children, there was no need for his brother to marry his wife; yea, as a Jewish writer observes <sup>261</sup>, she was forbidden, it was not lawful for him to marry her, and was the case if he had children of either sex, or even grandchildren: for as another of their commentators notes <sup>262</sup>, his having no child, regards a son or a daughter, or a son’s son, or a daughter’s son, or a daughter’s daughter; and it was the eldest of the brethren, or he that was next in years to the deceased, that was obliged by this law <sup>263</sup>, though not if he had a wife of his own; and accordingly in the following case proposed, each of the brethren married the eldest brother’s wife in

their turn, according to the course of seniority; and by this law, the first child that was born after such marriage, was reckoned the seed of the deceased, and was heir to his inheritance. The Jews in their Misna, or oral law, have a whole tract on this subject, called Yebamot, which contains various rules and directions, for the right observance of this law.

**Matthew 22:25**

Ver. 25. **Now there were with us seven brethren,**

That is, there was in the city, town or neighbourhood, where these Sadducees dwelt, probably at Jerusalem, a family, in which were seven sons, all brethren by the father’s side; for brethren by the mother’s side were not counted brethren, nor obliged by this law <sup>264</sup>; whether this was a reigned case which is here and in the following verses put, or whether it was real fact, which is possible, it matters not: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: the eldest of these seven brethren married a wife, and after some time died, having no children, son or daughter, by his wife; and therefore, according to the above law, leaves her to his next brother to marry her, and raise up seed unto him; which, according to the Jewish canons <sup>265</sup>, could not be done before ninety days, or three months after the decease of his brother; for so long they were to wait and see, whether she was with child by his brother or not; for if she was, it was not necessary, yea, it was unlawful for him to marry her.

**Matthew 22:26**

Ver. 26. **Likewise the second also,**

The eldest of the surviving brethren, having married his brother’s wife, after sometime died also without children, and left her to his next brother to marry her; and the third brother accordingly did marry her, and in process of time died likewise, leaving no issue behind him; and thus they went on in course, unto the seventh: the fourth, fifth, and sixth, married her in turn, and so did the seventh; and all died in the same circumstances, having no children by her.

**Matthew 22:27**

Ver. 27. **And last of all the woman died also.**

A widow and childless, having never married another person but these seven brethren; and the case with them being alike, no one having any child by her, upon which any peculiar claim to her could be formed, the following question is put.

<sup>261</sup> Aben Ezra in Deut. xxv. 5.

<sup>262</sup> Jarchi in ib. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>263</sup> Jarchi in Deut. xxv. 5. Misn. Yebamot, c. 2. sect. 8. & 4, 5. Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 2. sect. 6.

<sup>264</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 1. sect. 7.

<sup>265</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 47. 1. Maimon. ib. c. 1. sect. 19.

**Matthew 22:28**

Ver. 28. **Therefore in the resurrection,**

As asserted by the Pharisees and by Christ, supposing that there will be such a thing, though not granting it; for these men denied it, wherefore the Ethiopic version reads it hypothetically, “if therefore the dead will be raised”; upon such a supposition,

**whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her,**

or were married to her. By putting this question, they thought to have got some advantage against Christ, and in favour of their notion; they hoped, either that he would give into their way of thinking, and relinquish the doctrine of the resurrection upon this, and join with them against the Pharisees, and so there would be no need of an answer to the question; or they judged, that if he returned an answer, it would be either that he did not know whose wife she should be, and then they would traduce him among the common people, as weak and ignorant; or should he say, that she would be the wife of one of them only, naming which of them, or of them all, or of none of them, they fancied that such absurd consequences would follow on each of these, as would expose the doctrine of the resurrection to ridicule and contempt; but they missed their aim, and were sadly disappointed by Christ's answer and reasonings which follow.

**Matthew 22:29**

Ver. 29. **Jesus answered and said unto them,**

The Sadducees: as idle and impertinent as the case they put may seem to be and really was, our Lord thought fit to return an answer to them, thereby to expose their ignorance, and put them to silence and confusion: ye do err; not only in that they denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection, but that supposing that there would be a resurrection, things in that state would be just they were in this; as particularly for instance, that there would be the same natural relation of husband and wife, which their question supposes. Mark reads these words by way of interrogation,

**do ye not therefore err, because?**

And by Luke they are wholly omitted, as also what follows,

**not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.**

These two things were the spring and source of their errors: they had not a true knowledge, and right understanding of the Scriptures; which if they had had, it must have appeared to them, from many places in the

Old Testament, that the soul remains after death, and that the body will be raised from the dead: they owned the authority of the Scriptures, and allowed of all the writings of the Old Testament; for it seems to be a mistake of some learned men, who think that they only received the five books of Moses, and that therefore Christ takes his proof of his doctrine from thence; but though they had the greater esteem for the law, and would admit of nothing that was not clearly proved from that; yet they did not reject the other writings, as what might serve to confirm and illustrate what was taught in the law; but then, though they approved of the Scriptures and read them, yet they did not understand them, and so fell into those gross errors and sad mistakes; nor did they attend to the power of God, which, as it was able to make men out of the dust of the earth, was able to raise them again, when crumbled into dust; but this was looked upon by them, as a thing impossible, and so incredible; see Ac 26:8.

**Matthew 22:30**

Ver. 30. **For in the resurrection,**

At the time of the resurrection, and in that state; when the bodies and souls of men shall be reunited,

**they neither marry, nor are given in marriage;**

neither the men marry wives, nor are the women given in marriage to men, which is done by their parents here, generally speaking, they having the right of disposing of children in marriage: but, as Luke says, “they which shall be accounted worthy”; not through their own works of righteousness, but through the grace of God and righteousness of Christ, “to obtain the world”, the world to come, a future state of happiness, “and the resurrection of the dead”, that which will be unto everlasting life and glory, “neither marry nor are given in marriage”; shall not enter into any such natural and carnal relation: and this agrees with the notion of the other Jews, who say<sup>266</sup>; that

”In “the world to come”, there is neither eating nor drinking, ולא פרייה ורבייה, “nor fructification, nor increase” (of children), no receiving and giving, (no commerce), nor envy, nor hatred, nor contention.”

**But are as the angels of God in heaven;**

or, as in Luke, “are equal unto the angels”; and which he explains their immortality: “neither can they die any more”; no more than the angels can: for this must not be extended to everything; not in everything will

266 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1.

the saints be like, or equal to the angels; they will not be incorporeal, as the angels are, but then, even their bodies will be spiritual, and in some respects, like spirits; they will not stand in any need of sustenance, by eating and drinking, any more than the angels; nor will there be any such things as marriage, and procreation of children among them, any more than among angels; for they “are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection”: they will then appear to be the children of God by adopting grace, through their enjoying the adoption, even the redemption of their bodies; and possessing, in soul and body, the heavenly inheritance they are heirs of: indeed, the souls of the saints before the resurrection, during their separate state, are in some sense like the angels, to which may be applied those words of Maimonides <sup>267</sup>.

”In the world to come, there is no body, but the souls of the righteous only, without a body, השרה כמלאכי “as the ministering angels”; and seeing there is no body, there is no eating nor drinking in it, nor any of all the things which the bodies of the children of men stand in need of in this world; nor does anything befall which happens to bodies in this world, as sitting or standing, or sleep or “death”, or grief, or laughter, or the like.’

’And according to the sense of the Jews, they will be like to the angels after the resurrection: so God is by them introduced speaking <sup>268</sup>;”At the appointed time known by me, to quicken the dead, I will return to thee that body which is holy and renewed, as at the first, to be כמלאכי קדושים, “as the holy angels.””This was an usual way of speaking with them, to compare saints in a state of immortality, to angels <sup>269</sup>. Christ, by making mention of angels, strikes at another notion of the Sadducees, that there were no angels, Ac 23:8.

#### **Matthew 22:31**

Ver. 31. **But as touching the resurrection of the dead,....**

In proof of that doctrine, and which will greatly serve to confirm and establish it, and that it may appear that the dead are, or will be raised, and to put it out of all doubt,

**have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God,**

<sup>267</sup> Hilch. Teshuba, c. 8. sect. 2.

<sup>268</sup> Midrash Hanneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 66. 4.

<sup>269</sup> Vid. Abot. R. Nathan, c. 1. fol. 1. 3. Caphtor, fol. 18. 2. Philo de Sacrific. Abel & Cain, p. 131.

as Mark adds, “in the book of Moses”; which was written by him, the book of Ex 3:6 and though the words were spoke to Moses, yet were designed for the use, instruction, and comfort of the Israelites; not only at that time, but in succeeding ages, they being the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; whose God the Lord there declares himself to be. Moreover, whereas these words were spoken by God to Moses, there is some little difficulty occasioned, by Luke’s representing them to be the words of Moses; for he says, “Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham”, &c. which may be removed by observing, that the sense is, that when Moses showed to the children of Israel, what he heard and saw at the bush on Mount Sinai, he called the Lord by these names, in which he spoke of himself to him; he recited to them what the Lord said to him; and indeed he was bid to say to them these words; See Ex 3:14

**saying,**  
as follows,

#### **Matthew 22:32**

Ver. 32. **I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,**

The Sadducees expressly denied, that the resurrection could be proved out of the law.”

Says R. Eliezer, with R. Jose <sup>270</sup>, I have found the books of the Sadducees to be corrupt; for they say that the resurrection of the dead is not to be proved out of the law: I said unto them, you have corrupted your law, and ye have not caused anything to come up into your hands, for ye say the resurrection of the dead is not to be proved out of the law; lo! he saith, Nu 15:31 “That soul shall be utterly cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him; he shall be utterly cut off” in this world; “his iniquity shall be upon him”, is not this said with respect to the world to come?.

”Hence, in opposition to this notion of the Sadducees, the other Jews say <sup>271</sup>, that

Though a man confesses and believes that the dead will be raised, yet that it is not intimated in the law, he is an heretic; since it is a fundamental point, that the resurrection of the dead is of the law.”Hence they set themselves, with all their might and main, to prove this doctrine from thence, of which take the following

<sup>270</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2.

<sup>271</sup> Gloss. in ib. col. 1.

instances<sup>272</sup>.

”Says R. Simai, from whence is the resurrection of the dead to be proved out of the law? From Ex 6:4 as it is said, “I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan: to you” it is not said, but “to them”; from hence then, the resurrection of the dead may be proved out of the law.”

The gloss upon it is,

”the sense is, that the holy blessed God, promised to our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he would give to them the land of Israel; and because he gave it to them, has he not given it to their children? But we learn from hence, that they shall be raised, and that God will hereafter give them the land of Israel.”

And which the learned Mark. Mede takes to be the sense of the words of this text, cited by our Lord; and this the force of his reasoning, by which he proves the resurrection of the dead. Again,

”the Sadducees asked Rabban Gamaliel, from whence does it appear that the holy blessed God will quicken the dead? He said unto them, out of the law, and out of the prophets, and out of the Hagiographa; but they did not receive of him (or regard him): out of the law, as it is written, “Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and rise up”, De 31:16 And there are that say from this Scripture, De 4:4. “But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God, are alive every one of you this day”: as this day all of you stand, so in the world to come, all of you shall stand.”

Thus our Lord having to do with the same sort of persons, fetches his proof of the doctrine of the resurrection out of the law, and from a passage which respects the covenant relation God stands in to his people, particularly Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and which respects not their souls only, but their bodies also, even their whole persons, body and soul; for God is the God of the whole: and therefore as their souls now live with God, their bodies also will be raised from the dead, that they, with their souls, may enjoy everlasting glory and happiness; which is the grand promise, and great

<sup>272</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2. {k} T. Hieros. Betacot, fol. 4. 4, Midrash Kohelet, fol. 78. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 158. 3.

blessing of the covenant of grace. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; as all the saints are; for though their bodies are dead, their souls are alive, and their bodies will be raised in consequence of their covenant interest in God, to enjoy an immortal life with him: so the Jews are wont to say, that the righteous, even in their death, are called living<sup>273</sup>:

”from whence is it proved, (say they,) that the righteous, even in their death, קרײי חײי, “are called living?”

from De 34:4 as it is written, “and he said unto him, this is the land which I have sworn to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying.” Menasseh ben Israel, a learned Jew, of the last century, has produced<sup>274</sup> this same passage of Scripture, Christ here does in proof of the immortality of the soul, and argues from it in much the same manner: having mentioned the words, he adds,

”for God is not the God of the dead, for the dead are not; but of the living, for the living exist; therefore also the patriarchs, in respect of the soul, may rightly be inferred from hence to live.

#### **Matthew 22:33**

Ver. 33. **And when the multitude heard this,**

This wise and full answer of Christ to the posing question of the Sadducees, with which perhaps they had puzzled many, and never had met with their match before: they were astonished at his doctrine; concerning the pure, perfect, and angelic state of the righteous in the world to come; and how strongly and nervously he proved the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead, which were both denied by the Sadducees; and who were so confounded with his answer, proof, and reasonings, that Luke says, “after that they durst not ask him any question at all”: and the Scribes were so pleased therewith, that certain of them applauded him, saying, “master, thou hast well said”.

#### **Matthew 22:34**

Ver. 34. **But when the Pharisees had heard,**

Either with their own ears, they being some of them present: or rather from the relation of others, from the Scribes, who expressed their approbation of Christ’s answer to the Sadducees; for the Pharisees, with the Herodians, in a body, had left him, and were gone to their respective places of abode; or to them that sent them,

<sup>273</sup> T. Hieros. Betacot, fol. 4. 4, Midrash Kohelet, fol. 78. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 158. 3.

<sup>274</sup> De Resurrect. Mort, l. i. c. 10. sect. 6.

being baffled and confounded by him: but now hearing

**that he had put the Sadducees to silence,**

or stopped their mouths, having nothing to reply, which itself, was not disagreeable; for they were as opposite as could be to them in the doctrine of the resurrection, and in other things, and were their sworn and avowed enemies: and yet it sadly gravelled them, that Christ should be too hard for, and get the victory over all sects among them. Wherefore, considering that should he go on with success in this manner, his credit with the people would increase yet more and more; and therefore, though they had been so shamefully defeated in two late attempts, yet

**they were gathered together**

in great hurry upon this occasion. The Ethiopic version reads it, “they were gathered to him”, that is, to Christ; and so reads the copy that Beza gave to the university of Cambridge: but the other reading, as it is general, so more suitable to the place: they gathered together at some certain house, where they consulted what to do, what methods to take, to put a stop to his growing interest with the people, and how they might bring him into disgrace with them; and they seemed to have fixed on this method, that one among them, who was the ablest doctor, and best skilled in the law, should put a question to him relating to the law, which was then agitated among them, the solution of which was very difficult; and they the rather chose to take this course by setting a single person upon him, that should he succeed, the victory would be the greater, and the whole sect would share in the honour of it; and should he be silenced, the public disgrace and confusion would only fall on himself, and not the whole body, as in the former instances. This being agreed to, they went unto him.

**Matthew 22:35**

Ver. 35. **Then one of them, which was a lawyer,**

Or that was “learned”, or “skilful in the law”, as the Syriac and Persic versions, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel read. The Ethiopic version calls him, “a Scribe of the city”, of the city of Jerusalem; but I do not meet with any such particular officer, or any such office peculiar to a single man any where: mention is made of “the Scribes of the people” in Mt 2:4 and this man was one of them, one that interpreted the law to the people, either in the schools, or in the synagogues, or both; and Mark expressly calls him a “Scribe”: and so the Arabic version renders the word here; and from hence it may be concluded that the lawyers and Scribes were the same sort of persons. This

man was by sect a Pharisee, and by his office a Scribe; or interpreter of the law, and suitable to his office and character,

**asked him a question, tempting him, and saying:**

he put a difficult and knotty question to him, and thereby making a trial of his knowledge and understanding of the law; and laying a snare for him, to entrap him if he could, and expose him to the people, as a very ignorant man: and delivered it in the following form.

**Matthew 22:36**

Ver. 36. **Master, which is the great commandment in the law?**

He calls him “master, Rabbi, or doctor”, as the Sadducees had in Mt 22:24 either because he was usually so called by his disciples, and by the generality of the people; or merely in complaisance to engage his attention to him, and his question: and might hereby suggest, that should he return a proper and satisfactory answer to it he should be his master. The question is not which of the laws was the greatest, the oral, or the written law: the Jews give the preference to the law delivered by word of mouth; they prefer the traditions of the elders before the written law of Moses; See Gill on “Mt 15:2”; but the question was about the written law of Moses; and not merely about the decalogue, or whether the commands of the first table were greater than those of the second, as was generally thought; or whether the affirmative precepts were not more to be regarded than negative ones, which was their commonly received opinion; but about the whole body of the law, moral and ceremonial, delivered by Moses: and not whether the ceremonial law was to be preferred to the moral, which they usually did; but what particular command there was in the whole law, which was greater than the rest: for as there were some commands that were light, and others that were weighty, a distinction often used by them {m}, and to which Christ alludes in Mt 23:23. It was moved that it might be said which was the greatest and weightiest of them all. Some thought the commandment of the sabbath was the greatest: hence they say <sup>275</sup>, that he that keeps the sabbath is as if he kept the whole law: yea, they make the observance of the three meals, or feasts, which, according to the traditions of the elders, they were obliged to eat on the sabbath, to be at least one of the greatest of them.

”These three meals (says one of their writers <sup>276</sup>)

<sup>275</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 37. 1.

<sup>276</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 3. 3.

are a great matter, for it is one *מהמטת הגדולות שבחורה*  
“of the great commandments in the law”.

Which is the very phraseology used in this question. Others give the preference to circumcision, on which they bestow the greatest encomiums, and, among the rest <sup>277</sup>, say, it drives away the sabbath, or that is obliged to give place unto it. Others <sup>278</sup> say of the “phylacteries”, that the holiness of them is the greatest of all, and the command to be arrayed with them all the day, is more excellent than all others; and even of the fringe upon the borders of their garments, others observe <sup>279</sup>, that a man that is guilty of that command, is guilty of all others, and that single precept is equal to all the rest. In this multiplicity of opinions, Christ’s is desired on this subject, though with no good intention.

**Matthew 22:37**

Ver. 37. **Jesus said unto him,**

Directly, without taking time to think of it; and though he knew with what design it was put to him, yet, as an answer to it might be useful and instructive to the people, as well as silence and confound his adversaries, he thought fit to give one; and is as follows, being what is expressed in De 6:5.

**thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;**

that is, with all the powers and faculties of the soul, the will, the understanding, and the affections; in the most sincere, upright, and perfect manner, without any dissimulation and hypocrisy, and above all objects whatever, for this the law requires; and which man, in his state of innocence, was capable of, though now fallen, he is utterly unable to perform; so far from it, that without the grace of God, he has no true love at all to God, in his heart, soul and mind, but all the reverse; his carnal mind is enmity against God, and everything that is divine and good, or that belongs unto him: and though this is now the case of man, yet his obligation to love the Lord in this manner is still the same; and when the Spirit of God does produce the grace and fruit of love in his soul, he does love the Lord sincerely; because of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands, and because of the blessings of grace bestowed, and especially for Christ, the unspeakable gift of his love; and most affectionately does he love him, when he is most sensible of his everlasting

and unchangeable love to him, and when that is shed abroad by the Spirit; “for we love him, because he first loved us”, 1Jo 4:19 instead of, “with all thy mind”, as here, in De 6:5 it is read, “with all thy might”; and which clause is here added by the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, as it is in Mark 12:30. The Hebrew phrase seems to denote the vehemency of affections, with which God is to be beloved. Though the Jewish writers <sup>280</sup> paraphrase and interpret it, “with all thy substance”, or “money”; and in the Misna <sup>281</sup>, the following interpretation is given of the whole;”

with all thy heart”, with thy imaginations, with the good imagination, and with the evil imagination; and “with all thy soul”, even if he should take away thy soul; and “with all thy strength”, with all thy “mammon”, or riches; or otherwise, “with all thy might”, with every measure he measures unto thee, do thou measure unto him;”

that is, as one of the commentators says <sup>282</sup>, whether it be good or evil; or, as another <sup>283</sup>, in every case that happens give thanks to God, and praise him. And certain it is, that as God is to be loved in the strongest manner we are capable of, and with all we have, and are; so always, at all times, under all dispensations of his providence, and upon all accounts, and for all he does towards, in, upon, and for us.

**Matthew 22:38**

Ver. 38. **This is the first and great commandment.**

Whether the object of it is considered, who is the first and chief good; or the manner in which it is to be observed, which requires and engrosses the whole heart, soul, and mind, and all the strength and power of man; or its being the principle from whence all the duties, and actions of men should flow, and the end to which all are to be referred; and is not only a compendium of the duties of the first table of the decalogue, but of all others that can be thought to, and do, belong to God. This is the first command in order of nature, time, dignity, and causality; God being the first cause of all things, infinitely above all creatures, and love to him being the source, spring and cause of love to the neighbour; and it is the greatest in its object, nature, manner, and end. That this command, and these words our Lord cites, are so full and comprehensive, the Jews themselves cannot deny. A

<sup>277</sup> Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 11.

<sup>1131</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephillin, c. 4. sect. 25, 26. {r} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 43. 2.

<sup>279</sup> T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 43. 2.

<sup>280</sup> Targum Onk. & Jarchi in Deut. vi. 5.

<sup>281</sup> Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5. Vid. Targum Jon. in Dent. vi. 5.

<sup>282</sup> Bartenora in Misn. ib.

<sup>283</sup> Maimon. in ib.

noted writer of their's<sup>284</sup> says,

"the root of "all the commandments" is, when a man loves God with all his soul, and cleaves unto him.

"And, says<sup>285</sup> another;" in this verse only, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God", & שְׂרַת הַדְּבָרוֹת. כְּלוּלִים "the ten words, or decalogue, are comprehended".

**Matthew 22:39**

Ver. 39. **And the second is like unto it,**

For there is but a second, not a third: this is suggested in opposition to the numerous commandments in the law, according to the opinion of the Jews, who reckon them in all to be "six hundred and thirteen": of which there are "three hundred and sixty five" negative ones, according to the number of the days of the year; and "two hundred and forty eight" affirmative ones, according to the members of a man's body<sup>286</sup>. Christ reduces all to two, love to God, and love to the neighbour; and the latter is the second in order of nature, time, dignity, and causality; the object of it being a creature; and the act itself being the effect of the former, yet like unto it: for though the object is different, yet this commandment regards love as the former, and requires that it be as that, true, hearty, sincere, and perfect; that it be with singleness of heart, always, and to all men; and that it spring from love to God, and be performed to his glory: and which is expressed in the words written in Le 19:18 "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; as heartily and sincerely, and as a man would desire to be loved by his neighbour; and do all the good offices to him he would choose to have done to himself by him. This law supposes, that men should love themselves, or otherwise they cannot love their neighbour; not in a sinful way, by indulging themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures; some are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; but in a natural way, so as to be careful of their bodies, families, and estates; and in a spiritual way, so as to be concerned for their souls, and the everlasting happiness of them: and in like manner should men love their neighbours, in things temporal do them all the good they can, and do no injury to their persons or property; and in things spiritual pray for them, instruct them, and advise as they would their own souls, or their nearest and dearest relations. And this is to be extended to every man; though the Jews restrain it to their friend and companion, and one of their own

religion."

"Thy neighbour"; that is, (say they<sup>287</sup>), thy friend in the law; and "this is the great comprehensive rule in the law", to show that it is not fit there should be any division, or separation, between a man and his companion, but one should judge every man in the balance of equity: wherefore, near unto it is, "I am the Lord": for as I the Lord am one, so it is fit for you that ye should be one nation without division; but a wicked man, and one that does not receive reproof, it is commanded to hate him; as it is said, "do not I hate them that hate me?"

But our Lord intends by it to include, that love, benevolence, and good will, which are due to every man; and suggests, that this comprehends not only all that contained in the second table of the decalogue, but all duties that are reducible thereunto, and are obligatory on men one towards another whatever; all which should spring from love, and be done heartily and sincerely, with a view to the neighbour's good, and God's glory: and with this Maimonides agrees, saying<sup>288</sup>, that

"all the commands, or duties, respecting a man, and his neighbour, נְכוּנָה בְּגִמְלוֹת הַיָּדִים "are comprehended in beneficence."

**Matthew 22:40**

Ver. 40. **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**

Not that all that is contained in the five books of Moses, and in the books of the prophets, and other writings of the Old Testament, is comprehended in, and is reducible to these two precepts; for there are many things delivered by way of promise, written by way of history, &c. which cannot, by any means, be brought into these two general heads: but that everything respecting duty that is suggested in the law, or is more largely explained and pressed in any of the writings of the prophets, is summarily comprehended in these two sayings: hence love is the fulfilling of the law; see Ro 13:8. The substance of the law is love; and the writings of the prophets, as to the preceptive part of them, are an explanation of the law, and an enlargement upon it: hence the Jews have a saying<sup>289</sup>, that "all the prophets stood on Mount Sinai", and received their prophecies there, because the sum

284 Aben Ezra in Exod. xxxi. 18

285 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 138. 1.

286 T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 23. 2.

287 Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. affirm. 9.

288 In Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

289 Jarchi in Isa. xlvi. 16. & in Mal. i. 1.



of them, as to the duty part, was then delivered. Beza thinks, that here is an allusion to the “phylacteries”, or frontlets, which hung upon their foreheads and hands, as a memorial of the law. And certain it is, that the first of these commands, and which is said to be the greatest, was written in these phylacteries. Some take the phrase, “on these hang all the law and the prophets”, to be a mere Latinism, but it is really an Hebraism, and often to be met with in the Jewish writings: so Maimonides says <sup>290</sup>,

”the knowledge of this matter is an affirmative precept, as it is said, “I am the Lord thy God”; and he that imagines there is another God besides this, transgresses a negative, as it is said, “thou shalt have no other Gods before me”; and he denies the fundamental point, for this is the great foundation, *שהכל תלוי בו*, “on which all hang”:

”and so the word is used in many other places {e}. The sense is plainly this, that all that are in the law and prophets are consistent with, and dependent on these things; and are, as the Persic version renders the word, “comprehended” in them, and cannot be separated from them.

#### **Matthew 22:41**

Ver. 41. **While the Pharisees were gathered together,...** Or rather, “when” they were gathered together, and while they continued so, before they left him: for this is to be understood not of their gathering together, to consult privately about him; this is expressed before in Mt 22:34 but of their gathering together about Christ, to hear what answer he would return to the question their learned doctor would put to him: and he having given an answer to that, which the Scribe was obliged to allow was a good one; and he having no more to say, Christ directs his discourse not to him individually, but to all the Pharisees before he parted with them, and puts a question to them, in his turn; and which would lead on to another they could not answer, and they must therefore leave him once more with great shame and confusion.

#### **Jesus asked them:**

as the lawyer put a question to him suitable to his office and character, Christ puts another to the Pharisees suitable to his office and character, as a Gospel preacher; suggesting by it, that salvation was not by the law, and the works of it, which they set up for doctors and

interpreters of, and advocates for, but by the Messiah, who was promised to their fathers, and they expected.

#### **Matthew 22:42**

Ver. 42. **Saying, what think ye of Christ,**

Or the Messiah; he does not ask them whether there was, or would be such a person in the world. He knew, that he was so plainly spoken of in the writings of the Old Testament, which they had in their hands, that they could not be ignorant, that such a person was prophesied of: he knew that they believed that he would come, and that they were in continual expectation of his coming; wherefore he asks them what they thought of him, what were their sentiments and opinions concerning him; as about his person, whether they thought him to be divine, or human, a mere man, or God, as well as man; what they thought of his work and office he came to perform, whether it was a spiritual, or temporal salvation, they expected he should be the author of; and so of his kingdom, whether it would be of this world or not; and particularly, what thoughts they had of his sonship, and who was his father;

#### **whose son is he?**

and which the Pharisees understanding only as respecting his lineage and descent as man, as, of what family he was? who were his ancestors and progenitors?

#### **they say unto him, the son of David.**

This they said directly, without any hesitation, it being a generally received notion of their's, and was very right, that the Messiah should be of the seed and family of David: and hence he is frequently, in their writings, called by no other name, than the son of David; See Gill on “Mt 1:1”. If this question was put to some persons, it would appear, that they have no thoughts of Christ at all. The atheist has none; as God is not in all his thoughts, nor in any of them, for all his thoughts are, that there is no God; so neither is Christ the Son of God. The deist thinks thing of him, for he does not believe the revelation concerning him. The epicure, or voluptuous man, he thinks only of his carnal lusts and pleasures: and the worldling, or covetous man, thinks nothing but of his worldly substance, and of the much good things he has laid up for many years: to say nothing of the Heathens, who have never heard of him; others, and such as bear the Christian name, have very wrong thoughts of Christ, mean, and undervaluing. The Arrian thinks he is a created God, of a like, but not of the same nature with the Father. The Socinian thinks he is a God by office, and did not exist until he was born of the Virgin Mary; and has

<sup>290</sup> Hilch. Yesode Hatorah, c. 1. sect. 6. {e} Vid. Abkath Rokel. l. 1. p. 3.

no notion of his sacrifice, and satisfaction for the sins of men. The Arminian thinks meanly of his righteousness, and denies the imputation of it to them that believe. And indeed, all such think wrongly of Christ, who divide their salvation between their works and him, and make them their Christ, or their frames their Christ, or their graces, and particularly their believing in him; that is, that ascribe that to them, which properly belongs to him. And as for those who do not bear the name Christians, it is no wonder that they entertain wrong and low thoughts of Christ. The Jews thought him to be a mere man, and the carpenter's son. The Pharisees thought that he was an Antinomian, a libertine, a loose, and licentious person, that had no regard to the law, and good works: hence those words of his, "think not that I am come to destroy the law", Mt 5:17. Yea, they thought him to be a Samaritan, and to have a devil, and to cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. The Mahometans, though they allow him to be a prophet, yet think that he is inferior to Mahomet their prophet. There are others that think well of Christ, admire the loveliness of his person, and the fulness of his grace, but are afraid Christ does not think well of them: they think well of the suitableness there is in Christ, of his righteousness to justify, of his blood to cleanse and pardon, and of the fulness of his grace to supply all wants, but think these are not for them: they often revolve in their minds his ability to save, and firmly believe it, but question his willingness to save them: they often think of Christ, what he is to others, but cannot think of him for themselves; only believers in Christ have a good thought of him, to their own joy and comfort: faith is a good thought of Christ; to them that believe, he is precious; and such, through believing in him, are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; such think often, and well, of the dignity of Christ's person, of the excellency and usefulness of his offices, of the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and of the sufficiency of his grace for them: they think well of what he did for them in eternity, as their surety, in the council and covenant of peace; and of what he has done for them in time, by suffering and dying for them in their room and stead; and of what he is now doing for them in heaven, as their advocate and intercessor.

**Matthew 22:43**

Ver. 43. **He saith unto them,**

Not denying it to be a truth they affirmed; but rather granting and allowing it: he argues upon it, though he tacitly refuses their sense and meaning of the phrase,

thus,

**how then doth David in spirit call him Lord?** that is, if he is a mere man, if he is only the son of David, according to the flesh, if he has no other, or higher descent than from him, how comes it to pass, that David, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, by which he wrote his book of Psalms, see 2Sa 23:1 where the passage, after cited, stands, to call him Lord; which supposes him to be more than barely his son, and to be a greater person than himself, one superior in nature and dignity to him? for the phrase "in spirit", is not to be connected with the word Lord; as if the design of it was to show, that the Messiah was Lord, or God, in spirit, or with respect to his divine nature, but, with the word "call", expressing the influence of the Spirit of God, under which David wrote; otherwise the Pharisees would have had a direction how to have answered the question, which much puzzled them: **saying,**

as in Ps 110:1.

**Matthew 22:44**

Ver. 44. **The Lord said unto my Lord,**

By the Lord that said, is meant "Jehovah" the Father, who said the following words at the time of Christ's ascension, and entrance into heaven, after he had finished the great work of man's salvation; prophetically delivered by the Psalmist, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, being what was before purposed and promised: by "my Lord", the person spoken to, the Messiah is designed, who was David's "Adon", or Lord, by right both of creation and redemption: as God, he made him: and as the Messiah and Saviour, redeemed him; and on both accounts had a right to rule over him. The words said unto him are,

**sit thou on my right hand;**

which is a figurative phrase, and expressive of the exaltation, dignity, power, and authority of the Messiah; and of an honour done to him, which was never granted to the angels, nor to any mere man:

**till I make thine enemies thy footstool;**

till all the enemies of him, and his people, are subdued under him; carnal professors, as the Pharisees, and profane sinners, who neither of them would have him to rule over them; the world, the devil, antichrist, and all the powers of darkness, and the last enemy, death itself. That these words were spoken of the Messiah, and therefore pertinently cited, and properly applied to him, by Jesus, is evident from the silence of the Pharisees; for had it not been the generally received sense of the

Jewish church, they would, at once, have objected it to him; which might, in some measure, have relieved them under that distress, into which they were brought by this passage proposed unto them: but by their silence they acknowledged, that the Psalm was wrote by David; that it was wrote by him under the inspiration of the Spirit of God; and that the Messiah was the subject of it. And the same is owned by some of their doctors, ancient, and modern.

”Says R. Joden, in the name of R. Chijah, in time to come the holy blessed God will cause the king Messiah to sit at his right hand; as it is said, “the Lord said unto my Lord”, &c. <sup>291</sup>.”

And the same says, R. Berachiah, in the name of R. Levi, elsewhere <sup>292</sup>. And, says, another of their writers <sup>293</sup>,

”we do not find any man, or prophet, whose birth was prophesied of before the birth of his father and mother, but Messiah our righteousness; and of him it is intimated, “from the womb of the morning”, &c. i.e. before the womb of her that bore thee was created, thy birth was prophesied of: and this these words respect, “before the sun, his name is Yinnon”, Ps 72:17 i, e. before the creation of the sun, the name of our Messiah was strong and firm, and he shall sit at the right hand of God; and this is what is said, “sit at my right hand”.

In some writings of the Jews, esteemed by them, very ancient <sup>294</sup>, the “Adon” or Lord, to whom these words are spoken, is interpreted of Messiah ben Joseph, whom they make to sit at the right hand of Abraham; which, though a false interpretation of the words, carries in it some marks and traces of the ancient sense of them: yea, even some of the more modern Jews <sup>295</sup> have owned, that they belong to the Messiah, and apply them to him. Though others, observing what confusion their forefathers were thrown into by Jesus, and what improvement his followers have made of this sense of the words since, have quitted it, and introduced strange and foreign ones.

<sup>291</sup> Midrash Tillira in Psal. xviii. 35. apud Galatin. de Cath. ver. arcan. l. 8. c. 24.

<sup>292</sup> R. Moses Hadarsan in Gen. xviii. 1. apud ib.

<sup>293</sup> R. Isaac Arama in Gen. xlvii. 6. spud ib. l. 3. c. 17.

<sup>294</sup> Zohar in Num. fol. 99. 2. & Raya Mehimna, in ib. in Gen. fol. 37. 3.

<sup>295</sup> R. Saadiah Gaon in Dan. vii. 13. Nachman. disp. cure Paulo. p. 36, 55.

Some <sup>296</sup> of them would have Abraham the patriarch to be the subject of this Psalm; and that it was composed either by Melchizedek or by Eliezer, the servant of Abraham; or by David, on account of the victory Abraham obtained over the four kings, in rescuing his kinsman Lot: but Melchizedek could not be the author of it, because he was a far greater person than Abraham; he blessed him, and took tithes of him, and therefore would not call him Lord. Eliezer might indeed, as being his servant; but then he could not assign to him a seat at the right hand of God, or say of him, that he had an everlasting priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek: and though the Psalm was composed by David, yet not on the above account, for the same reasons. Nor is David the subject of it, as others {m} have affirmed; for it cannot be thought that David would say this of himself, or call himself his Lord, which this sense of the words makes him to do: and whereas others of them say, that it was wrote by one of the singers concerning him; it may be replied, that the title declares the contrary: besides, David is not ascended into heaven, nor is he set down at the right hand of God, nor had he any thing to do with the priesthood, much less was he a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and that for ever: but all is true of the Messiah Jesus, of whose kingdom and priesthood, sufferings, and exaltation, conquest of his enemies, and success of his Gospel, this whole Psalm is a very plain and manifest prophecy

#### Matthew 22:45

Ver. 45. **If David then call him Lord,**

That is, the Messiah, which is taken for granted, nor could the Pharisees deny it,

#### how is he his son?

The question is to be answered upon true and just notions of the Messiah, but unanswerable upon the principles of the Pharisees; who expected the Messiah only as a mere man, that should be of the seed of David, and so his son; and should sit upon his throne, and be a prosperous and victorious prince, and deliver them out of the hands of their temporal enemies: they were able to make answer to the question, separately considered, as that he should be of the lineage and house of David; should lineally descend from him, be of his family, one of his offspring and posterity, and so be properly and naturally his son; but how he could be so, consistent with his being David's Lord, puzzled them. Had they understood and owned the proper divinity of the Messiah, they might

<sup>296</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 60. 3. Jarchi in Psal. cx. 1. Vet. Nizzachon, p. 179, 180.

have answered, that as he was God, he was David's Lord, his maker, and his king; and, as man, was David's son, and so both his root and offspring; and this our Lord meant to bring them to a confession of, or put them to confusion and silence, which was the consequence.

### Matthew 22:46

Ver. 46. **And no man was able to answer him a word,**

They saw the dilemma they were reduced to, either to acknowledge the deity of the Messiah, or confess their ignorance; and neither of them they cared to do, and therefore judged it to be the wisest part to be silent. Neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions: neither Pharisees nor Sadducees, for the same is observed by Luke 20:40 of the Sadducees particularly, and was true of all sorts, and every sect, of men among them: and thus our Lord was freed from a cavilling, captious, and troublesome generation of men, from this time forward, to the time of his sufferings, which was not very long after; for this was the third day before the passover, as appears from Mt 26:1.

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

### CHAPTER XXIII

*1 Christ admonished the people to follow the good doctrine, not the evil examples of the scribes and Pharisees. 5 His disciples must beware of their ambition. 13 He denounceth eight woes against their hypocrisy and blindness. 34 and prophesieth of the destruction of Jerusalem.*

Matthew 23

- [1] Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,
- [2] Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
- [3] All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.
- [4] For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.
- [5] But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,
- [6] And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,
- [7] And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.
- [8] But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master,

even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

- [9] And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.
- [10] Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.
- [11] But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.
- [12] And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.
- [13] But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.
- [14] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.
- [15] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.
- [16] Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!
- [17] Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?
- [18] And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.
- [19] Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?
- [20] Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.
- [21] And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.
- [22] And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.
- [23] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.
- [24] Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.
- [25] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

- [26] Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.
- [27] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.
- [28] Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.
- [29] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,
- [30] And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.
- [31] Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.
- [32] Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.
- [33] Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?
- [34] Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:
- [35] That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.
- [36] Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.
- [37] O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!
- [38] Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.
- [39] For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

### JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW CHAPTER XXIII

#### Matthew 23:1

Ver. 1. **Then spake Jesus to the multitude,**

To the common people that were about him in the temple; the high priests and elders, Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, having left him, being all nonplussed and

silenced by him: and now, lest on the one hand, the people seeing the ignorance and errors of these men detected by Christ, should be tempted to conclude there was nothing in religion, and to neglect the word and worship of God, on account of the concern these men had in it; and on the other hand, because of their great authority and influence, being in Moses's chair, lest the people should be led into bad principles and practices by them, he directs them in what they should observe them, and in what not: that they were not altogether to be rejected, nor in everything to be attended to; and warns them against their ostentation, pride, hypocrisy, covetousness, and cruelty; and, at the same time, removes an objection against himself, proving that he was no enemy to Moses, and the law, rightly explained and practised:

#### **and to his disciples;**

not only the twelve, but to all that believed in him, and were followers of him.

#### Matthew 23:2

Ver. 2. **Saying, the Scribes and Pharisees,**

The Persic version adds, the priests: but Christ does not here speak of the sanhedrim, or grand council of the nation, and of their legislative power; but of those that were the teachers of the people, and the interpreters of the law; and of those, who, though they corrupted the word with their glosses and traditions, yet retained some truth, and at least came nearer truth, than the Sadducees; who therefore are omitted, and only Scribes and Pharisees mentioned, who gave the literal and traditional sense of the Scriptures; of whom he says, they

#### **sit in Moses's seat:**

not that they were his successors in his office as a legislator and mediator; though the Persic version reads it, "sit in the place and chair of Moses"; but they read his law, and explained it to the people: this post and place, as yet, they kept in the office they were, and were to continue; and the people were to regard them so far as they spoke consistent with the law, until it had its full accomplishment in Christ. The allusion is not to the chairs in which the sanhedrim sat in trying and determining causes, but to those in which the doctors sat when they expounded the law; for though they stood up when they read the law, or the prophets, they sat down when they preached out of them: this custom of the synagogue was observed by our Lord; see Luke 4:16.

#### Matthew 23:3

Ver. 3. **All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe,**

This must be restrained to things that were agreeable to the chair of Moses, in which they sat, to the law of Moses, which they read and explained, to other parts of Scripture and truth in general; for otherwise many of their glosses and traditions were repugnant to the law, and ought not to be observed, as appears from Mt 5:1. The word “observe”, in this clause, is omitted by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; and Beza says, it is wanting in one ancient copy, but is in others; and is retained in the Syriac and Persic versions

**that observe and do;**

hearken to what they say, give diligent heed unto it, take notice of it, and act according to it:

**but do not ye after their works;**

let their doctrine be the rule of your lives, so far as it agrees with the law of Moses; but let not their actions be drawn into an example by you; conform to their instructions, but do not imitate their practices:

**for they say, and do not;**

they talk of good works, but do none; they bid others do them, but do not practise them themselves; they very strictly and severely enjoin them on others, but are very careless themselves to observe them; and of this the Jews are so conscious, that they suggest the same doctrine <sup>297</sup>.

“The daughter of Ahar (a wicked man) came before Rabbi; she said to him, Rabbi, supply me with the necessaries of life: he replied to her, daughter, who art thou? she answered him, the daughter of Ahar: he said to her, is there any of his seed in the world? for lo! it is written, Job 18:19. “He shall neither have son, nor nephew, among his people, nor any remaining, in his dwellings”: she replied to him, זכור לתורתו ואל תזכור משני, “remember his law, or doctrine, but do not remember his works.”--Says R. Jochanan, what is that which is written, Mal 2:7. “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.” If the doctor is like to an angel, or messenger of the Lord of hosts, they should seek the law at his mouth; and if not, they should not seek the law at his mouth. Says Resh Lekish, R. Meir found and explained that Scripture, Pr 22:17. “Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart to my knowledge”: to their knowledge it is not said, but to my knowl-

edge. R. Chanina says, hence, Ps 45:10. “Hearken, O daughter! and consider, incline thine ear, forget thine own people, and thy father’s house”: on which the gloss is, forget their works, and do not learn them: he that knows how to take care not to learn their works, may learn the law from their mouths.”

--And a little after,

“the disciples of the wise men are like to a nut; as a nut, though it is defiled with mire and filth, yet that which is within it is not to be rejected; so a scholar, or a disciple of a wise man, though he act wickedly, his law, or doctrine, is not to be despised.”

Good doctrine is not the worse for being taught by bad men; nor are good works to be slighted and neglected, because they are not done by all that teach them; but it must be owned that examples are very useful and forcible, and practice greatly recommends doctrine; and it is to be wished, that they both always went together.

**Matthew 23:4**

Ver. 4. **For they bind heavy burdens,**

Meaning not the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, circumcision, and other rituals, which obliged to the keeping of the whole law, which was a yoke men were not able to bear; but the traditions of the elders, which the Scribes and Pharisees were very tenacious of, and very severely enjoined the observance of, and are called their “heavy” things <sup>298</sup>.

“It is a tradition of R. Ishmael, there are in the words of the law, that, which is bound or forbidden, and that which is loose or free; and there are in them light things, and there are in them heavy things; but the words of the Scribes, ריני הני כולן חמור, “all of them are heavy””

And a little after,

“the words of the elders, חמוריי, “are heavier” than the words of the prophets.”

Hence frequent mention is made of

“the light things of the school of Shammai, ריי “and of the heavy things of the school of Hillell” <sup>299</sup>”

<sup>298</sup> T. Hieros. Peracot, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>299</sup> T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 19. 2. Yom Tob. fol. 60. 2. & Bercot, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>297</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 15. 2.

two famous doctors, heads of two universities, in being in Christ's time: these are also called, מכות פרושין, "the blows, or wounds of the Pharisees"<sup>300</sup>; not as Bartenora explains them, the wounds they gave themselves, to show their humility; or which they received, by beating their heads against the wall, walking with their eyes shut, that they might not look upon women, under a pretence of great chastity; but, as Maimonides says, these are their additions and heavy things, which they add to the law. Now the binding of these heavy things, means the imposing them on men, obliging them to observe them very strictly, under great penalties, should they omit them. The allusion is, to those frequent sayings in use among them, such a thing is "bound", and such a thing is loosed; such a "Rabbi binds", and such an one looses; that is, forbids, or allows of such and such things; See Gill on "Mt 16:19".

**and grievous to be borne.**

This clause is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but is in all the Greek copies, and serves to illustrate and aggravate the burdensome rites and institutions of these people: and

**lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers:**

the sense is, not that they were so rigid and hardhearted, that they would not move a finger to remove these burdens from the shoulders of men, or ease them in the least degree, or dispense with their performance of them in the least measure, upon any consideration, though this also was true in many respects; but that they were so slothful and indolent themselves, that though they strictly enjoined the observance of their numerous and unwritten traditions on the people, yet in many cases, where they could without public notice, they neglected them themselves, or at least, made them lighter and easier to them, as in their fastings, &c. In the Misna<sup>301</sup>, mention is made of "a crafty wicked man", along with a woman Pharisee, and the blows of the Pharisees before spoken of; and in the Gemara<sup>302</sup>, is explained by R. Hona, of one,

"that makes things "light" for himself, and makes them "heavy" for others."

Such crafty wicked men were Scribes and Pharisees; though R. Meir pretended that he made things "light" to others and "heavy" to himself<sup>303</sup>.

**Matthew 23:5**

Ver. 5. **But all their works they do for to be seen of men,**

All their prayers, alms deeds, and fastings, were all done in a public manner, that men might behold them, and they might have applause and glory from them: they sought neither the glory of God, nor the good of their fellow creatures, nor any spiritual advantage and pleasure to themselves, in their performances; they neither attended to moral duties, nor ceremonious rites, nor the traditions of their fathers, any further than they could be seen by men in them, and keep up their credit and esteem among them. Hence,

**they make broad their phylacteries:**

these were four sections of the law, wrote on parchments, folded up in the skin of a clean beast, and tied to the head and hand. The four sections were these following, viz. the "first", was Ex 13:2 the "second", was Ex 13:11 the "third", was De 6:4 the "fourth", was De 11:13. Those that were for the head, were written and rolled up separately, and put in four distinct places, in one skin, which was fastened with strings to the crown of the head, towards the face, about the place where the hair ends, and where an infant's brain is tender; and they took care to place them in the middle, that so they might be between the eyes. Those that were for the hand, were written in four columns, on one parchment, which being rolled up, was fastened to the inside of the left arm, where it is fleshy, between the shoulder and the elbow, that so it might be over against the heart<sup>304</sup>. These, they imagined, were commanded them by God, in

Ex 13:16 whereas the sense of these passages only is, that the goodness of God in delivering them out of Egypt, and the words of the law, should be continually before them, in their minds and memories, as if they had tokens on their hands, and frontlets between their eyes; but they understood them literally, and observed them in the above manner. These the Jews call "Tephillin", because they use them in time of prayer, and look upon them as useful, to put them in mind of that duty: they are here called "phylacteries", because they thought they kept them in the fear of God, preserved in them the memory of the law, and them from sin; yea, from evil spirits, and diseases of the body. They imagined there was a great deal of holiness in, and valued themselves

300 Misn. Sota, c. 3. sect. 4.

301 Ubi supra. (Misn. Sota, c. 3. sect. 4.)

302 T. Bab. Sota, fol. 21. 2.

303 T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 1.

304 Targ. Jon. Jarchi, & Baal Hatturim in Exod. xiii. 16. & Deut. vi. 8. Maimon. Hilch. Tephillin, c. 1. sect. 1. & c. 2. sect. 2. & c. 3. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. & c. 4. sect. 1, 2.

much upon the use of them<sup>305</sup>; and the Pharisees, because they would be thought to be more holy and religious, and more observant of the law than others, wore these things broader than the rest of the people;

**and enlarge the borders of their garments.**

These were the fringes which they put upon the borders of their garments, and on them a ribbon of blue, to put them in mind of the commandments, to obey them, Nu 15:38. The observance of this law is of so much consequence with the Jews, that they make all the commandments to depend on it<sup>306</sup>; and say, that it is equal to them all, and that he that is guilty of the breach of it, is worthy of death<sup>307</sup>: they ascribe the like virtue to these fringes, as to their phylacteries, and think themselves much the better for the wearing them; and the Pharisees, because they would appear with a greater air of sanctity and devotion than others, made their's larger. We<sup>308</sup> read of one Ben Tzitzith Hacceseth, a man of this complexion, who was so called, because his *התחיתות*, or fringes, were drawn upon, a pillow; and there are some that say, that the pillow was bore between the great men of Rome: it was drawn after him, not upon the ground, but upon a cloth or tapestry, and the train supported by noblemen, as is pretended. This was one of those, that enlarged the *התחיתות*, or fringes, beyond the ordinary size; hence Mark calls it, "long clothing."

**Matthew 23:6**

**Ver. 6. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts,**

Or the first and chief places to sit, or lie down on, at ordinary meals, and especially at large entertainments, where the great ones sat, as in 1Sa 9:22 where Jarchi on the place observes, that by the manner of their sitting, it was known who was the greatest; and this the Scribes and Pharisees affected. With the Romans, the most honourable place was at the upper end of the table: some think it was more honourable to sit in the middle, but the master of the feast sat at the lower end; and to senior men, and who were venerable with age, or excelled in prudence and authority, the first sitting down, and the more honourable place, were given; and when the table was taken away, they used to rise first<sup>309</sup>: the middle place

was the more honourable with the Numidians<sup>310</sup>, and so it seems to be with the Romans<sup>311</sup>, and also with the Jews; and this the Scribes and Pharisees loved, desired, sought for, and were pleased if they had not it. It is said<sup>312</sup> of Simeon ben Shetach, a noted Pharisee, about, or rather before the time of Christ, that having fled upon a certain account from king Jannai, he sent for him, and when he came,

"he sat himself between the king and the queen: the king said to him, why dost thou mock me? he replied to him, I do not mock thee, thou hast riches and I have learning, as it is written, "Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence", Ec 7:12. He said to him, but why dost thou "sit between the king and queen?" He replied, in the book of Ben Sira, it is written, "Exalt her and she shall promote thee, and cause thee to sit among princes." He ordered to give him a cup, that he might ask a blessing; he took the cup and said, blessed be the food that Jannai and his friends eat."

Thus on account of their wisdom and learning, they thought they had a right to take the upper hand of kings themselves:

**and the chief seats in the synagogues;**

for these were different; the seats of the senior men were turned towards the people, and the backs of them were towards the ark or chest, in which the holy books were put; and these seem to be what the Scribes and Pharisees coveted, that they might be in the full view of the people. And so says Maimonides<sup>313</sup>, "How do the people sit in the synagogues?"

"The elders sit, i.e. first, and their faces are towards the people, and their backs are to the temple, or holy place; and all the people sit in rows, and the faces of one row are to the backs of the row that is before them; so that the faces of all the people are to the holy place, and to the elders, and to the ark."

**Matthew 23:7**

**Ver. 7. And greetings in the markets,**

310 Sallust. Bell. Jugurth. p. 45.

311 Vid. Alstorph. de lect. vet. p. 117. Minut. Felix, p. 3, 4.

312 T. Hieros. Betacot, fol. 11. 2. Beresh. Rabba, sect. 91. fol. 78. 4.

313 Hilchot Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 4.

305 Maimon. ib. c. 4. sect. 25, 26. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 3. 23. Targ. in Cant. viii. 3.

306 Maimon. Hilch. Tzitzith, c. 3. sect. 12.

307 T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 25, 1. Shebuot, fol. 29. 1. & Menachot, fol. 43. 2.

308 T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 1.

309 Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dier. l. 5. c. 21.



They used to stroll about the markets, being public places, where there was a great concourse of people, on purpose to be taken notice of before multitudes, with singular marks of respect; as stretching out the hand, uncovering the head, and bowing the knee:

**and to be called of men Rabbi,**

Rabbi; because of their great authority, and largeness of their knowledge: the repetition of the word Rabbi, is not made in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, but is in all the Greek copies, and very justly; since it was usual in the salutations of them, to double the word. It is reported <sup>314</sup> of R. Eleazar ben Simeon, of Migdal Gedur, that having reproached a deformed man he met in the road; when he came to the city where the man lived,

“the citizens came out to meet him, and said to him, peace be upon thee, רבי רבי מורי מורי, “Rabbi, Rabbi, Master, Master”; he (Eleazar) said to them, who do you call “Rabbi, Rabbi?” They replied to him, he who followed thee: he said unto them, if this be a Rabbi, let there not be many such in Israel.”

The Jews pretend, that king Jehoshaphat used to salute the doctors with these titles; though they forget that they were not in use in his time, as will be hereafter observed: they say <sup>315</sup>,

“whenever he saw a disciple of the wise men, he rose from his throne, and embraced and kissed him, and called him, אבי אבי רבי רבי מרי מרי, “Father, Father, Rabbi, Rabbi, Master, Master”.

Where you have the three different words used by our Lord in this and the following verses, by which these men loved to be called, and he inveighed against; nay, they not only suggest, that kings gave them these honourable titles, and they expected them from them, but even they liked to be called kings themselves. It is said <sup>316</sup> of R. Hona arid R. Chasda, that as they were sitting together, one passed by them,

“and said to them, “peace be to you kings”, מלכי שלום ליכו, “peace be to you kings”: they said to him, from whence does it appear to thee, that the Rabbins are called kings? He replied to them, from what is written, “by me kings reign”, &c.

They said to him, from whence hast thou it, that we are to double or repeat peace, or salutation to kings? He answered them, that R. Judah said, that Rab said from hence, 1Ch 12:18. “Then the spirit came upon Amasai”, &c.”

This title began but to be in use in the time of our Lord, or a very little while before: none of the prophets had it, nor Ezra the Scribe, nor the men of the great synagogue, nor Simeon the Just, the last of them; nor Antigonus, a man of Socho, a disciple of his: and it is observed by the Jews themselves <sup>317</sup>, that

“the five couple are never called by the name of Rabban, nor by the name of Rabbi, only by their own name.”

By whom are meant, Joseph ben Joezer, and Joseph ben Jochanan; Joshua ben Perachia, said to be the master of Jesus of Nazareth, and Nittai the Arbelite; Judah ben Tabai, and Simeon ben Shetach; Shemaiah and Abtalion; Hillell and Shammai. The sons, or disciples of the two last, first took these titles. Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillell, thought by some to be the same Simeon that had Christ in his arms, is <sup>318</sup> said to be the first that was called by this name; and it is also observed by them <sup>319</sup>, that Rabban was a name of greater honour than Rabbi, or Rab, and that Rabbi was more honourable than Rab; and to be called by a man's own name, was more honourable than any of them. The Karaite Jews make much the same complaint, and give much the same account of the pride and vanity of the Rabbinical doctors, as Christ here does; for so one of them says <sup>320</sup>;

“The Karaites do not use to act according to the custom of the wise men among the Rabbans, to make to themselves gods of silver, and guides of gold, with this view, br arqhl, “to be called Rab”; and also to gather wealth and food to fulness, &c.”

**Matthew 23:8**

Ver. 8. **But be not ye called Rabbi,**

Do not be ambitious of any such title, fond of it, or affect it, or be elated with it, should it be given you; nor look upon yourselves as men of power and authority over others; as having the dominion over men's faith, a power

<sup>317</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 21. 1.

<sup>318</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 1.

<sup>319</sup> lb.

<sup>320</sup> Eliahu Adderet, c. 6. apud Trigland. de Sect. Kar. c. 10. p. 164.

<sup>314</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 2.

<sup>315</sup> T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1. & Cetubot, fol. 103. 2.

<sup>316</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 62. 1.

to make laws for others, impose them in a magisterial way, and bind and loose men's consciences at pleasure, as these men do:

**for one is your master, even Christ;**

meaning himself, the true Messiah, the head of the church, King of saints, and Lord of all; who had all power in heaven and in earth, to make laws, appoint ordinances, and oblige men to receive his doctrines, and obey his commands: the word "Christ", is left out in the Vulgate Latin, the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but is in the Arabic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in all the ancient Greek copies Beza consulted, excepting two: no other indeed can be meant; he is the great Rabbi, and doctor, that is to be hearkened to, and the master we are all to obey:

**and all ye are brethren;**

not merely as the descendants of Adam, but as being in a spiritual relation, the children of God, and disciples of Christ, and so have no superiority one over another: this may regard the disciples, both as believers and Christians, partakers of the same grace, and standing in the same relation to God, Christ, and one another, and having an equal right to the same privileges: and as apostles and ministers, one as such, no, not Peter, having no pre-eminence over the other, having the same commission, doctrine, and authority, one as the other.

**Matthew 23:9**

Ver. 9. **And call no man your father upon the earth,**

Not but that children may, and should call their natural parents, fathers; and such who have been instrumental in the conversion of souls, may be rightly called by them their spiritual fathers; as servants and scholars also, may call those that are over them, and instruct them, their masters: our Lord does not mean, by any of these expressions, to set aside all names and titles, of natural and civil distinction among men, but only to reject all such names and titles, as are used to signify an authoritative power over men's consciences, in matters of faith and obedience; in which, God and Christ are only to be attended to. Christ's sense is, that he would have his disciples not fond of any titles of honour at all; and much less assume an authority over men, as if they were to depend on them, as the founders of the Christian religion, the authors of its doctrines and ordinances; and to take that honour to themselves, which did not belong to them; nor even choose to be called by such names, as would lead people to entertain too high an opinion of them, and take off of their dependence on God the Father,

and himself, as these titles the Scribes and Pharisees loved to be called by, did: and who were called not only by the name of Rabbi, but Abba, "Father", also: hence we read of Abba Saul, or "Father" Saul <sup>321</sup>; Abba Jose ben Jochanan, a man of Jerusalem <sup>322</sup>, Abba Chanan <sup>323</sup>, Abba Chelphetha, a man of the village of Hananiah <sup>324</sup>; Abba Gorion <sup>325</sup>, and others; and this name was

לשון כבוד כמו רבי <sup>326</sup>, "a name of honour, even as Rabbi" <sup>326</sup>, and of great authority: the wise men are said to be אבות הכל, "the fathers of all" <sup>327</sup>, to whom all gave heed, and upon whom all depended, as so many oracles. There is a whole treatise in their Misna, called Pirke Abot, which contains some of the oracles, and peculiar sayings of these "fathers", the Misnic doctors, and which are preferred to the writings of Moses, and the prophets. In this sense, and upon this score, our Lord inveighs against them, and cautions his disciples against giving or taking all such titles, in such sense. "For one is your Father, which is in heaven"; who is so, both by creation and adoption, and is possessed of all paternal authority; and is to be honoured and obeyed by all; from whom all wisdom and knowledge is derived, and who has the care and government of all in heaven and in earth.

**Matthew 23:10**

Ver. 10. **Neither be ye called masters,**

Or guides and leaders; not but that, the ministers of the word are in a sense such; it is their business to lead and direct souls to Christ, to guide their feet in the way of peace, and to go before them, as examples to them, in word, in conversation, faith, and purity; but then they are to guide them according to the word of God, and not their own dictates; and teach them to observe the rules, and obey the ordinances of Christ, and not what are of their own inventing and prescribing; and to enforce the authority of their great Lord and Master, and not their own; and direct men to a dependence on Christ, as head of the church, who is the one Lord, as his faith is one, and his baptism one also: "for one is your master, even Christ"; which is said before, in Mt 23:8 but being a matter of so much importance to the honour of Christ, and men being so apt to set

<sup>321</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 8.

<sup>322</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 53. 2.

<sup>323</sup> Ib. fol. 64. 1.

<sup>324</sup> T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 94. 1. & Bava Bathra. fol. 56. 2.

<sup>325</sup> Massech Sopherim, c. 15. sect. 10.

<sup>326</sup> Juchasiu, fol. 31. 2. & 61. 2.

<sup>327</sup> Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

up for masters themselves, in opposition to him, or in conjunction with him, or above him, it was necessary to repeat it; for in an authoritative sense he is the one, and only master of the assemblies.

**Matthew 23:11**

Ver. 11. **But he that is greatest among you,**

Either who really is so, having more grace, and greater gifts bestowed upon him, than others; which doubtless was the case of some of the disciples, or who desired to be the greatest, was ambitious of, and affected a superiority over others, and to be in the highest post and place, as it is certain some of them did. This was what they were often contending about among themselves, who should be greatest: and Christ here seems to have regard to that vain spirit, which appeared among them; and his view is, to check and restrain it: “shall be your servant”; or “let him be your servant”. Service is the way to honour; he that would be most esteemed ought to do the most work; and the man that has the most grace, and the greatest gifts, ought to employ them for the use and benefit of others; See Gill on “Mt 20:27”.

**Matthew 23:12**

Ver. 12. **And whosoever shall exalt himself,**

Above his fellow Christians, or fellow ministers, by entertaining too high an opinion of himself, by boasting of his gifts, as preferable to others, and as if he had not received them; by assuming, or eagerly coveting titles of honour among men, or by affecting honour that do not belong to him, or, abusing what he has: “shall be abased”; or humbled by God, or men, or both; such shall lose the honour they have, and come greatly short of what they are ambitious of; they shall fall into disgrace with men, and are abominable in the sight of God: “and he that shall humble himself”; by entertaining low thoughts, and a mean opinion of himself, behaving modestly among men; not being elated with his gifts, but acknowledging that they are owing to the grace and goodness of God; and using them in an humble manner, for, the advantage of others; not coveting honour from men, nor lifted up with what is conferred on him: “shall be exalted”; by God, or men, or both; if not in this world, yet in the world to come: and indeed, generally speaking, such modest, humble, persons, are most esteemed among men; and God gives more grace unto them, and will at last give them glory. This is a saying, often used by our Lord on different accounts, both with respect to his disciples, for their instruction, and with regard to the scribes and Pharisees, for their mortification; see Luke

14:11. It seems to be a proverbial expression, and much in use among the Jews: it is said in so many words in the Talmud <sup>328</sup>, as here;

“whosoever shall humble himself, the holy blessed God shall exalt him; and whosoever shall exalt himself, the holy blessed God shall humble him.”

**Matthew 23:13**

Ver. 13. **But woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,**

It seems from hence, that the Scribes and Pharisees had not left him, at least not all of them, notwithstanding the confusion they were thrown into; but were still about him, observing what he said to the people, and watching an opportunity to take every advantage against him; whom he addresses in a very awful manner, calling them “hypocrites”, as he truly might; for they were such, both to God and men: he had detected them already before the people, in several instances of hypocrisy; and gives sufficient reasons, in the following part of this chapter, to support the character, he gives of them, and his charge against them; denouncing a woe upon them in this world, and that which is to come, no less than eight times; expressing his abhorrence of their wickedness, his commiseration of their case, and their certain destruction: “for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men”: not eternal life and happiness, the entrance into which can neither be opened nor shut by men: those whom God determines to bring thither, shall have an entrance abundantly ministered to them, in spite of the opposition of men and devils; though these men did all that in them lay, to hinder persons enjoying everlasting glory. But the Gospel dispensation is here meant, which opened by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ and his disciples, and which the Scribes and Pharisees did all they could to shut; by discouraging the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of ordinances, in which this dispensation lay; and prejudicing the minds of men against it, that they might not embrace the doctrines of it, nor submit to its ordinances: they, by their office, ought to have opened and explained the Scriptures, the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, and led the people into a knowledge of the mysteries of his kingdom, and encouraged them to enter into this new state of things; which, according to the true intent of Scripture, was to take place, and now did: but instead of this, they shut up the Scriptures, took away the key of knowledge, and laid it aside; and darkened the Scriptures

by their false glosses, and obliged the people to observe the traditions of the elders, and which they call hrwtl gyo, “an hedge for the law”<sup>329</sup>; to which Beza thinks, the allusion is here, and by which men were shut up, and kept from the true knowledge both of law and Gospel:

**for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in:**

they neither believed in the Messiah themselves, nor embraced the doctrines relating to his person and office: have any of the Pharisees believed on him? No; they received him not, they rejected him, and also the counsel of God, against themselves, not being baptized with the baptism of John, the forerunner of Christ; nor would they suffer others, that were inclined to profess their faith in him, and be baptized, to do it; but discouraged them all they could, by their reproachful treatment of the person, miracles, and ministry of Christ, and by their threatenings and menaces, and by their excommunications of such as made a confession of him.

**Matthew 23:14**

Ver. 14. **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,**

The same character is given as before, and the same woe denounced, and a fresh reason given of it:

**for ye devour widows' houses;**

that is, the goods in the houses of such as were left with fatherless children, and but little to support them; who being left alone, and none to advise them, and being weak, and prone to superstition; these greedy dogs, as Isaiah calls them, who could never have enough, easily imposed upon them, wormed them out of all their substance, stripped them bare of the necessaries of life, prevailed on them to sell their houses and goods, and bestow them on them; or got their little estates into their hands, pretending to take care, and dispose of them for them, to their advantage:

**and for a pretence make long prayers:**

as if they were very holy, good men; or pretended that the substance of these widows, which they got into their hands, was for their long prayers for them; or they made long prayers for them in return for their substance. Maimonides<sup>330</sup> says, that

“the ancient saints, or good men, used to stay an hour before prayer, and an hour after prayer, hev ומאריך בתפלה and “prolonged”, or “held an hour in prayer”:

329 Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1.

330 Hilch. Tephillah, c. 4. sect. 16.

and this being three times a day, nine hours every day, as is observed in the Talmud<sup>331</sup>, were spent in this manner; and on this account they got the character of very devout and religious men, and hereby covered all their avarice, rapine, and oppression of the poor: but God will not be mocked;

**therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation;**

both on account of their plundering and distressing the poor, the widows, and the fatherless; and also because of their hypocrisy in doing this under the cover of religion and holiness. Hence it appears, that there are degrees of punishment in hell, and that hypocrites, and all such who oppress the poor, under the mask of godliness, supposing gain to be that, will be partakers of the greatest degree of it. In Munster's Hebrew Gospel it is called משפט ארוך, “a long judgment”, or “damnation”, in allusion to their long prayers: and is the very reverse of what they expect on account of them: they say<sup>332</sup>

“three things prolong a man's days and years, המאריך בתפלתו, “he that is long in his prayer”

is the first mentioned; and he that is long at his prayer, it is an excellency, they say; but instead of a long and happy life, he shall have a long damnation. This verse is left out in some copies, and in others it stands before the former; in which order it is read in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions.

**Matthew 23:15**

Ver. 15. **Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,**

The same character, and woe, are still continued, and a new reason added, confirming the justness of them, in order to awaken and convince them, or, however, to caution the people against them:

**for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte;** that is, to the Jewish religion, and their particular sect. There were two sorts of proselytes among them; one was called bvwt rg, “a proselyte of the gate”, one that might dwell in any of their towns, and cities, and who is thus described<sup>333</sup>;

“Who is a proselyte of the gate? whosoever takes upon him, before three neighbours, that he will not commit idolatry. R. Meir and the wise men say, whosoever takes upon him the seven precepts which the sons of Noah took upon them: others say, these do not come into

331 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2.

332 Ib. fol. 54. 2.

333 T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 64. 2.

the general rule of a proselyte of the gate: who is then a proselyte of the gate? this is a proselyte, that eats what dies of itself, but takes upon him to fulfil all the commandments said in the law, except that which forbids the eating of things that die of themselves.”

But the usual account of such an one is, who agrees to the seven precepts commanded the children of Noah <sup>334</sup>, which were these <sup>335</sup>; the first forbad idolatry, the second blasphemy, the third murder, the fourth uncleanness, the fifth theft, the sixth required judgment, or punishment on malefactors, the seventh forbad eating the member of any creature alive. The other proselyte was called qdu rg, “a proselyte of righteousness”; and he was one that submitted to circumcision <sup>336</sup>, and the rest of the ceremonies of the law; and was in all respects as an Israelite himself; and of this sort is the text to be understood. The Ethiopic version reads the words, “baptize one proselyte, and when he is baptized”; referring to a custom among the Jews, who baptized; or dipped their proselytes in water, as well as circumcised them; about which there are great disputes in their writings; some alleging, that the dipping of them was necessary to the making them proselytes; others affirming, that it was not:

“a proselyte that is circumcised, and not dipped, dipped, and not circumcised, the whole follows after, or depends on circumcision, says R. Eliezer.”

R. Joshua says, even dipping delays it; (i.e. the want of it, hinders a man from being a proselyte;) but R. Joshua ben Levi says, it should go according to the tradition of Bar Kaphra; for the tradition of Bar Kaphra is,

“that he that is circumcised, and not dipped, lo! he is right; for there is no proselyte but what is dipped, because of the pollutions that happen to him <sup>337</sup>.”

And elsewhere <sup>338</sup> this is debated in the following manner:

“a proselyte that is circumcised, and not dipped, R. Eliezer says, lo! this is a proselyte; for so we find concerning our fathers, that they were circumcised, but not dipped. One that is dipped,

and not circumcised, R. Joshua says, lo! this is a proselyte; for so we find concerning our mothers, that they were dipped, but not circumcised. The wise men say, one that is dipped, and not circumcised, or circumcised, and not dipped, is no proselyte, until he is both circumcised and dipped.”

So the dispute ended, and it became a settled point, that one should never be reckoned a proselyte, unless he was both circumcised and dipped. And after this it became customary to receive proselytes by circumcision, dipping, and sacrifice; and the manner was this <sup>339</sup>:

“a stranger that comes to be made a proselyte at this time, they say unto him, what dost thou see, that thou comest to be made a proselyte? dost thou not know that the Israelites at this time are miserable, banished, drove about, and plundered, and chastisements come upon them? If he says, I know this, but it does not satisfy me, they receive him immediately, and make known some of the light commands, and some of the heavy commands to him; and they acquaint him with the business gleanings, the forgotten sheaf, the corner of the field left standing, and the poor’s tithe: they also inform him of the penalties of the commands, and say unto him, know thou, that before thou camest into this way, thou didst eat fat, and was not punished with cutting off; thou didst profane the sabbath, and was not punished with stoning? but now if thou eatest fat, thou wilt be punished with cutting off; and if thou profanest the sabbath, thou wilt be punished with stoning: and as they inform him of the penalties of the precepts, so they acquaint him with the giving of the rewards of them; saying to him, know thou that the world to come is not made but for the righteous; and the Israelites at this time cannot receive neither much good, nor much punishment? but they do not multiply words, nor critically inquire of him; if he receives these things, they immediately circumcise him; and if there remain in him obstructions, hindering circumcision, they circumcise him a second time; and when he is healed they immediately dip him; and two disciples of the wise men stand over him, and acquaint him with some of the light commands, and some of the heavy commands; then he dips, and comes up, and is as an Israelite in all respects:

334 Maimon. Hilch. Obede Cochabim, c. 10. sect. 6. & Maacalot Asurot, c. 11. sect. 7. & Issure Biah, c. 14. sect. 7.

335 lb. Hilch. Melachim, c. 9. sect. 1.

336 Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 1.

337 T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 64. 4.

338 T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 46. 1, 2.

339 Ib. fol 47. 1, 2.

if a woman, the women set her in water up to her neck, and two disciples of the wise men stand by her without, and inform her of some of the light commands, and some of the heavy commands.”

And, as Maimonides <sup>340</sup> adds, who gives a larger account of this matter,

“she sits in the water, and after that dips herself before them; and they turn away their faces, and go out, so that they do not see her, when she comes out of the water.”

From all which it appears, that this affair was moved after our Lord’s time; was not a settled point till a good while after; and is a custom that has obtained since the Jews were drove out of their own land; though they pretend to say it was an ancient practice of their fathers, of which they can give no sufficient proof; wherefore there could be no regard had to it in this text, and consequently the Ethiopic version of it is not a right one; nor can the dipping of proselytes by the Jews be what Christian baptism takes its rise from, or in any respect be modelled according to it, between which, in many things, there is a wide difference. Now the Jews were very diligent and industrious, which is meant by compassing of sea and land: they used all kinds of methods, ways and means, to gain such a point, and sometimes very wicked ones.

“Rabbenu Tam <sup>341</sup> allowed a daughter of Israel to change her religion, and a stranger to lie with her, that she might confirm it, when he became a proselyte.”

And this they were so exceeding fond of, not out of any regard to the glory of God, or the good of the souls of men; nor did they really love the proselytes: and it is often said by them <sup>342</sup>, that

“proselytes are hard or uneasy to Israel, as the itch or scab.”

The gloss says, because they were not expert in the commandments, and were the cause of punishment, and the Israelites were apt to imitate their works; but they coveted to make them, because hereby either they strengthened their own party, or filled their purses with their substance, or got applause and credit among the common people; for the making a proselyte was reckoned

<sup>340</sup> Hilch. Issure Biah, c. 14. sect. 6.

<sup>341</sup> Piske Toseph. Cetubot, art. 7.

<sup>342</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 2. & 109. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 70. 2. & Nidda, fol. 13. 2.

a very great action, and is ascribed to the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob, and made equal to creation <sup>343</sup>.

“Says R. Eliezer, in the name of R. Jose ben Zimra, if all that come into the world were gathered together to create even one fly, they would not be able to put breath into it: but you will object what he saith, “the souls they made in Haran”, Ge 12:5, but these are the proselytes whom Abraham proselyted; but why does he say “made”, and not proselyted? to teach thee, that whoever brings near a stranger, and proselytes him, “is as if he created him”. You will say Abraham made proselytes, but not Sarah: the text is, “the souls which they made in Haran”: which he made is not written, but which they made: Abraham proselyted the men, and Sarah proselyted the women.”

And a little after,”

Jacob made proselytes, as it is written, Ge 35:2 “Jacob said unto his household”,

And in imitation of these they might be fond of making proselytes, but no further than their own interest was some way or other concerned:

**and when he is made, ye make him two fold more the child of hell than yourselves;**

for to their former errors in heathenism, some of which they might still retain, they added new ones, they received from them, equally as bad, and were but more and more deserving of hell, and even more than their masters; and besides, were trained up by them in the most bitter prejudices against Christ, and his Gospel; and many of them proved more violent persecutors of the followers of Christ, than the original Jews themselves: see Ac 15:5 Our Lord here seems to oppose a common notion and saying of their’s <sup>344</sup>, that when

”one was made a proselyte, he became entirely like a new born babe;”

but so far from being like one in innocence and harmlessness, that he became a child of hell, filled with wrath and malice, and fitted for destruction; and so opposes another notion of their’s, that hellfire has no

<sup>343</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 39. fol. 35. 1. & sect. 84. fol. 72. 3, 4.

<sup>344</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. & 48. 2. & 62. 1. & 97. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Issure Biah, c. 14. sect. 11. & Eduth, c. 13. sect. 2.

power over their disciples, nor even over the transgressors of Israel <sup>345</sup>: but they will find it, by experience, that neither their descent from Abraham, nor their learning, nor their religion, will save them from the devouring flames, which their sins have made them so deserving of, and so are *Mnhyg ynb*, “children of hell” <sup>346</sup>; a Talmudic phrase; the meaning of which they understood well enough, and which was applicable to them, and more so to their proselytes; and that as owing to them, which was an aggravation of their own guilt and condemnation.

### Matthew 23:16

Ver. 16. **Woe unto you, you blind guides,**

Meaning the same persons, the Scribes and Pharisees, as before, though not named, who pretended to be “guides of the blind”, Ro 2:19 but were them selves blind, and so very unfit to be guides of others; they were as they were born, ignorant of divine things, of God in Christ, of the true Messiah, of the true meaning of the Scriptures, of the spirituality of the law, and of the Gospel of Christ; and the way of salvation by him; and their minds were blinded by the God of this world, and with a greedy, and insatiable covetousness after the things of it, of which Christ here gives an instance:

**which say, whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing;**

meaning either that it was no sin to use such an oath, or it was not binding upon a man: he might choose whether he would abide by what he swore by the temple he would do; and thus they ignorantly, and wickedly encouraged vain swearing and perjury. It was usual with them to swear by the temple: take an instance or two.

”Says R. Jochanan <sup>347</sup>, היכלא, “by the temple”, it is in our hands; but what shall I do?”

The gloss upon it is;

”it is an oath by the temple of God, that it is in our power to reveal the illegitimacy of the families of the land of Israel.”

”Says R. Zechariah ben Hakatzab <sup>348</sup>, המונג הזה, “by this habitation” (meaning the temple), her hand was not removed from my hand from the time the Gentiles entered into Jerusalem, to the time they went out.”

Jarchi and Bartenora’s note on it is, this is an oath. Again,

”says R. Simeon ben Gamaliel <sup>349</sup>, המונג הזה, “by this habitation”; I will not rest this night until they (doves) are sold for pence apiece.”

The gloss on it is, “he swore by the sanctuary.”

**But whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is guilty;**

or is bound, or is a debtor, to make good his oath; he cannot be excused, but must be obliged to fulfil it; or if he does not, he is guilty of perjury. This is to be understood not of the gold that covered any part of the temple; nor of the golden vessels in it; but of the gold, or money, or gifts which were offered for the service of the temple: and the sense is, that whosoever swore by “Korban”, and that this, or that should be as “Korban”, he should not go back from it; he was obliged to give it. This showed the covetous disposition of these men, who made nothing of oaths that were sworn by the temple; but those that were made by the “Korban”, or the gifts of it, were binding, because their interest was in it; it was for their gain.

### Matthew 23:17

Ver. 17. **Ye fools, and blind,**

That argue after so ridiculous a manner, that make use of such thin sophistry, that everybody may see through it; who must be stupid and sottish to the last degree, and their minds foolishly blinded with avarice; as to please and satisfy themselves: with so poor a distinction; that would by no means serve them, but make against them:

**for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?**

The temple, to be sure: for that was the seat of the divine majesty; built for him to dwell in, and in which he took up his residence; and was dedicated to his service, and in it was divine worship performed unto him. The temple was sanctified by the presence of God in it; and the gold sanctified by the temple, being devoted to the service of it: whatever holiness it had, it had it from the temple, and therefore the temple must be greater than that; and consequently it must be most extravagantly ridiculous and foolish in them, to make oaths by the gold of the temple, and gifts dedicated to its service, and on that score sanctified by it, more binding and sacred than such as were by the temple itself.

### Matthew 23:18

<sup>349</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol 166. 1. Misn. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 7. Vid. c. 6. sect. 3.

<sup>345</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 27. 1.

<sup>346</sup> T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 17. 1.

<sup>347</sup> T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 71. 1.

<sup>348</sup> Misn. Cetubot, c. 2. sect. 9. Juchasin, fol. 56. 1.

Ver. 18. **And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing,**

These are again the words or savings of the scribes and Pharisees, and express their sentiments and practice: it was usual with them to swear by the altar; and this was reckoned either no sin at all, or such an oath was not accounted binding on a man; he might break, or keep it as he thought fit: of this kind of swearing, we have the following instances. One said to another <sup>350</sup>,

”swear to me that thou wilt not discover me, and he swore to him; by what did he swear? says R. Jose bar Chanina, במזבח הפנימי, “by the innermost altar”.

Again, it is said of Zedekiah <sup>351</sup>,

”that he (Nebuchadnezzar) made him to swear; by what did he make him to swear? says R. Jose, by the covenant he made him to swear; Rabbi says במזבח, “by the altar” he made him to swear.”

And elsewhere <sup>352</sup> it is said of him,”

and he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who made him swear by God”, 2Ch 36:13. By what did he make him swear? says R. Jose bar Chanina, “by the horns of the innermost altar” he made him swear.”

**But whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty:**

of perjury, if he does not make good his oath; he is bound to perform it, it is obligatory; whatever he swore should be a gift for the altar, he was indispensably obliged to bring it; for whatever he swore by “Korban”, or the gift, could never be put to any other use.

#### Matthew 23:19

Ver. 19. **Ye fools, and blind,**.... This is very justly repeated, since this is no less an instance of their folly, blindness, and stupidity. In three copies of Beza’s the word “fools” is not; nor is it in the Vulgate Latin, nor in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; but the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions have it:

**for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?**

The gift, or offering, before it was devoted to sacred use, and brought, and laid upon the altar, was common, had no ceremonial sanctity in it, and might be put to any use; but when it was brought, and laid upon the altar, it became holy; for, according to the law, whatever touched

the altar, and indeed all, or any of the vessels of the sanctuary, was holy, Ex 29:37. Christ speaks the sense of the law, and their own traditions, and in their own language, and argues from the same to the confutation of them: חמזבה מקדש, “the altar”, they say {u}, “sanctifies” that which is fit for it; that is, that which is proper to be offered up upon it:

”as the altar sanctifies that which is fit for it, so the ascent unto it sanctifies; and as the altar, and the ascent, sanctify what is fit for them, so the vessels sanctify; the vessels for liquids sanctify the liquids, and the dry measures sanctify the dry; the vessels for liquids do not sanctify the dry, nor the dry measures sanctify the liquids; the holy vessels, which are bored, (or broken,) when they do the service they used to do, when whole, sanctify, if not, they do not sanctify; nor does anything sanctify but in the sanctuary.”

Now, since this is a clear case, that the altar sanctifies the gift, and not the gift the altar, our Lord’s question is, which is the greater? A man that has the least share of common sense will easily see, that the altar must be the greater: wherefore these scribes and Pharisees must be wretchedly stupid to give out, that an oath made by the altar was not binding, when one that was made by the gift, or Korban, was binding; seeing the gift, or offering, received its sanctity from the altar: hence, of the two, an oath made by the altar should be more sacred and obligatory than one made by the gift. {u} Misn. Zebachim, c. 9. sect. 7.

#### Matthew 23:20

Ver. 20. **Whosoever therefore shall swear by the altar,**

Not that Christ allowed of swearing by the altar, or by the temple, or by heaven, or by any creature, animate or inanimate; for such swearing is elsewhere disapproved of by him, and forbid, but if a man did swear by the altar, he ought to know, and consider that he not only **sweareth by it,**

but by all the gifts, and offerings that are brought, and laid upon it,

**and by all things thereon;**

whatever gifts and sacrifices are offered upon it; which, by being put there, become holy, as the altar itself: so that he that swears by the altar, swears also by the gifts of the altar; and consequently, according to their own traditions, such oaths must be binding.

<sup>350</sup> Echa Rabbati, fol. 54. 1.

<sup>351</sup> Midrash Kohelet, fol. 78. 1.

<sup>352</sup> Midrash Megillat Esther, fol. 89. 1.



**Matthew 23:21**

Ver. 21. **And whoso shall swear by the temple,**

As we have before seen they used to do, and as appears from what the poet says <sup>353</sup>:

Ecce negas, jurasque mihi per templa tonantis Non credo: jura, verpe, per Anchialum.

In which he intimates, that if the Jew swore by the temple, he would not believe him; as well he might not, since such an oath was accounted nothing; but bids him swear by Anchialus, that is, by *היאיליה*, “Chi Eloah”, or *ליית*, “Chi Alon”, or *אל*, the living God”, or *הי הולמ*, “Chi Haolam, he that lives for ever” <sup>354</sup>; and suggests, that he should then believe him. Now our Lord, though he did not allow of such swearing, yet justly argues, that he that sweareth by the temple, not only “sweareth by it”, which could not be a witness of what was swore; but he must be interpreted to swear by the inhabitant of it, and by him that dwelleth in it; that is, God, for whom it was built, to whom it was dedicated; where he was worshipped, and where he vouchsafed to reside; taking up his dwelling between the cherubim upon the mercy seat, in the most holy place; from whence he communed with men, and gave tokens of his presence; and who only could be the proper witness of the truth, or falsehood, of what was swore; and therefore an oath, by the temple, ought to be looked upon as if made by God himself, and so to be sacred and binding.

**Matthew 23:22**

Ver. 22. **And he that shall swear by heaven,**

As the Jews were wont to do in common, but did not look upon such an oath as obligatory on them; See Gill on “Mt 5:34”, though such an onesweareth by the throne of God; for heaven is God’s throne, where he sits, and, in an eminent manner, displays the glory of his majesty: and by him that sitteth thereon, by God himself. Thus swearing by anything that has any relation to God, is implicitly swearing by him; and therefore ought to be considered as binding, as if he was expressed in it; since an appeal cannot be made to things inanimate, nor indeed to any creature, but to God, the searcher of hearts.

**Matthew 23:23**

Ver. 23. **Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,**

Christ returns to the former epithets he had very rightly given to these men, and very pertinently repeats them here; and which are confirmed by the instances

of their conduct and practice here alleged, which abundantly show their hypocrisy and deceit; since they were very strict in observing some outward things, which gave them credit with the people, and especially the priests and Levites, some little trifling ceremonies and traditions of their elders, whilst they neglected internal religion, and those things which were of the greatest moment and importance:

**for ye take tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin;**

which ought not commanded by the law, they were obliged to by the traditions of the elders. Mint is an herb well known, and has its name in the Greek from its sweet smell; on account of which the Jews used to spread it on the floors of their synagogues <sup>355</sup>. This was one of the herbs that was subject to the law of the seventh year <sup>356</sup>, and is mentioned with those which were to be tithed <sup>357</sup>. The Ethiopic version, instead of mint reads “hyssop”; and which also was an herb that was obliged to be tithed <sup>358</sup>. “Anise” is a seed also well known, and which the Jews call *tbv*, and of which they often observe, that it is subject to tithing, both seed, herb, flowers, or stalks <sup>359</sup>: instead of this Munster’s Hebrew Gospel has *בייט*, “rue”; and which, in the Misna <sup>360</sup>, is mentioned along with mint, as it is by Luke 11:42 and said to be one of the things the Pharisees gave tithe of; though in their oral law it is reckoned among the things that are free from tithe <sup>361</sup>: and therefore this must be a sort of work of supererogation to give tithe of that, which they were not obliged to. “Cummin” is a sort of anise; its seed is much like fennel seed, and which pigeons are very fond of: mention is made of it in Isa 28:25 and is reckoned with figs, dates, carobes, or Egyptian figs, and rice, which were obliged to be tithed <sup>362</sup>, and was what was also bound to the offering of the first fruits to the priest <sup>363</sup>. Christ mentions these particular herbs and seeds, as a specimen of what they paid tithes of. In Luke, it is added, “and all manner of herbs”: for, according to the traditions of the elders, they were in general subject to tithes: and it is a common saying or maxim of the Jews, that the tithing of

<sup>355</sup> Jarchi in Misn. Oketzim, c. 1. sect. 2.

<sup>356</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 7. sect. 1, 2.

<sup>357</sup> Hieros. Dermai, fol. 22. 3.

<sup>358</sup> Misn. Maaserot, c. 3. sect. 9.

<sup>359</sup> lb. c. 4. sect. 5. T. Hieros. Maaserot, fol. 51. 2. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 7. 2. Jarchi & Maimon. in Misn. Oketzim, c. 3. sect. 4.

<sup>360</sup> Oketzim, c. 1. sect. 2.

<sup>361</sup> Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 1.

<sup>362</sup> Misn. Demai, c. 2. sect. 1.

<sup>363</sup> Misn. Trumot, c. 10. sect. 4.

<sup>353</sup> Martial. Epigr. l. 11. Ep. 60.

<sup>354</sup> Vid. Selden. Prolegomena ad lib. de Successionibus.

corn is from the law, but מְשִׁירֵי־קֶרֶבֶת דְּרַבָּנִין “the tithing of herbs is from the Rabbins”<sup>364</sup>: it is a constitution of their’s, and not of Moses:

**and have omitted the weightier matters of the law.**

The distinction of the commandments of the law into lighter and heavier, or weightier, to which Christ here refers, is frequent with the Jews. When one comes to be made a proselyte, they acquaint him with some of *twlq twum*, “the light commands”, and some of *twrwmx twum*, “the heavy”, or “weighty commands”<sup>365</sup>. So again, they paraphrase the words in Isa 33:18 “where is the scribe?” he that numbers all the letters in the law. “Where is the receiver?” who weighs the “light” things, וחמורני שבתורה, and “heavy”, or “weighty things in the law”<sup>366</sup>. Again<sup>367</sup>,

“in the words of the law there are some things “light”, and some things “heavy”, or “weighty”:

but those weighty things they omitted, and regarded those that were light; yea, that had no foundation in the law at all: and no wonder, since, in the place last cited, they say<sup>368</sup>, that

”the words of the Scribes are all of them “weighty” and that the sayings of the elders are more “weighty” than the words of the prophets.”

The things our Lord refers to, and instances in, are as follow;

**judgment, mercy, and faith.**

“Judgment” may mean the administration of justice in courts of judicature; the putting in execution good judgments, righteous laws and statutes; protecting and relieving the injured and oppressed, and doing that which is right and equitable between man and man: but, on the contrary, these men devoured widows’ houses, and oppressed the poor and fatherless. “Mercy” includes all acts of compassion to the distressed, relieving the necessitous, distributing to their wants, and showing all kindness and beneficence to the poor and needy; which the scribes and Pharisees very little practised, being a set of cruel, hard hearted, and covetous persons. “Faith” may not only design faithfulness in a man’s keeping his

<sup>364</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 83. 2. & T. Hieros. Challah, fol. 60. 2. & Maaserot, fol. 48. 3.

<sup>365</sup> T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Issure Bia, c. 14. sect. 2, 6, 9. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 116.

<sup>366</sup> T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 15. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2.

<sup>367</sup> T. Hieros Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>368</sup> Ib.

word and promise, and fidelity to a trust reposed in him; but also faith in God, as the God of providence, and as the God of grace and mercy; believing in his word and promises, and worshipping him, which the law requires; and the rather this seems to be intended, because Luke, instead of “faith”, puts “the love of God”, which faith includes, and works by, and is the end of the commandment, arising from faith unfeigned: so that Christ instances in the weightier matters of both tables of the law, which these men neglected, and the latter, as well as the former; not believing the revelation of the Gospel, nor the Messiah, who was promised, and prophesied of by God, in the writings of the Old Testament:

**these ought ye to have done:**

more especially, and in the first place, as being of the greatest use and importance:

**and not to leave the other undone;**

meaning either the lighter matters, and lesser commands of the law; or even their tithes of herbs: if they thought themselves obliged to them, Christ would not dispute the matter with them; if they thought fit to observe them, they might, so long as they did not interfere with, and take them off from things of greater moment. But alas! these men preferred the rituals of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders, above the duties of the moral law; and reckoned that the latter were nothing, if the former were wanting; for they<sup>369</sup> Say, that

”the words of the Scribes, are more lovely than the words of the law.”

And also<sup>370</sup>, that”

he that profanes the holy things, and despises the solemn feasts, and makes void the covenant of Abraham our father (circumcision), and behaves impudently towards the law (ceremonial), although the law and good works are in his hands, he has no part in the world to come.

”The Persic version renders the words thus; “these ought ye to do, and not them”; as if it was our Lord’s sense, that they ought to observe the weightier matters of the moral law, and not regard their tithing of herbs, and other traditions of, their fathers.

**Matthew 23:24**

Ver. 24. **Ye blind guides**,.... As in Mt 23:16 who

<sup>369</sup> T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

<sup>370</sup> T. Hieres. Pesachim, fol. 33. 2.

strain at a gnat and swallow a camel: the Syriac and Persic versions read the words in the plural number, gnats and camels. The Jews had a law, which forbid them the eating of any creeping thing, Le 11:41 and of this they were strictly observant, and would not be guilty of the breach of it for ever so much.

”One that eats a flea, or a gnat; they say <sup>371</sup> is מומר, “an apostate”;

One that has changed his religion, and is no more to be reckoned as one of them. Hence they very carefully strained their liquors, lest they should transgress the above command, and incur the character of an apostate; and at least, the penalty of being beaten with forty stripes, save one; for,

“whoever eats a whole fly, or a whole gnat, whether alive or dead, was to be beaten on account of a creeping flying thing <sup>372</sup>.

Among the accusations Haman is said to bring against them to Ahasuerus, and the instances he gives of their laws being different from the king’s, this one <sup>373</sup>; that

“if a fly falls into the cup of one of them, וְרָקוּ וְשִׁתְּתוּ, “he strains it, and drinks it”; but if my lord the king should touch the cup of one of them, he would throw it to the ground, and would not drink of it.”

’Maimonides says <sup>374</sup>,

”He that strains wine, or vinegar, or strong liquor, and eats “Jabchushin” (a sort of small flies found in wine cellars <sup>375</sup>, on account of which they strained their wine), or gnats, or worms, which he hath strained off, is to be beaten on account of the creeping things of the water, or on account of the creeping flying things, and the creeping things of the water.”

’Moreover, it is said <sup>376</sup>,

“a man might not pour his strong liquors through a strainer, by the light (of a candle or lamp), lest he should separate and leave in the top of the strainer (some creeping thing), and it should fall again into the cup, and he should transgress the law, in Le 11:41.”

To this practice Christ alluded here; and so very

371 T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 26. 2. & Horaiot, fol. 11. 1.

372 Mainon. Hilch. Maacolot Asurot, c. 2. sect. 22.

1224 T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 2. Vid. T. Hietos. Sota, fol. 17. 1.

374 Ubi supra, (Mainon. Hilch. Maacolot Asurot, c. 2.) sect. 20.

375 Gloss. in T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 67. 1.

376 Ib.

strict and careful were they in this matter, that to strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel, became at length a proverb, to signify much solicitude about little things, and none about greater. These men would not, on any consideration, be guilty of such a crime, as not to pay the tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and such like herbs and seeds; and yet made no conscience of doing justice, and showing mercy to men, or of exercising faith in God, or love to him. Just as many hypocrites, like them, make a great stir, and would appear very conscientious and scrupulous, about some little trifling things, and yet stick not, at other times, to commit the grossest enormities, and most scandalous sins in life.

#### Matthew 23:25

Ver. 25. **Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,**

Our Lord cannot be thought to bear too hard upon these men, nor does he continue this character of them, and denunciations of woe against them, without a reason

**for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.**

The allusion is to their traditions about washing their cups and pots, and brazen vessels; see Mark 7:4 which they strictly observed. In their oral law is a whole tract, called “האשכנז”, which gives rules about the places where they washed, the things to be washed, and the manner of washing them; about which they were very nice, pretending to much outward cleanness, but had no regard to inward purity. Christ’s sense is, that they took much pains, and were very careful, that the cup they drank out of, and the platter, or dish they ate out of, should be very clean; when at the same time, the food and drink that were within them, were got by oppression and rapine; by devouring widows’ houses, by making undue claims upon, and extorting unjust sums from the fatherless, the poor, and the needy; and were abused by them, to luxury and intemperance. In like manner the Jews themselves say of hypocrites <sup>377</sup>;

”They make show of a pure and clean soul, but under it lies hid a leprosy: they are like to “vessels full of uncleanness”; they are outwardly washed with the water of fraud and craftiness; but whatsoever is within, in the midst of them, is unclean.”

The Vulgate Latin version of the text, instead of “excess”, reads “uncleanness”, and so does Munster’s Hebrew Gospel: many copies read “unrighteousness”.

377 R. Sol Gabirol in Cether Malcuth apud L. Capell in loc.

Excess is thought to be a sin the Pharisees were not guilty of, though they were of extortion, injustice, and uncleanness.{w} R. Sol Gabirol in Cether Malcuth apud L. Capell in loc.

**Matthew 23:26**

Ver. 26. **Thou blind Pharisee,**

Well might Christ call such an one a blind Pharisee, who was so scrupulously careful to cleanse his cup and platter; and yet made no conscience of filling them with what was gotten in an unjust way, and so defiled himself and them:

**cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also:**

get food and drink in an honest way, remove all extortion and oppression out of thine hands, and luxury and intemperance from thy table; and so shall the outward cleanness of thy cup and dish, be no reproach unto thee, or testimony against thee, of thine hypocrisy. So the great concern of all men should be, inward purity; that their hearts be purified by faith in the blood of Christ, and sprinkled from an evil conscience by the same; that principles of grace and holiness be formed in them by the Spirit of God; and then their outward lives and conversations being influenced thereby, will be honourable and agreeable to their professions. Otherwise, an external reformation, or an outward show of holiness, and bare pretensions to it, without internal grace, will never be of any avail in the sight of God.

**Matthew 23:27**

Ver. 27. **Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,**

It is much these men could bear to hear themselves so often called by this name; and it shows great courage in our Lord, so freely to reprove them, and expose their wickedness, who were men of so much credit and influence with the people:

**for ye are like unto whited sepulchres;**

or "covered with lime", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, render it. For the Jews used to mark their graves with white lime, that they might be known: that so priests, Nazarites, and travellers, might avoid them, and not be polluted with them. This appears from various passages in their writings:

"The vineyard of the fourth year, they marked with clods of earth, and an uncircumcised one with dust, ושל קברות ביד, "and graves with chalk", mixed (with water) and poured (on them <sup>378</sup>.)

378 Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 5. sect. 1.

"Of this marking of the graves, the reason of it, the time and manner of doing it, Maimonides <sup>379</sup> gives us this account:

"Whoever finds a grave, or a dead carcass, or anything for the dead that defiles, by the tent he is obliged to put a mark upon it, that it may not be a stumbling to others; and on the intermediate days of a feast, they go out from the sanhedrim, to mark the graves.--With what do they mark? hxmm dyob, "with chalk infused" in water, and poured upon the unclean place: they do not put the mark upon the top of the unclean place, (or exactly in it,) but so that it may stand out here and there, at the sides of it, that what is pure may not be corrupted; and they do not put the mark far from the place of the uncleanness, that they may not waste the land of Israel; and they do not set marks on those that are manifest, for they are known to all; but upon those that are doubtful, as a field in which a grave is lost, and places that are open, and want a covering.

"Now because when the rains fell, these marks were washed away, hence on the first of Adar (February) when they used to repair the highways, they also marked the graves with white lime, that they might be seen and known, and avoided; and so on their intermediate feast days <sup>380</sup>: the reason why they made use of chalk, or lime, and with these marked their graves, was because it looked white like bones <sup>381</sup>; so that upon first sight, it might be thought and known what it was for, and that a grave was there: hence this phrase, "whited sepulchres":

**which indeed appear beautiful outward;**

especially at a distance, and when new marked:

**but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness;**

worms and rottenness, which arise from the putrefied carcasses, and are very nauseous and defiling.

**Matthew 23:28**

Ver. 28. **Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous,**

By making broad their phylacteries, enlarging the borders of their garments, praying long prayers,

379 Hilch. Tumath Meth, c. 8. sect. 9.

380 Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1. & Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in lb.

381 Jarchi in Misu. Moed Katan, c. 1. sect. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 5. sect. 1.

compassing sea and land to make one proselyte, paying tithes of all manner of herbs, and cleansing the outside of the cup and platter, and doing all their works, prayers, fastings, and alms deeds, to be seen of men. This is the accommodation of the above simile; by reason of these things they looked like whited sepulchres, outwardly beautiful: so these appeared outwardly righteous, they looked like righteous persons, and were not; they were what Hagar, as the Jews say, charged her mistress with being; for so they interpret these words, “her mistress was despised in her eyes”, Ge 16:4<sup>382</sup>.

”She said, this Sarah is not secretly, what she is openly; she appears כְּאִילוּ הִיא דְקָתָה “as if she was righteous” and she is not righteous.’

”The same they say of<sup>383</sup> Leah. This was a misrepresentation; but the representation Christ gives of these men, is right; they were of that sort of the Pharisees, which they call הַבְּיֵינִי, “the dyed”, or “coloured” ones: it is said of Jannai the king, that he should say to those of his family<sup>384</sup>,

”Do not be afraid of them that are Pharisees, (that are truly so,) nor of them that are not Pharisees; but of them that are, Nyewbuh, “dyed”, for they are like to Pharisees; for their works are as the works of Zimri, (adulterers, as these were,) and they expect the reward as Phinehas.

”The gloss upon it is,

”the Pharisees hated him, because he had slain many of their wise men, and was turned Sadducee; and when he was dying, his wife was afraid of them, lest they should take away the kingdom from her sons, and she desired him to seek their favour for her; but he said unto her, do not be afraid of the Pharisees, for they are “righteous”, and will not render evil to thee, nor to thy sons; for they have not sinned against them; nor of them that are not Pharisees, for they are their friends; but of “the dyed ones”: as if he had said, their appearance is not according to their nature, but they are dyed without, וְאִינוּ תּוֹכֵמוֹ כְּבָרֵם, “and their inside is not as their outside”: for their works are as the work of Zimri, for they are ungodly; and they expect the reward as Phinehas,

saying to men, to honour them as Phinehas.’

’But this outward show and appearance of righteousness, was only “unto men”, not unto God: they did not appear so to him, who is the searcher of hearts, and knows what is in man, and knew all the secret wickedness that was in them; for though they imposed upon, and deceived men, they could not deceive God; nor was their iniquity hid from Christ, who adds, “but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity”: and which was evident from their ambition and vain glory, in desiring the uppermost rooms at feasts, the chief places in the synagogue, greetings in the markets, and titles of honour and grandeur; from their avarice and cruel oppression of the widows, and fatherless, under a pretence of long prayers; from their neglecting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, and practising extortion and excess: that saying of their’s<sup>385</sup>, may be applied to themselves;

”every disciple of a wise man, שְׂאִינוּ תּוֹכּוֹ כְּבָרּוֹ, “whose inside is not as his outside”, is no disciple of a wise man.

”And it is expressly ascribed by some of their writers to one sort of the Pharisees, of whom they say<sup>386</sup>,

”they are desirous to appear to men to be holy, but their inside is not as their outside;’

which is much the same Christ here says of them. What our Lord charges these men with, is owned by their own doctors; they say<sup>387</sup>, that

”the iniquity of those that were under the first temple, was open and manifest, but the iniquity of those that were under the second temple, was not open.’

But as the gloss says,”

the children of the second temple, הָשִׁימָה הֵיוּ בְּתֵר, “were secretly wicked”’

### Matthew 23:29

Ver. 29. **Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,**

This is the seventh and last time, in which these words are delivered in this exact form by our Lord, in this chapter; and expresses the certainty, both of their sin and punishment: and the instance annexed to it, no less discovers the hypocrisy of these persons, and supports

382 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 40. 3. Jarchi in Gert. xvi.

4.

383 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 71. fol. 63. 2.

384 T. Bab. Sota, fol. 22. 2.

385 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 72. 2.

386 Bartenora in Misn. Sota, c. 3. sect. 4.

387 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 2.

the character given of them; as also furnishes out a sufficient reason, why a woe is denounced upon them;

**because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous;**

meaning by the “prophets” and “righteous” men, the same persons, the prophets, who were righteous men; or else the prophets, and also other righteous men besides them. Rightly is the word “build”, used of tombs and sepulchres; the Jews have a canon, which runs thus <sup>388</sup>;

”they do not dig graves nor sepulchres, on a feast day.”

The commentators <sup>389</sup> on it say, that the graves are the holes which they dig in the earth, and the sepulchres are the buildings over the graves. In the Gemara it is asked <sup>390</sup>,

”what are the graves? and what are the sepulchres? says R. Judah, the graves are made by digging and the sepulchres or tombs בְּבִינֵי “by building”;

and these edifices which they built over the graves of some of their prophets, and righteous men, were very grand and beautiful. The Cippi Hebmici furnish us with many instances of this kind: in Hebron, in the land of Canaan, which is Kirjath Arba, is the cave of Machpelah; in which were buried the fathers of the world, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; and over it is a wonderful, נִיבָה “and beautiful” building and it is the building of David the king; and opposite the city, in the mountain, is a beautiful building, and there was buried Jesse, the father of David the king; in the way from Hebron to Jerusalem, is Chalchul, where Gad, David’s seer, was buried; and Tekoah, where Isaiah the prophet was buried, and over him a “beautiful” structure: at the Mount of Olives is a beautiful fabric, which they say is the sepulchre of Huldah, the prophetess; at the bottom of the mount is a very great cave, attributed to Haggai the prophet, and in the middle of it are many caves; near it, is the sepulchre of Zechariah the prophet, in a cave shut up, and over it is נִיבָה נֶאֱמָר, “a beautiful arch”, or vault of one stone: between Rama and Jerusalem are caves ascribed to Simeon the just, and the seventy (elders of the) sanhedrim: at Rama, Samuel was buried, also his father Elkanah, and Hannah his mother, and in a cave shut up, and over the cave buildings: at Cheres, which is Timnath Cheres, in Mount Ephraim, are buried Joshua the son of Nun, and Nun

388 Misn. Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 6.

389 Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

390 T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 8. 2.

his father, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and over them are trees. At Avarta is the school of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, and Eleazar is buried upon the mountain; and below the village, between the olive trees, Ithamar, and over him a large monument: at the barns is a temple of the Gentiles, with a vault and a cave, where they say are buried seventy elders. At Belata, a village about a sabbath day’s journey from Shechem, Joseph the righteous was buried: at Mount Carmel, is the cave of Elijah the prophet, and there was buried Elisha, the son of Shaphat the prophet: at Jordan was buried Iddo the prophet, and over it is a great elm tree, and it is in the form of a lion; and there was buried Shebuel, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, over whom is a great oak tree: at Geba, in Mount Lebanon, is buried Zephaniah the prophet, in the middle of a cave shut up. On a mountain, a sabbath day’s journey from Zidon, Zebulun was buried, in a beautiful vault; at Cephar Noah, was buried Noah the just; and at Kadesh Nephtalim, Barak the son of Abinoam, and Deborah his wife, and Jael; and at Timnath, Shamgar the son of Auath, over whom are two marble pillars. At Cephar Cana, is buried Jonah, the son of Amittai, on the top of a mountain, in a temple of the Gentiles, in a “beautiful” vault: at Jakuk, was buried in the way, Habakkuk the prophet; and at the north of the village of Raam, was buried Obadiah the prophet: at Susan the palace, was buried Mordecai the Jew, and over him a beautiful stone statue; and on it written, this is the sepulchre of Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a man of Jemini; and near the river Hiddekel, Ezekiel the prophet was buried. In this account, many things may be observed, which confirm and illustrate the words of the text. And certain it is, that it was accounted very honourable and laudable in persons, to beautify the sepulchres of the patriarchs and prophets. Among the excellent characters given of Benaah, R. Jochanan’s master, it is said <sup>391</sup>,

that he was a very wise man, and a judge, and understood mysteries and parables; trem Nyuw, “and painted the cave” of Adam the first, and the cave of Abraham.’

”Though perhaps this is to be understood of him in a figurative sense, but yet must allude to a literal one: the sepulchres of the prophets, were especially very sacred:”

391 Juchasin, fol. 86. 1.

all sepulchres (they say <sup>392</sup> might be removed, but the sepulchres of a king, and the “sepulchres of a prophet”; they say unto him, were not the sepulchres of the sons of David removed? and the sepulchres of the sons of Huldah were in Jerusalem, and a man might not touch them, to remove them for ever. R. Akiba replied to them because of decency it was forgiven (or allowed) there, and from thence the uncleanness being channelled, went out to the brook Kidron.’

Now our Lord must not be understood as blaming them for barely building the tombs of the prophets, and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous, which they might have done without blame. But because they did all this, that they might be thought to be very innocent and holy men, and far from being guilty of the crimes their forefathers were; when they were of the very selfsame blood thirsty, persecuting spirit; and did, and would do the same things to the prophets and apostles of the New Testament, their fathers had done to the prophets of the Old. They have a saying <sup>393</sup>, that

”they do not erect monuments “for the righteous”; for their words are their memorial.

”But this can only mean, that there is no need of monuments for them; since their sayings are sufficient to keep up the memory of them. Hence Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that our Lord reproves them out of their own mouths, for despising the words of the prophets; imagining they performed piety enough, by bestowing cost in adorning their sepulchres; when they themselves own, their sayings are the best remembrances of them, and therefore ought to be regarded more than their tombs.

#### **Matthew 23:30**

**Ver. 30. And say, if we had been in the days of our fathers,**

Their ancestors and predecessors: signifying, that if they had lived in the times they did, or had been in the same post and office with them, they should have opposed, at least not consented to their measures:

**we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets;**

would not have joined them in persecuting the prophets, and in shedding their blood, and putting them to death; but would have received them as the prophets of the Lord, have hearkened to their advice and message,

<sup>392</sup> T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 57. 4.

<sup>393</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 47. 1.

and have honoured and obeyed them as such; and this they thought they sufficiently declared, by building and adorning their tombs.

#### **Matthew 23:31**

**Ver. 31. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves,**

Or “against yourselves”, as the Syriac reads; for what they said was a plain acknowledgment, and a full confession, what their fathers had done, and whose offspring they were; and from whom better things were not to be expected; since they were their fathers’ own children, and of the same temper and disposition with them: that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets. They plainly owned, that their fathers killed the prophets, and that they descended from them; though they meant not so much to reproach, their ancestors, as to give themselves a greater character; yet it did not with those, that knew them; not with our Lord: for as their own words testified against them, that they were a seed of evildoers; their practices showed them to be of the same spirit and principles with their progenitors.

#### **Matthew 23:32**

**Ver. 32. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.**

Of their sins; for there were bounds and limits set how far they should proceed, and no further; as yet they had not got to the end of their iniquity: their fathers had gone great lengths in sin, but their iniquity was not yet full, as is said of the Amorites, Ge 15:16 these their sons were to fill it up. They had shed the blood of many of the prophets; and indeed there were none of them but they had persecuted and abused, in one shape or another: some they entreated shamefully, others they beat: some they stoned, and others they put to death with the sword, or otherwise; and now their children were about to fill the measure brimful, by crucifying the Son of God, which they were at this time meditating and contriving; and by persecuting and slaying his apostles, and so would bring upon them the vengeance of God. The Jews well enough understood these words, which were spoken to them in an ironical way, and expressing what they were about, and what they would hereafter do, and what would be the issue and consequence of it: they have a saying <sup>394</sup>, that

”the holy blessed God does not take vengeance on a man, *ד' שתתמלא אחרו*, “until his measure is filled up”; according to Job 20:22.”

Which the Chaldee paraphrase renders,

<sup>394</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 9. 1.

”when his measure is filled up, then shall he take vengeance on him;

”and that this is Christ’s sense, appears from what follows.

**Matthew 23:33**

Ver. 33. **Ye servants, ye generation of vipers,**

The latter of these names, John the Baptist calls the Sadducees and Pharisees by, in Mt 3:7 and Christ, in Mt 12:34 both express their craft and subtlety, their inward poison, and venomous nature; their fair outside, and specious pretences; their hypocrisy, malice, and wickedness; in which they were like to the old serpent, their father the devil, and to their ancestors, that murdered the prophets; nor could any good thing be expected, from such a viperous generation:

**how can ye escape the damnation of hell?**

signifying, that it was impossible that they should; nor could they surely expect it themselves, who must be conscious to themselves of their wickedness, malice, and deceit. The Persic version reads it, “where can ye escape?” &c. and so Beza says it was read, in one ancient copy of his; and the sense is, whither can ye flee? to whom, or what can you have recourse to, to screen you from the wrath to come? Rocks and mountains, caves and dens, will be of no service. The phrase, דינה של גיהנום, “the judgment, or damnation of hell”, is a phrase often used in the Talmud<sup>395</sup>, and Midrashes<sup>396</sup> of the Jews; and intends future torment, and the everlasting vengeance and wrath of God, the unquenchable fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and which impenitent unbelieving sinners cannot escape.

**Matthew 23:34**

Ver. 34. **Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets,**

To try them, whether they would show the respect to prophets, they pretended to have for them; by building and beautifying their sepulchres; by exclaiming against their forefathers for shedding their blood; and by declaring, that had they lived in their days, they would not have joined with them in it; and to make it appear, that these were all empty words, and specious pretences; and that they had the same malicious and bloody principles in them; and would be guilty of the same practices, and so

395 T. Bab. Berncot, fol. 61. 1. Erubin, fol. 18. 2. Yebamot, fol. 102. 2. Sota, fol. 4. 2. & 5. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 1.

396 Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 203. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 14. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 76. 1.

fill up the measure of their fathers’ sins; and bring upon them the punishment of everlasting burnings hereafter, as well as ruin and destruction on their nation, city, and temple now. Christ here speaks, as, one having power and authority, to qualify and send forth men, under the several characters here mentioned, and of what he should do after his resurrection: for notwithstanding the people of the Jews would crucify him, and use him as they did, in a barbarous manner; yet after all this, he would send his ministers to them, to gather his elect out from among them, to render the rest inexcusable, and to show his longsuffering and patience. The persons designed by “prophets”, “wise men”, and “Scribes”, are his apostles: called “prophets”; because they were divinely inspired to write, and preach in his name; had the gift of foretelling future events, and of explaining with the greatest clearness and exactness, the prophecies of the Old Testament; showing their respect unto, and accomplishment in Christ: “wise men”; because they were made wise unto salvation, and capable of instructing others: they were filled with all spiritual and evangelical wisdom, and preached the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom: and Scribes; because they were well instructed in the kingdom of heaven, and had the true knowledge of the law, and could rightly interpret it, as well as make known the Gospel of the grace of God. Christ chooses to use these names and titles, because the Jews pretended to have great veneration for the ancient prophets, and these he should send, would not be a whit inferior to them, but in many things exceed them; and they had great esteem for their wise men and Scribes, who would be vastly exceeded by these ministers of his, and yet would be used very badly by them:

**and some of them ye shall kill;**

as Stephen, the first “martyr”, who was stoned to death by them; and James, the brother of John, whom Herod, to their good liking, killed with the sword; and the other James they threw headlong from off the pinnacle of the temple, and killed him with a fuller’s club<sup>397</sup>.

**And crucify;**

so Simeon, the son of Cleophas, was crucified at the instigation of the Jews, as Eusebius relates<sup>398</sup>.

**And some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues;**

397 Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 23.

398 Ib. l. 3. c. 32.



as John, Peter, and Paul:

**and persecute them from city to city;**

as they did Paul and Barnabas, as the Acts of the Apostles testify.

**Matthew 23:35**

Ver. 35. **That upon you may come all the righteous blood,**

Or “the blood of all the righteous men”, as the Syriac: Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read; for there is no righteousness in blood, nor any conveyed by it: all men are of one blood, and that is tainted, they that are righteous, are not so naturally, nor by any righteousness of their own, but by the righteousness of Christ: and such were the persons here meant, whose blood being shed in the cause of righteousness, God would revenge; and the punishment for such a crime, and the vengeance of God for it, were to come upon the nation of the Jews by this means, through their crucifying of Christ, and killing, and persecuting his apostles; whereby they would make it manifest, that they approved of, and consented to, what others had done to all the righteous men, whose blood had been

**shed upon the earth;**

whether in Judea, or elsewhere; and continued in the same wicked practices, or committed worse, and so justly incurred the wrath of God to the uttermost; which would quickly come upon them, when the measure of their fathers’ sin were filled up by them, from the beginning of time, to the present age: even

**from the blood of righteous Abel:**

who was the first person in the world that was killed, and that for righteousness sake too, because his works were righteous, his person being so; not by his works, but through the righteousness and sacrifice of the Messiah, which were to be brought in; in the faith of which he offered up his sacrifice, whereby he obtained a testimony from God, that he was righteous, having respect to his person in Christ, and so to his offering. This epithet of “righteous” seems to be what was commonly given him by the Jews: hence, with a peculiar emphasis, he is called, *הבֵּל הַרִּיק*, “Abel the righteous”<sup>399</sup>; as he is also said to be *Mygrhnl var*, “the head of them that killed”<sup>400</sup>; he being the first man that was slain; for which reason he is mentioned here by Christ; and also, because his blood cried for vengeance, and still continued to do, upon all such persons that should commit the like crime. It is an

observation frequently made by the Jews, on those words in Ge 4:10 “the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me”, that

”it is not said in the Hebrew text, the blood of thy brother, but the bloods of thy brother; his blood, and the blood of his seed<sup>401</sup>; and that from hence may be learned, that the blood of his children, and of his children’s children, and of all his offspring, to the end of all generations, that should proceed from him, all stood and cried before the Lord<sup>402</sup>.

”The Jerusalem Targum paraphrases the words in this remarkable manner;”the price of the bloods of “the multitude of the righteous”, that shall spring from Abel thy brother.

”And Onkelos thus,

”the voice of the blood of the seed that shall rise from thy brother,

**unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.**

Learned men are very much divided about this person, who he was. Some think our Lord speaks prophetically of Zechariah, the son of Baruch; who, as Josephus says<sup>403</sup>, was slain in the middle of the temple, just before the siege of Jerusalem; and who was, as he also relates, a rich man, of an illustrious family, a hater of wickedness, and a friend to liberty: and because, as Abel was the first man that was slain, and this man being killed in the temple, at the close of the Jewish state; and because the words may be rendered, “whom ye shall have slain”, therefore he is thought to be intended: but there are several things that do not agree with him, besides its being a narration of a fact, as past, according to the usual rendering of the word: for this Zacharias was the son of Baruch, and not Barachias, which are two different names; he was killed in the middle of the temple, not between the temple and the altar; nor does he appear to be a man of such great character, as to be distinguished in this manner; and besides, his death was what the Jews did not consent to in general, and therefore could not be charged with it; he was acquitted by the sanhedrim of the charge of treachery laid against him, and was assassinated by two zealots. Others have thought that Zacharias, the father

<sup>401</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 22. fol. 20. 1. Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 5. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. affirm. 98.

<sup>402</sup> Abot. R. Nathan, c. 31.

<sup>403</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 1.

<sup>399</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 8. 2.

<sup>400</sup> Juchasin, fol. 5. 2.

of John the Baptist, is meant, who is supposed to be murdered by the Jews very lately; and it being a recent action, is mentioned by our Lord: the reason of it is a tradition, which several ancient writers<sup>404</sup> speak of, and is pretended to be this; that there was a place, in the temple appropriated to virgins, and that Mary, the mother of our Lord, after his birth, came and took her place here, as a virgin, when the Jews, knowing her to have a child, objected to it; but Zechariah, who was acquainted with the mystery of the incarnation, ordered her to keep her place, upon which the Jews slew him upon the spot: but this tradition is not to be depended on; nor does it appear that there ever was any such particular place in the temple assigned to virgins; nor that the father of this Zacharias was Barachias; or that the son was slain by the Jews, and in this place. Others have been of opinion, that Zechariah the prophet is designed; and indeed, he is said to be the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, Zec 1:1 and the Jewish Targumist speaks of a Zechariah, the son of Iddo, as slain by the Jews in the temple. His words are these<sup>405</sup>;

”as ye slew Zechariah, the son of Iddo, the high priest, and faithful prophet, in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, on the day of atonement; because he reprov'd you, that ye might not do that evil which is before the Lord.”

And him the Jews make to be the same with Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, in Isa 8:2 and read Berechiah<sup>406</sup>; but the Targumist seems to confound Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, with him; for the prophet Zechariah was not an high priest, Joshua was high priest in his time; nor does it appear from any writings, that he was killed by the Jews; nor is it probable that they would be guilty of such a crime, just upon their return from captivity; and besides, he could not be slain in such a place, because the temple, and altar, were not yet built: it remains, that it must be Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who was slain in the court of the house of the Lord, 2Ch 24:20 who, as Abel was the first, he is the last of the righteous men whose death is related in the Scriptures, and for whose blood vengeance was required, as for Abel's. He was slain in the court of the house of the Lord; and so the Ethiopic version here renders it, in the midst of the holy

house. It is often said by the Jewish writer<sup>407</sup>, that

”R. Joden (sometimes it is R. Jonathan) asked R. Acha, whether they slew Zechariah, in the court of the Israelites, or in the court of the women? he answered him, neither in the court of the Israelites, nor in the court of the women, but in the court of the priests

And elsewhere they say<sup>408</sup>, that they

”slew a priest and a prophet in the sanctuary; this is Zechariah the son of Jehoiada.”

Now it should be observed, that the temple, or sanctuary, is sometimes put for the whole sacred building, with all its courts and appurtenances; and sometimes, as in this text, for that part of it that was covered, between which, and the altar of burnt offerings, in the court of the priests, which must he here meant, and not the altar of incense, in the most holy place, was a space of twenty two cubits<sup>409</sup>, frequently called, in Jewish writings, the space between the porch and the altar; that is, the porch which led into the temple, and the brazen altar in the court of the priests, which was open to the air, and is the very spot here intended. Now this was a very sacred place, and is mentioned as an aggravation of the sin of the Jews, that they should enter where none but priests might; nor these neither that had any defect in them; and defile it also by shedding innocent blood.

”The court of the Israelites is holier than the court of the women; because those that wanted atonement might not enter there; and a defiled person that entered there, was obliged to be cut off: the court of the priests was holier than that, because the Israelites might not enter there, but in the time of their necessities, for laying on of hands for atonement, for killing and waving: the place between the porch and the altar was holier than that; for such that had any blemishes, or were bareheaded, or had their garments rent, might not enter<sup>410</sup>.”

’Hence they say<sup>411</sup>, that

407 T. Hieros. Tannioth, fol. 69. 1.

408 Echa Rabbati, fol. 55. 1.

409 Misn. Middot, c. 3. sect. 6.

410 Maimon. Beth. Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 18, 19, 20. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 4.

411 T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 1. & 58. 3. Midrash Kobelet, fol. 68. 4.

404 Origen. in Matth. T. 3. Homil. 26. fol. 44. Greg. Nyssen. in diem nat. Christ. Vol. 2. p. 777. Basil. de human. gen. Christ. & Theophylact. in loc.

405 Targum in Lam. ii. 20.

406 T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 2

”the Israelites committed seven transgressions on that day: they slew a priest, and a prophet, and a judge; and they shed innocent blood, and they blasphemed God, and defiled the court, and it was a sabbath day, and the day of atonement.’

The chief objections to its being this Zechariah are, that the names do agree; the one being the son of Jehoiada, the other the son of Barachias; and the killing of him was eight hundred years before this time; when it might have been thought our Lord would have instanced in a later action: and this he speaks of, he ascribes to the men of that generation: to which may be replied, that as to the difference of names, the father of this Zechariah might have two names, which is no unusual thing; besides, these two names signify much the same thing; Jehoiada signifies praise the Lord, and Barachias bless the Lord; just as Eliakim and Jehoiakim, are names of the same person, and signify the same thing, 2Ch 36:4. Moreover, Jerom tells us, that in the Hebrew copy of this Gospel used by the Nazarenes, he found the name Jehoiada instead of Barachias: and as to the action being done so long ago, what has been suggested already may be an answer to it, that it was the last on record in the writings of the Old Testament; and that his blood, as Abel’s, is said to require vengeance: and Christ might the rather pitch upon this action, because it was committed on a very great and worthy man, and in the holy place, and by the body of the people, at the command of their king, and with their full approbation, and consent: and therefore, though this was not done by the individual persons in being in Christ’s time, yet by the same people; and so they are said to slay him, and his blood is required of them: and their horrible destruction was a punishment for that load of national guilt, which had been for many hundreds of years contracting, and heaping upon them.

#### **Matthew 23:36**

Ver. 36. **Verily I say unto you,**

An usual form of introducing something of moment to raise attention to it, and to ascertain the truth of it:

**all these things shall come upon this generation;**

all the things which Christ had foretold should come to pass in the present age; as that the apostles and ministers of the word he should send to them, some of them they would kill and crucify, and others they would scourge in their synagogues, or persecute from place to place; and all the horrible murders and bloodshed in any age, committed by that people, would be placed to the

account of the men of that generation; and the guilt of them imputed to them, and the punishment due unto them be inflicted on them. And which came to pass, and had its full accomplishment about forty years after this, in the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and the whole nation; so that many now living were personally involved in that temporal ruin, as well as escaped not the damnation of hell, Mt 23:33.

#### **Matthew 23:37**

Ver. 37. **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,**

The metropolis of Judea, the seat of the kings of Judah, yea, the city of the great king; the place of divine worship, once the holy and faithful city, the joy of the whole earth; wherefore it was strange that the following things should be said of it. The word is repeated to show our Lord’s affection and concern for that city, as well as to upbraid it with its name, dignity, and privileges; and designs not the building of the city, but the inhabitants of it; and these not all, but the rulers and governors of it, civil and ecclesiastical; especially the great sanhedrim, which were held in it, to whom best belong the descriptive characters of killing the prophets, and stoning them that were sent by God unto them; since it belonged to them to take cognizance of such who called themselves prophets, and to examine, and judge them, and, if false, to condemn them <sup>412</sup>; hence that saying of Christ, Luke 13:33 which goes before the same words, as here, “it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem”: and who are manifestly distinguished from their “children”: it being usual to call such as were the heads of the people, either in a civil or ecclesiastic sense, “fathers”, and their subjects and disciples, “children”: besides, our Lord’s discourse throughout the whole context is directed to the Scribes and Pharisees, the ecclesiastic guides of the people, and to whom the civil governors paid a special regard.

**Thou that killest the prophets;**

that is, with the sword, with which the prophets in Elijah’s time were slain by the children of Israel, 1Ki 19:10 and which was one of the capital punishments inflicted by the Jewish sanhedrim <sup>413</sup>; and also that which follows was another of them.

**And stonest them which were sent unto thee;**

as particularly Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, before mentioned. The Jews themselves are obliged to own, that this character belongs to them: say <sup>414</sup> they,

<sup>412</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 5.

<sup>413</sup> lb. c. 7. sect. 1.

<sup>414</sup> R. Isaac Arama in Gen. xlvi. apud Galatin. Arcan.

”when the word of God shall come, who is his messenger, we will honour him. Says R. Saul, did not the prophets come, Μωνυρηω, “and we killed them”, and shed their blood, and how shall we receive his word? or how shall we believe?”

And a celebrated writer of their’s, on those words <sup>415</sup>, “but now murderers”, has this note;

”they have killed Uriah, they have killed Zechariah.”

**How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!**

Christ here speaks as a man, and the minister of the circumcision, and expresses an human affection for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and an human wish, and will for their temporal good; which he very aptly signifies by the hen, which is a very affectionate creature to its young, and which it endeavours to screen from danger, by covering with its wings. So the “Shekinah” with the Jews is called, αψψδθ αρτυ, “the holy bird” <sup>416</sup>; and that phrase, לחות חתה כנפי השכינה “to betake one’s self, or to come to trust under the wings of the Shekinah”, is often used <sup>417</sup> for to become a proselyte to the true religion, and worship of God, as Jethro, and Ruth the Moabitess did. An expression much like to this here is used by an apocryphal writer of 2 Esdras:”

I gathered you together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings: but now, what shall I do unto you? I will cast you out from my face.” (2 Esdras 1:30)

It seems to be a simile much in use with that people. Our Lord is to be understood not of his divine will, as God, to gather the people of the Jews internally, by his Spirit and grace, to himself; for all those whom Christ would gather, in this sense, were gathered, notwithstanding all the opposition made by the rulers of the people; but of his human affection and will, as a man, and a minister, to gather them to him externally, by, and under the ministry of his word, to hear him preach; so as that they might be brought to a conviction of, and an assent unto him as the Messiah; which, though it might fall short of faith in him, would have been sufficient to

have preserved them from temporal ruin, threatened to their city and temple, in the following verse. Instances of the human affection, and will of Christ, may be observed in Mark 10:21 which will of his, though not contrary to the divine will, but subordinate to it, yet not always the same with it, nor always fulfilled: whereas his divine will, or his will as God, is, always fulfilled: “who hath resisted his will?” this cannot be hindered, and made void; he does whatsoever he pleases: and further, that this will of Christ to gather the Jews to himself, is to be understood of his human, and not divine will, is manifest from hence, that this will was in him, and expressed by him at certain several times, by intervals; and therefore he says, “how often would I have gathered”, &c. whereas the divine will is one continued, invariable, and unchangeable will, is always the same, and never begins or ceases to be, and to which such an expression is inapplicable; and therefore these words do not contradict the absolute and sovereign will of God, in the distinguishing acts of it, respecting the choice of some persons, and the leaving of others. And it is to be observed, that the persons whom Christ would have gathered, are not represented as being unwilling to be gathered; but their rulers were not willing that they should, and be made proselytes to him, and come under his wings. It is not said, “how often would I have gathered you, and you would not!” nor, “I would have gathered Jerusalem, and she would not”; nor, “I would have gathered thy children, and they would not”; but, “how often would I have gathered thy children, and ye would not!” Which observation alone is sufficient to destroy the argument founded on this passage in favour of free will. Had Christ expressed his desire to have gathered the heads of the people to him, the members of the Jewish sanhedrim, the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews: or had he signified how much he wished, and earnestly sought after, and attempted to gather Jerusalem, the children, the inhabitants of it in common, and neither of them would not; it would have carried some appearance of the doctrine of free will, and have seemed to have countenanced it, and have imputed the non-gathering of them to their own will: though had it been said, “they would not”, instead of, “ye would not”, it would only have furnished out a most sad instance of the perverseness of the will of man, which often opposes his temporal, as well as his spiritual good; and would rather show it to be a slave to that which is evil, than free to that which is good; and would be a proof of this, not in a single person only,

Cath. ver. l. 3. c. 5.

<sup>415</sup> Jarchi in Isa. i. 21.

<sup>416</sup> Zohar in Numb. fol. 106. 3. & Imre binah in ib.

<sup>417</sup> Tzeror Hammor, fol. 77. 4. & 115. 2. Vid. Targum in Ruth ii. 12. Zohar in Exod. fol. 28. 3. & 29. 2.

but in a body of men. The opposition and resistance to the will of Christ were not made by the people, but by their governors. The common people seemed inclined to attend his ministry, as appears from the vast crowds, which, at different times and places, followed him; but the chief priests, and rulers, did all they could to hinder the collection of them to him, and their belief in him as the Messiah; by traducing his character, miracles, and doctrines, and by menacing the people with curses, and excommunications, making a law, that whoever confessed him should be turned out of the synagogue. So that the plain meaning of the text is the same with that of Mt 23:13 and consequently is no proof of men's resisting the operations of the Spirit and grace of God; but only shows what obstructions and discouragements were thrown in the way of attendance on the external ministry of the word. In order to set aside, and overthrow the doctrine of grace, in election, and particular redemption, and effectual calling, it should be proved that Christ, as God, would have gathered, not Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it only, but all mankind, even such as are not eventually saved, and that in a spiritual, saving way and manner, to himself; of which there is not the least intimation in this text: and in order to establish the resistibility of the grace of God, by the perverse will of man, so as to become of no effect; it should be shown that Christ would have savingly converted persons, and they would not be converted; and that he bestowed the same grace upon them, he does bestow on others, who are converted: whereas the sum of this passage lies in these few words, that Christ, as man, out of a compassionate regard for the people of the Jews, to whom, he was sent as the minister of the circumcision, would have gathered them together under his ministry, and have instructed them in the knowledge of himself, as the Messiah; which if they had only notionally received, would have secured them, as chickens under the hen, from impending judgments, which afterwards fell upon them; but their governors, and not they, would not; that is, would not suffer them to receive him, and embrace him as the Messiah. So that from the whole it appears, that this passage of Scripture, so much talked of by the Arminians, and so often cited by them, has nothing to do with the controversy about the doctrines of election and reprobation, particular redemption, efficacious grace in conversion, and the power of man's free will. This observation alone is sufficient to destroy the argument founded on this passage, in favour of free will.

#### Matthew 23:38

Ver. 38. **Behold your house is left unto you desolate.**

Signifying that the city in which they dwelt, where they had their ceiled houses, and stately palaces, would, in a little time, within the space of forty years, be destroyed, and become a desert; and the temple, formerly the house of God, but now only their's, and in which they trusted, would be abandoned by God, he would grant his presence no more in it; and the Messiah, the proprietor of it, and who was now in it, would then take his leave of it, and never more return to it; and that also should share the same fate as the city, and at the same time. Our Lord seems to have in view those passages in Jer 12:7 and which the Jewish <sup>418</sup> writers understood of the temple. The author of the apocryphal the second book of Esdras has much such an expression as this: "Thus saith the Almighty Lord, Your house is desolate, I will cast you out as the wind doth stubble." (2 Esdras 1:33)

#### Matthew 23:39

Ver. 39. **For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth,**

Meaning in a very little time after the passover, from the time of his crucifixion and death; otherwise they saw him many times after this, as in the palace of the high priest, in Pilate's judgment hall, and on the cross; but not after his resurrection. This shows the reason of their house being desolate, and in what sense it should be so, and immediately became so; namely, by being then directly, and ever after, destitute of his presence: and though they might afterwards seek for, and expect the Messiah in it, yet they would never be able to see him, nor throughout their long captivity: till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; that is, until the time comes, that the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all Israel shall be saved, the Jews shall be converted, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; when they shall readily and cheerfully say these words to Christ, who will then appear in his glory; which they were now displeased at in the multitude that followed him, and the children in the temple. Though some think this is said by way of threatening, since the rest that is spoken to them by Christ is of that sort, and regards the men of that generation; and is given as a reason of their house being left desolate: and the sense is, that they should never see him with joy and pleasure; since, though they would be obliged to confess that he was Lord and Christ, they would never say the above words to him in faith, and holy reverence of him. The

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418 Targum & Kimchi in Jer. xii. 7.

Cambridge exemplar of Beza's, and the Persic versions, read, "in the name of God."

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

### CHAPTER XXIV

*1 Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple. 3 what and how great calamities shall be before it. 29 the signs of his coming to judgement. 36 And because that day and hour is unknown. 42 we ought to watch like good servants, expecting every moment our masters coming.*

Matthew 24

- [1] And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.
- [2] And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.
- [3] And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?
- [4] And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.
- [5] For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.
- [6] And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.
- [7] For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.
- [8] All these are the beginning of sorrows.
- [9] Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.
- [10] And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.
- [11] And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.
- [12] And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.
- [13] But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.
- [14] And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.
- [15] When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)
- [16] Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:
- [17] Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:
- [18] Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.
- [19] And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!
- [20] But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:
- [21] For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
- [22] And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.
- [23] Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.
- [24] For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.
- [25] Behold, I have told you before.
- [26] Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.
- [27] For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
- [28] For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.
- [29] Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:
- [30] And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
- [31] And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
- [32] Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

- [33] So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.
- [34] Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.
- [35] Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.
- [36] But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.
- [37] But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
- [38] For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,
- [39] And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
- [40] Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
- [41] Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
- [42] Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.
- [43] But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.
- [44] Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.
- [45] Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?
- [46] Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.
- [47] Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.
- [48] But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;
- [49] And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;
- [50] The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,
- [51] And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW  
CHAPTER XXIV

**Matthew 24:1**

Ver. 1. **And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple,**

He not only went out of it for that time, but took his final leave of it, never to return more to it; having foretold its desolation, which he, in part, by so doing, immediately fulfilled: this the disciples observing, and being intent on the outward splendour, and worldly grandeur of it, were concerned that so beautiful a structure should be deserted; and almost thought it incredible, that so strong, and firm a building could be destroyed.

**And his disciples came unto him:**

as he went, and as soon as he was come out of the temple, and whilst in view of it:

**for to show him the buildings of the temple;**

the walls of it, and courts adjoining to it, how beautiful and firm they were: whether this was done by them to raise in him admiration or commiseration, in hopes he might change the sentence he had passed upon it, is not easy to say; or whether this did not express their incredulity about the desolation of it; which Christ's answer, in the next verse, seems to imply. Mark says, it was "one of the disciples" that observed these to him, who might be accompanied with the rest, and in their name address him; and who, probably, might be Peter, since he was generally their mouth; and that he should speak to him in this manner: "master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" Luke says, "how it was adorned with goodly stones, and gifts." The Jews give very great encomiums of the second temple, as repaired by Herod; and it was undoubtedly a very fine structure. They say <sup>419</sup>, that he built the house of the sanctuary, "an exceeding beautiful building"; and that he repaired the temple, in beauty "greatly exceeding" that of Solomon's <sup>420</sup>. They moreover observe <sup>421</sup>, that

"he who has not seen the building of Herod, has never seen, בניין נאה, "a beautiful building." With what is it built? says Rabbah, with stones of green and white marble. And there are others say, that it was built with stones of spotted green and white marble."

These, very likely, were the very stones the disciples pointed to, and admired; and were of a prodigious size, as well as worth. Some of the stones were, as Josephus <sup>422</sup>

<sup>419</sup> Juchasin, fol. 139. 1.

<sup>420</sup> Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24. 2.

<sup>421</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1. & Succa, fol. 51. 2.

<sup>422</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5

says,

“forty five cubits long, five high, and six broad.”

Others of them, as he elsewhere affirm <sup>423</sup>,

“were twenty five cubits long, eight high, and twelve broad.”

And he also tells us, in the same place, that there were,

“in the porches, four rows of pillars: the thickness of each pillar was as much as three men, with their arms stretched out, and joined together, could grasp; the length twenty seven feet, and the number of them an hundred and sixty two, and beautiful to a miracle.”

At the size of those stones, and the beauty of the work, it is said <sup>424</sup>, Titus was astonished, when he destroyed the temple; at which time his soldiers plundered it, and took away “the gifts”, with which it is also said to be adorned. These were rich and valuable things which were dedicated to it, and either laid up in it, or hung upon the walls and pillars of it, as it was usual in other temples <sup>425</sup>. These may, intend the golden table given by Pompey, and the spoils which Herod dedicated; and particularly the golden vine, which was a gift of his <sup>426</sup>; besides multitudes of other valuable things, which were greatly enriching and ornamental to it. Now the disciples suggest, by observing these, what a pity it was such a grand edifice should be destroyed; or how unaccountable it was; that a place of so much strength, could easily be demolished.

#### **Matthew 24:2**

Ver. 2. **And Jesus said unto them, see ye not all these things?**

“These great buildings”, as in Mark; all these goodly stones, so beautiful and large, and so firmly put together:

**verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down;**

or broken, as Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads it: which prediction had a full and remarkable accomplishment; and which is not only attested by Josephus <sup>427</sup>, who relates, that both the city and temple were dug up, and laid level with the ground; but also by other Jewish writers; who tell us <sup>428</sup> that

<sup>423</sup> Antiq. Jud. l. 15. c. 14.

<sup>424</sup> Egesippus, l. 5. c. 43.

<sup>1275</sup> Vid. Ryckium de Capitol. Rom. c. 21, &c.

<sup>426</sup> Joseph. Antiq. l. 15.

<sup>427</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 7.

<sup>428</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Taaniot, c. 5. sect. 3. T. Bab. Taanith,

“on the ninth of Ab, a day prepared for punishments, Turnus Rufus the wicked, lkyhh ta vrx, “ploughed up the temple”, and all round about it, to fulfil what is said, “Zion shall be ploughed as a field.”

Yes, and to fulfil what Christ here says too, that not one stone should be left upon another, which a plough would not admit of.

#### **Matthew 24:3**

Ver. 3. **And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives,**

Which was on the east of the city of Jerusalem <sup>429</sup>, “over against the temple”, as Mark says, and where he could sit and take a full view of it; for the wall on the east side was lower than any other, and that for this reason; that when the high priest burnt the red heifer on this mount, as he did, and sprinkled the blood, he might have a view of the gate of the temple. It is said <sup>430</sup>,

“all the walls which were there, were very high, except the eastern wall; for the high priest, when he burned the heifer, stood on the top of the mount of Olives, and directed himself, and looked to the gate of the temple, at the time he sprinkled the blood.”

This place, very probably, our Lord chose to sit in, that he might give his disciples an occasion to discourse more largely with him on this subject; and that he might take the opportunity of acquainting them with what would be the signs and forerunners of this desolation, and so it proved:

**the disciples came to him privately;**

these four at least, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, as Mark relates; and that either separately from the rest of the disciples, or from the multitude: it might not be thought so proper, to ask the following questions before them, and they might suppose that Christ would not be so ready to give an answer to them plainly, before the common people; when they might hope to be indulged with one by him, in private:

**saying, tell us, when shall these things be?**

That this house will be left desolate, these buildings will be destroyed, and not one stone left upon another? This first question relates purely to the destruction of the temple, and to this Christ first answers, from Mt 24:4.

**And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of**  
fol. 23. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

<sup>429</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>1280</sup> Misn. lb. c. 2. sect. 4.



**the end of the world?**

Which two are put together, as what they supposed would be at the same time, and immediately follow the destruction of the temple. That he was come in the flesh, and was the true Messiah, they firmly believed: he was with them, and they expected he would continue with them, for they had no notion of his leaving them, and coming again. When he at any time spake of his dying and rising from the dead, they seemed not to understand it: wherefore this coming of his, the sign of which, they inquire, is not to be understood of his coming a second time to judge the world, at the last day; but of his coming in his kingdom and glory, which they had observed him some little time before to speak of; declaring that some present should not die, till they saw it: wherefore they wanted to be informed, by what sign they might know, when he would set up his temporal kingdom; for since the temple was to be destroyed, they might hope a new one would be built, much more magnificent than this, and which is a Jewish notion; and that a new state of things would commence; the present world, or age, would be at a period; and the world to come, they had so often heard of from the Jewish doctors, would take place; and therefore they ask also, of the sign of the end of the world, or present state of things in the Jewish economy: to this Christ answers, in the latter part of this chapter, though not to the sense in which they put the questions; yet in the true sense of the coming of the son of man, and the end of the world; and in such a manner, as might be very instructive to them, and is to us.

**Matthew 24:4**

Ver. 4. **And Jesus answered and said unto them,**... Not to indulge their curiosity, but to instruct them in things useful to be known, and which might be cautions to them and others, against deceivers; confirm them in the faith of himself, when they should see his predictions accomplished; and be directions to them, of what might shortly be expected.

**Take heed that no man deceive you:** by pretending to come from God with a new revelation, setting himself up for the Messiah, after my departure; suggesting himself to be the person designed by God to be the deliverer of Israel, and to be sent by him, to set up a temporal kingdom, in great worldly splendour and glory; promising great names, and high places of honour and trust in it; things which Christ knew his disciples were fond of, and were in danger of being ensnared by; and therefore gives them this suitable and seasonable advice,

and caution.

**Matthew 24:5**

Ver. 5. **For many shall come in my name,**

by his orders, or with delegated powers and authority from him; but should assume the name of the Messiah, which was peculiarly his, to themselves; and take upon them his office, and challenge the honour and dignity which belonged unto him:

**saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.** This is the first sign, preceding the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; as there was a general expectation among the Jews of a Messiah; that is, of one that should arise and deliver them from the Roman yoke, which was the common idea tacked to that word; in this period of time, many set up themselves to be deliverers and redeemers of the people of Israel: who had each of them their followers in great numbers, whom they imposed upon, and brought to destruction. Of this sort was Theudas, not he that Gamaliel speaks of, Ac 5:36 for he was before this time; but one that was in the time of Claudius Caesar, when Cuspius Fadus was governor of Judea; who persuaded a great number to follow him to the river Jordan, which he promised to divide, by a word of command, and give them a passage over; and thereby, as the historian observes <sup>431</sup>, πολλοὺς ἠπατήσθη, “he deceived many”; which is the very thing that is here predicted: but he and his company were routed Fadus, and his head cut off. There was another called the Egyptian, mentioned in Ac 21:38 who made an uproar, and led four thousand cut-throats into the wilderness; and this same man persuaded thirty thousand men to follow him to Mount Olivet, promising a free passage into the city; but he being vanquished by Felix, then governor of Judea; fled, and many of his followers were killed and taken <sup>432</sup>: and besides, there were many more magicians and impostors, that pretended to signs and wonders, and promised the people deliverance from their evils, by whom they were imposed upon to their ruin. There were others also besides these, that set up for deliverers, who called themselves by the name of the Messiah. Among these, we may reckon Simon Magus, who gave out that he was some great one; yea, expressly, that he was the word of God, and the Son of God <sup>433</sup>, which were known names of the Messiah; and Dositheus the Samaritan, asserted himself to be Christ <sup>434</sup>; and also

<sup>431</sup> Joseph. Antiq. l. 20. c. 2.

<sup>432</sup> Joseph. Antiq. l. 20. c. 6.

<sup>433</sup> Jerom in loc. Iren. adv. Haeres. l. 1. c. 20.

<sup>434</sup> Origen contr. Cels. l. 1. p. 44.

Menander affirmed, that no man could be saved, unless he was baptized in his name<sup>435</sup>; these are instances before the destruction of Jerusalem, and confirm the prophecy here delivered.

**Matthew 24:6**

Ver. 6. **And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars,**

This is the second sign of the destruction of Jerusalem: it is observable that this, and some of the following signs, are given by the Jews, as signs of the Messiah's coming; whereas they were forerunners of their ruin, for the rejection of him who was already come. They suppose the Messiah will come in the seventh year, or the year of rest and release:

“On the seventh year (they say<sup>436</sup> will be מלחמות “wars”: and in the going out, or at the close of the seventh year, the son of David will come.”

Which wars, the gloss says, will be between the nations of the world, and Israel. Here wars may mean the commotions, insurrections, and seditions, against the Romans, and their governors; and the intestine slaughters committed among them, some time before the siege of Jerusalem, and the destruction of it. Under Cureanus the Roman governor, a sedition was raised on the day of the passover, in which twenty thousand perished; after that, in another tumult, ten thousand were destroyed by cut-throats: in Ascalon two thousand more, in Ptolemais two thousand, at Alexandria fifty thousand, at Damascus ten thousand, and elsewhere in great numbers<sup>437</sup>. The Jews were also put into great consternation, upon hearing the design of the Roman emperor, to put up his image in their temple:

**see that ye be not troubled;**

so as to leave the land of Judea as yet, and quit the preaching of the Gospel there, as if the final destruction was just at hand;

**for all these things must come to pass;**

these wars and the reports of them and the panic on account of them; these commotions and slaughters, and terrible devastations by the sword must be; being determined by God, predicted by Christ, and brought upon the Jews by their own wickedness; and suffered in righteous judgment, for their sin:

**but the end is not yet;**

<sup>435</sup> Tertull. de prescript. Haeret. c. 46.

<sup>436</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. & Megilia, fol. 17. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 3. 3, 4.

<sup>437</sup> Vid. Joseph. Antiq. l. 20. c. 6. & de Bello Jud. l. 2, &c.

meaning not the end of the world, but the end of Jerusalem, and the temple, the end of the Jewish state; which were to continue, and did continue after these disturbances in it.

**Matthew 24:7**

Ver. 7 **For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,**

This seems to be a distinct and third sign, foreboding the general calamity of the Jews; that there should be not only seditions and intestine wars, in the midst of their country, but there should be wars in other nations, one with another; and with the Jews, and the Jews with them: and this also is made a sign of the Messiah's coming by them, for so they say<sup>438</sup>;

“when thou seest, מלכיות מתנרות אלו באלו באלו, “kingdoms stirred up one against another”, look for the feet of the Messiah: know thou that so it shall be; for so it was in the days of Abraham: by the means of kingdoms stirred up one against another, redemption came to Abraham.”

Poor blinded creatures! when these very things were the forerunners of their destruction. And so it was, the Jewish nation rose up against others, the Samaritans, Syrians, and Romans: there were great commotions in the Roman empire, between Otho and Vitellius, and Vitellius and Vespasian; and at length the Romans rose up against the Jews, under the latter, and entirely destroyed them; compare the writings in 2 Esdras:

“And one shall undertake to fight against another, one city against another, one place against another, one people against another, and one realm against another.” (2 Esdras 13:31)

“the beginning of sorrows and great mournings; the beginning of famine and great death; the beginning of wars, and the powers shall stand in fear; the beginning of evils! what shall I do when these evils shall come?” (2 Esdras 16:18)

“Therefore when there shall be seen earthquakes and uproars of the people in the world:” (2 Esdras 9:3)

**And there shall be famines:**

a fourth sign of the desolation of the city and temple, and which the Jews also say, shall go before the coming of the Messiah:

“in the second year (of the week of years) in  
<sup>438</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 1.

which the son of David comes, they say <sup>439</sup>, there will be “arrows of famine” sent forth; and in the third year, רב גדול, “a great famine”: and men, women, and children, and holy men, and men of business, shall die.”

But these have been already; they followed the Messiah, and preceded their destruction: one of these famines was in Claudius Caesar’s time, was foretold by Agabus, and is mentioned in Ac 11:28 and most dreadful ones there were, whilst Jerusalem was besieged, and before its utter ruin, related by Josephus.

#### **And pestilences:**

a pestilence is described by the Jews after this manner <sup>440</sup>:

“a city that produces a thousand and five hundred footmen, as Cephar Aco, and nine dead men are carried out of it in three days, one after another, זה דבר לו! “this is a pestilence”; but if in one day, or in four days, it is no pestilence; and a city that produces five hundred footmen, as Cephar Amiko, and three dead men are carried out of it in three days, one after another, lo! this is a pestilence.”

These commonly attend famines, and are therefore mentioned together; and when the one was, the other may be supposed sooner or later to be:

#### **and earthquakes in divers places**

of the world; as, at Crete <sup>441</sup>, and in divers cities in Asia <sup>442</sup>, in the times of Nero: particularly the three cities of Phrygia, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse; which were near to each other, and are all said to perish this way, in his reign <sup>443</sup>;

“and Rome itself felt a tremor, in the reign of Galba <sup>444</sup>.”

#### **Matthew 24:8**

Ver. 8. **All these are the beginning of sorrows,**

They were only a prelude unto them, and forerunners of them; they were only some foretastes of what would be, and were far from being the worst that should be endured. These were but light, in comparison of what

befell the Jews, in their dreadful destruction. The word here used, signifies the sorrows and pains of a woman in travail. The Jews expect great sorrows and distresses in the times of the Messiah, and use a word to express them by, which answers to this, and call them, xyvmh ylbx, “the sorrows of the Messiah”; חבלי, they say <sup>445</sup>, signifies the sorrows of a woman in travail; and the Syriac version uses the same word here. These they represent to be very great, and express much concern to be delivered from them. They <sup>446</sup> ask,

“what shall a man do, to be delivered from “the sorrows of the Messiah?” He must employ himself in the law, and in liberality.”

And again <sup>447</sup>,

“he that observes the three meals on the sabbath day, shall be delivered from three punishments; from “the sorrows of the Messiah”, from the judgment of hell, and from Gog and Magog.”

But alas there was no other way of escaping them, but by faith in the true Messiah, Jesus; and it was for their disbelief and rejection of him, that these came upon them.

#### **Matthew 24:9**

Ver. 9. **Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted,....** Our Lord proceeds to acquaint his disciples, what should befall them in this interval; and quite contrary to their expectations, who were looking for a temporal kingdom, and worldly grandeur, assures them of afflictions, persecutions, and death; that about these times, when these various signs should appear, and this beginning of sorrows take place; whilst these will be fulfilling in Judea, and other parts of the world; the Jews continuing in their obstinacy and unbelief, would deliver them up to the civil magistrates, to be scourged and imprisoned by them; either to their own sanhedrim, as were Peter and John; or to the Roman governors, Gallio, Festus, and Felix, as was the Apostle Paul.

#### **And shall kill you;**

as the two James, Peter, Paul, and even all the apostles, excepting John, who suffered martyrdom, and that before the destruction of Jerusalem:

**and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake;**

<sup>439</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

<sup>440</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. & 19. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Taanith, c. 2. sect. 5.

<sup>441</sup> Philostrat. in vit. Apollon. l. 4. c. 11.

<sup>442</sup> Sueton. in vit. Nero, c. 48.

<sup>443</sup> Orosius, l. 7. c. 7.

<sup>444</sup> Sueton. in vit. Galba, c. 13.

<sup>445</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 2. {

<sup>446</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

<sup>447</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 2.

as the apostles and first Christians were, both by Jews and Gentiles; the latter being stirred up against them by the former, wherever they came, and for no other reason, but because they professed and preached in the name of Christ, as the Acts of the Apostles show: and their hatred proceeded so far, as to charge all their calamities upon them; as war, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, &c. as the apologies of the first Christians declare.

**Matthew 24:10**

Ver. 10. **And then shall many be offended,**.... That is, many who had been hearers of the apostles, and professors of the Christian religion; who were highly pleased with it, and were strenuous advocates for it, whilst things were tolerably quiet and easy; but when they saw the apostles, some of them beaten, and imprisoned; others put to death, and others forced to fly from place to place; and persecutions and affliction, because of Christ and his Gospel, likely to befall themselves, would be discouraged hereby, and stumble at the cross; and fall off from the faith of the Gospel, and the profession of it:

**and shall betray one another;**

meaning, that the apostates, who would fall off from the Christian religion, would prove treacherous to true believers, and give in their names to the persecutors, or inform them where they were, that they might take them, or deliver them into their hands themselves: these are the false brethren, the Apostle Paul was in perils among:

**and shall hate one another;**

not that the true Christians should hate these false brethren, any more than betray them; for they are taught to love all men, even their enemies; but these apostates should hate them, in whose communion they before were, and to whom they belonged; and even to a very great degree of hatred, as it often is seen, that such who turn their backs on Christ, and his Gospel, prove the most bitter enemies, and most violent persecutors of its preachers and followers.

**Matthew 24:11**

Ver. 11. **And many false prophets shall rise,**

Out of, from among the churches of Christ; at least under the name of Christians; for false teachers are here meant, men of heretical principles, pretending to a spirit of prophecy, and to new revelations, and a better understanding of the Scriptures; such as Simon Magus, Ebion, and Cerinthus, who denied the proper deity, and real humanity of Christ; Carpocrates, and the Gnostics his followers, the Nicolaitans, Hymeneus, Philetus, and others:

**and shall deceive many:**

as they all of them had their followers, and large numbers of them, whose faith was subverted by them; and who followed their pernicious ways, being imposed upon and seduced by their fair words, specious pretences, and licentious practices.

**Matthew 24:12**

Ver. 12. **And because iniquity shall abound,**

Meaning, either the malice and wickedness of outrageous persecutors, which should greatly increase; or the treachery and hatred of the apostates; or the errors and heresies of false teachers; or the wickedness that prevailed in the lives and conversations of some, that were called Christians: for each of these seem to be hinted at in the context, and may be all included, as making up the abounding iniquity here spoken of; the consequence of which would be,

**the love of many shall wax cold.**

This would be the case of many, but not of all; for in the midst of this abounding iniquity, there were some, the ardour of whose love to Christ, to his Gospel, and to the saints, did not abate: but then there were many, whose zeal for Christ, through the violence of persecution, was greatly damped; and through the treachery of false brethren, were shy of the saints themselves, not knowing who to trust; and through the principles of the false teachers, the power of godliness, and the vital heat of religion, were almost lost; and through a love of the world, and of carnal ease and pleasure, love to the saints was grown very chill, and greatly left; as the instances of Demas, and those that forsook the Apostle Paul, at his first answer before Nero, show. This might be true of such, who were real believers in Christ; who might fall under great decays, through the prevalence of iniquity; since it does not say their love shall be lost, but wax cold.

**Matthew 24:13**

Ver. 13. **But he that shall endure to the end,**

In the profession of faith in Christ, notwithstanding the violent persecutions of wicked men; and in the pure and incorrupt doctrines of the Gospel, whilst many are deceived by the false teachers that shall arise; and in holiness of life and conversation, amidst all the impurities of the age; and shall patiently bear all afflictions, to the end of his life, or to the end of sorrows, of which the above mentioned were the beginning:

**the same shall be saved;**

with a temporal salvation, when Jerusalem, and the unbelieving inhabitants of it shall be destroyed: for

those that believed in Christ, many of them, through persecution, were obliged to remove from thence; and others, by a voice from heaven, were bid to go out of it, as they did; and removed to Pella, a village a little beyond Jordan <sup>448</sup>, and so were preserved from the general calamity; and also with an everlasting salvation, which is the case of all that persevere to the end, as all true believers in Christ will.

**Matthew 24:14**

Ver. 14. **And this Gospel of the kingdom,**

Which Christ himself preached, and which he called and sent his apostles to preach, in all the cities of Judah; by which means men were brought into the kingdom of the Messiah, or Gospel dispensation; and which treated both of the kingdom of grace and glory, and pointed out the saints' meetness for the kingdom of heaven, and their right unto it, and gives the best account of the glories of it:

**shall be preached in all the world;**

not only in Judea, where it was now confined, and that by the express orders of Christ himself; but in all the nations of the world, for which the apostles had their commission enlarged, after our Lord's resurrection; when they were bid to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and when the Jews put away the Gospel from them, they accordingly turned to the Gentiles; and before the destruction of Jerusalem, it was preached to all the nations under the heavens; and churches were planted in most places, through the ministry of it:

**for a witness unto all nations;**

meaning either for a witness against all such in them, as should reject it; or as a testimony of Christ and salvation, unto all such as should believe in him:

**and then shall the end come;**

not the end of the world, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and others understand it; but the end of the Jewish state, the end of the city and temple: so that the universal preaching of the Gospel all over the world, was the last criterion and sign, of the destruction of Jerusalem; and the account of that itself next follows, with the dismal circumstances which attended it.

**Matthew 24:15**

Ver. 15. **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation,**

From signs, Christ proceeds to the immediate cause of the destruction of Jerusalem; which was,

“the abomination of desolation”, or the desolating abomination; or that abominable thing, which threatened and brought desolation upon the city, temple, and nation: by which is meant, not any statue placed in the temple by the Romans, or their order; nor the golden eagle which Herod set upon the temple gate, for that was before Christ said these words; nor the image of Tiberius Caesar, which Pilate is said to bring into the temple; for this, if true, must be about this time; whereas Christ cannot be thought to refer to anything so near at hand; much less the statue of Adrian, set in the most holy place, which was an hundred and thirty years and upwards, after the destruction of the city and temple; nor the statue of Titus, who destroyed both, which does not appear: ever to be set up, or attempted; nor of Caligula, which, though ordered, was prevented being placed there: but the Roman army is designed; see Luke 21:20 which was the *כנף שקרין משמנו*, “the wing”, or “army of abominations making desolate”, Da 9:27. Armies are called wings, Isa 8:8 and the Roman armies were desolating ones to the Jews, and to whom they were an abomination; not only because they consisted of Heathen men, and uncircumcised persons, but chiefly because of the images of their gods, which were upon their ensigns: for images and idols were always an abomination to them; so the “filthiness” which Hezekiah ordered to be carried out of the holy place, 2Ch 29:5 is by the Targum called, *רִיחוקָא* “an abomination”; and this, by the Jewish writers <sup>449</sup>, is said to be an idol, which Ahaz had placed upon the altar; and such was the abomination of desolation, which Antiochus caused to be set upon the altar:

“Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side;” (1 Maccabees 1:54)

And so the Talmudic writers, by the abomination that makes desolate, in Da 12:11 to which Christ here refers, understand an image, which they say <sup>450</sup> one Apostomus, a Grecian general, who burnt their law, set up in the temple. Now our Lord observes, that when they should see the Roman armies encompassing Jerusalem,

<sup>449</sup> R. David Kimchi, & R. Sol. ben Melech, in 2 Chron. xxix. 5.

<sup>450</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 28. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. & Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Tzeror Ham, mor, fol. 46. 4. Zohar in Num. fol. 61. 1.

<sup>448</sup> Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.

with their ensigns flying, and these abominations on them, they might conclude its desolation was near at hand; and he does not so much mean his apostles, who would be most of them dead, or in other countries, when this would come to pass; but any of his disciples and followers, or any persons whatever, by whom should be seen this desolating abomination,

**spoken of by Daniel the prophet:**

not in Da 11:31 which is spoken of the abomination in the times of Antiochus; but either in

Da 12:11 or rather in Da 9:27 since this desolating abomination is that, which should follow the cutting off of the Messiah, and the ceasing of the daily sacrifice. It is to be observed, that Daniel is here called a prophet, contrary to what the Jewish writers say <sup>451</sup>, who deny him to be one; though one of <sup>452</sup> no inconsiderable note among them affirms, that he attained to the end, הנבואה הגבול "of the prophetic border", or the ultimate degree of prophecy: when therefore this that Daniel, under a spirit of prophecy, spoke of should be seen,

**standing in the holy place;**

near the walls, and round about the holy city Jerusalem, so called from the sanctuary and worship of God in it; and which, in process of time, stood in the midst of it, and in the holy temple, and destroyed both; then

**whoso readeth, let him understand:**

that is, whoever then reads the prophecy of Daniel; will easily understand the meaning of it, and will see and know for certain, that now it is accomplished; and will consider how to escape the desolating judgment, unless he is given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; which was the case of the greater part of the nation.

**Matthew 24:16**

Ver. 16. **Then let them which be in Judea,**

When this signal is given, let it be taken notice of and observed; let them that are in the city of Jerusalem, depart out of it; or who are in any other parts of Judea, in any of the towns, or cities thereof; let them not betake themselves to Jerusalem, imagining they may be safe there, in so strong and fortified a place, but let them flee elsewhere; see

Luke 21:21 and accordingly it is observed, that many did flee about this time; and it is remarked by several interpreters, and which Josephus <sup>453</sup> takes notice of with

451 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. & Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Tzeror Ham, mor, fol. 46. 4. Zohar in Num. fol. 61. 1.

452 Jacchiades in Dan. i. 17.

453 De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 19. sect. 7.

surprise, that Cestius Gallus having advanced with his army to Jerusalem, and besieged it, on a sudden, without any cause, raised the siege, and withdrew his army, when the city might have been easily taken; by which means a signal was made; and an opportunity given to the Christians, to make their escape: which they accordingly did, and went over Jordan, as Eusebius says <sup>454</sup>, to a place called Pella; so that when Titus came a few mouths after, there was not a Christian in the city, but they had fled as they are here bidden to

**flee into the mountains;**

or any places of shelter and refuge: these are mentioned particularly, because they are usually such; and design either the mountains in Judea, or in the adjacent countries. The Syriac and Persic versions read in the singular number, "into the mountain"; and it is reported that many of them did fly, particularly to Mount Libanus <sup>455</sup>.

**Matthew 24:17**

Ver. 17. **Let him which is on the housetop,**

Who should be there either for his devotion or recreation; for the houses of the Jews were built with flat roofs and battlements about them, which they made use of both for diversion and pleasure, and for private meditation and prayer, for social conversation, and sometimes for public preaching; see Mt 10:27

**not come down to take anything out of his house:**

that is, let him not come down in the inner way, but by the stairs, or ladder, on the outside of the house, which was usual. They had two ways of going out of, and into their houses; the one they call <sup>456</sup>, דרך פתחים, "the way of the doors"; the other, דרך גג, "the way of the roof": upon which the gloss is,

"to go up on the outside, דרך פולם "by way" or "means" of a ladder, fixed at the entrance of the door of the upper room, and from thence he goes down into the house by a ladder;"

and in the same way they could come out; see Mark 2:4 and let him not go into his house to take any of his goods, or money, or food along with him necessary for his sustenance in his flight; lest, whilst he is busy in taking care of these, he loses his life, or, at least, the opportunity of making his escape; so sudden is this desolation represented to be.

454 Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 5. p. 75.

455 Joseph. ib.

456 T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 117. 1.

**Matthew 24:18**

Ver. 18. **Neither let him which is in the field,**

Ploughing, or sowing, or employed in any other parts of husbandry, or rural business,

**return back to take clothes;**

for it was usual to work in the fields without their clothes, as at ploughing and sowing. Hence those words of Virgil <sup>457</sup>.

”Nudus ara, sere nudus, hyems ignava colono.”

Upon which Servius observes, that in good weather, when the sun warms the earth, men might plough and sow without their clothes: and it is reported by the historian <sup>458</sup> of Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, that the messengers who were sent to him, from Minutius the consul, whom he had delivered from a siege, found him ploughing naked beyond the Tiber: not that he was entirely naked, but was stripped of his upper garments: and it is usual for people that work in the fields to strip themselves to their shirts, and lay their clothes at the corner of the field, or at the land’s end; and which we must suppose to be the case here: for our Lord’s meaning is not, that the man working in the field, should not return home to fetch his clothes, which were not left there; they were brought with him into the field, but put off; and laid aside in some part of it while at work; but that as soon as he had the news of Jerusalem being besieged, he should immediately make the best of his way, and flee to the mountains, as Lot was bid to do at the burning of Sodom; and he might not return to the corner of the field, or land’s end, where his clothes lay, as Lot was not to look behind; though if his clothes lay in the way of his flight, he might take them up, but might not go back for them, so sudden and swift should be the desolation. The Vulgate Latin reads, in the singular number, “his coat”; and so do the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; and so it was read in four copies of Beza’s, in three of Stephens’s, and in others; and may design the upper coat or garment, which was put off whilst at work.

**Matthew 24:19**

Ver. 19. **And woe unto them that are with child,**

Not that it should be criminal for them to be with child, or a judgment on them; for it was always esteemed a blessing to be fruitful, and bear children: but this expresses the miserable circumstances such would be in, who, by reason of their heavy burdens, would not

be able to make so speedy a flight, as the case would require; or would be obliged to stay at home, and endure all the miseries of the siege: so that these words, as the following are not expressive of sin, or punishment, but of pity and concern for their misery and distress: and to them that give suck in those days; whose tender affection to their infants will not suffer them to leave them behind them; and yet such their weakness, that they will not be able to carry them with them; at least, they must be great hindrances to their speedy flight. So that the case of these is much worse than that of men on the house top, or in the field, who could much more easily leave their goods and clothes, than these their children, as well as had more agility and strength of body to flee. So twqynymw twrbwe, “women with child, and that give suck”; are mentioned together in the Jewish writings, as such as were excused from certain fasts, though obliged to others <sup>459</sup>.

**Matthew 24:20**

Ver. 20. **But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter,**

When days are short, and unfit for long journeys, and roads are bad, and sometimes not passable, through large snows, or floods of water; and when to dwell in desert places, and lodge in mountains, must be very uncomfortable: wherefore Christ directs to pray to God, who has the disposal of all events, and of the timing of them, that he would so order things in the course of his providence, that their flight might not be in such a season of the year, when travelling would be very difficult and troublesome. Dr. Lightfoot observes, from a Jewish writer <sup>460</sup>, that it is remarked as a favour of God in the destruction of the first temple, that it happened in the summer, and not in winter; whose words are these:”

God vouchsafed a great favour to Israel, for they ought to have gone out of the land on the tenth day of the month Tebeth; as he saith Eze 24:2 “son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day”: what then did the Lord, holy and blessed? If they shall now go out in the winter, (saith he,) they will all die; therefore he prolonged the time to them, and carried them away in summer.”

And since therefore they received such a favour from him at the destruction of the first temple, there

<sup>457</sup> Georgic. l. 1.

<sup>458</sup> Aurel Victor. de illustr. viris, c. 20.

<sup>459</sup> T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 64. 3. Maimon. Hilch.

Taanioth, c. 5. sect. 10.

<sup>460</sup> Taachuma, fol. 57. 2.

was encouragement to pray to him, that they might be indulged with the like favour when Jerusalem should be besieged again:

**neither on the sabbath day:**

the word “day” is not in the Greek text; and some <sup>461</sup> have been of opinion, that the “sabbatical year”, or the seventh year, is meant, when no fruits would be found in the fields, and a great scarcity of provisions among people; who would not have a sufficiency, and much less any to spare to strangers fleeing from their native places; but rather the sabbath day, or “day of the sabbath”, as the Persic version reads it, is designed; and Beza says, four of his copies read it in the genitive case: and so four of Stephens’s. And the reason why our Lord put them on praying, that their flight might not be on the sabbath day, was, because he knew not only that the Jews, who believed not in him, would not suffer them to travel on a sabbath day more than two thousand cubits; which, according to their traditions <sup>462</sup>, was a sabbath day’s journey; and which would not be sufficient for their flight to put them out of danger; but also, that those that did believe in him, particularly the Jerusalem Jews, would be all of them fond of the law of Moses, and scrupulous of violating any part of it, and especially that of the sabbath; see Ac 21:20. And though the Jews did allow, that the sabbath might be violated where life was in danger, and that it was lawful to defend themselves against an enemy on the sabbath day; yet this did not universally obtain; and it was made a question of, after the time of Christ, whether it was lawful to flee from danger on the sabbath day; of which take the following account <sup>463</sup>.”Our Rabbins teach, that he that is pursued by Gentiles, or by thieves, may profane the sabbath for the sake of saving his life: and so we find of David, when Saul sought to slay him, he fled from him, and escaped.

Our Rabbins say, that it happened that evil writings (or edicts) came from the government to the great men of Tzippore; and they went, and said to R. Eleazar ben Prata, evil edicts are come to us from the government, what dost thou say? xrbn, “shall we flee?” and he was afraid to say to them “flee”; but he said to them with a nod, why do you ask me? go and ask Jacob, and Moses, and David; as it is written, of Jacob, Ho 12:12 “and Jacob fled”; and so of Moses, Ex 2:15 “and Moses fled”;

<sup>461</sup> Vid. Reland. Antiq. Heb. par. 4. c. 10. sect. 1. & Hammond in loc.

<sup>462</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 27. sect. 1.

<sup>463</sup> Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 231. 4.

and so of David, 1Sa 19:18 “and David fled, and escaped”: and he (God) says, Isa 26:20 “come my people, enter into thy chambers”.

From whence, it is plain, it was a question with the doctors in Tzippore, which was a town in Galilee, where there was an university, whether it was lawful to flee on the sabbath day or not; and though the Rabbi they applied to was of opinion it was lawful, yet he was fearful of speaking out his sense plainly, and therefore delivered it by signs and hints. Now our Lord’s meaning, in putting them on this petition, was, not to prevent the violation of the seventh day sabbath, or on account of the sacredness of it, which he knew would be abolished, and was abolished before this time; but he says this with respect to the opinion of the Jews, and “Judaizing” Christians, who, taking that day to be sacred, and fleeing on it unlawful, would find a difficulty with themselves, and others, to make their escape; otherwise it was as lawful to flee and travel on that day, as in the winter season; though both, for different reasons, incommodious.

**Matthew 24:21**

Ver. 21. **For then shall be great tribulation,**

This is urged as a reason for their speedy flight; since the calamity that would come upon those who should remain in the city, what through the sword, famine, pestilence, murders, robberies, &c. would

**be such as was not since the beginning of the world, to this time, no, nor ever shall be.**

The burning of Sodom and Gomorrhah, the bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt, their captivity in Babylon, and all their distresses and afflictions in the times of the Maccabees, are nothing to be compared with the calamities which befell the Jews in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Great desolations have been made in the besieging and at the taking of many famous cities, as Troy, Babylon, Carthage, &c. but none of them are to be mentioned with the deplorable case of this city. Whoever reads Josephus’s account will be fully convinced of this; and readily join with him, who was an eyewitness of it, when he says <sup>464</sup>, that

”never did any city suffer such things, nor was there ever any generation that more abounded in malice or wickedness.”

And indeed, all this came upon them for their impenitence and infidelity, and for their rejection and

<sup>464</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 11.



murdering of the Son of God; for as never any before, or since, committed the sin they did, or ever will, so there never did, or will, the same calamity befall a nation, as did them.

**Matthew 24:22**

Ver. 22. **And except those days should be shortened,**

That is, those days of tribulation which commenced at the siege of Jerusalem; and therefore cannot refer to the times before it, and the shortening of them by it, which were very dreadful and deplorable through the murders and robberies of the cut-throats and zealots; but to those after the siege began, which were very distressing to those that were within; and which, if they had not been shortened, or if the siege had been lengthened out further,

**there should no flesh be saved;**

not one Jew in the city of Jerusalem would have been saved; they must everyone have perished by famine, or pestilence, or sword, or by the intestine wars and murders among themselves: nor indeed, if the siege had continued, would it have fared better with the inhabitants of the other parts of the country, among whom also many of the same calamities prevailed and spread themselves; so that, in all likelihood, if these days had been continued a little longer, there had not been a Jew left in all the land.

**But for the elect's sake;**

those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to believe in him, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; both those that were in the city, or, at least, who were to spring from some that were there, as their immediate offspring, or in future ages, and therefore they, and their posterity, must not be cut off; and also those chosen ones, and real believers, who were at Pella, and in the mountains, and other places, for the sake of these, and that they might be delivered from these pressing calamities,

**those days shall be shortened:**

for otherwise, if God had not preserved a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace, that should be saved, they had been as Sodom and as Gomorrha, not one would have escaped. The shortening of those days is not to be understood literally, as if the natural days, in which this tribulation was, were to be shorter than usual. The Jews indeed often speak of the shortening of days in this sense, as miraculously done by God: so they say <sup>465</sup>, that

”five miracles were wrought for our father Jacob, when he went from Beersheba to go to Haran. The first miracle was, that אַתְּקַרְוּ לִי שְׁנֵי דְיוֹמָא, “the hours of the day were shortened for him”, and the sun set before its time, because his word desired to speak with him.”

They also say <sup>466</sup>,

”that the day in which Ahaz died, was shortened ten hours, that they might not mourn for him; and which afterwards rose up, and in the day that Hezekiah was healed, ten hours were added to it.”

But the meaning here is, that the siege of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it, should be sooner ended: not than God had determined, but than the sin of the Jews deserved, and the justice of God might have required in strict severity, and might be reasonably expected, considering the aggravated circumstances of their iniquities. A like manner of speech is used by the Karaite Jews <sup>467</sup>, who say,

”if we walk in our law, why is our captivity prolonged, and there is not found balm for our wounds? and why are not Mhymy wjemtn, “the days” of the golden and silver kingdom “lessened”, for the righteousness of the righteous, which were in their days?”

**Matthew 24:23**

Ver. 23. **Then if any man shall say unto you,**

Either at the time when the siege shall be begun, and the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place; or during the days of tribulation, whilst the siege lasted; or after those days were shortened, and the city destroyed, and the Roman army was gone with their captives: when some, that were scattered up and down in the country, would insinuate to their countrymen, that the Messiah was in such a place: saying,

**lo! here is Christ, or there, believe it not;**

for both during the time of the siege, there were such that sprung up, and pretended to be Messiahs, and deliverers of them from the Roman power, and had their several abettors; one saying he was in such place, and another that he was in such a place; and so spirited up the people not to fly, nor to deliver up the city; and also, after the city was taken and destroyed, one and another set up for the Messiah. Very quickly after, one Jonathan,

<sup>466</sup> R. Sol. Jarchi in Isa. xxxviii. 8.

<sup>467</sup> Chilluk M. S. apud Trigland. de sect. Karaeorum, c. 9. p. 147.

<sup>465</sup> Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel, & Targum Hieros. in Gem xxviii. 10.

a very wicked man, led many into the desert of Cyrene, promising to show them signs and wonders, and was overthrown by Catullius, the Roman governor <sup>468</sup>; and after that, in the times of Adrian, the famous Barcochab set up for the Messiah, and was encouraged by R. Akiba, and a multitude of Jews <sup>469</sup>.

**Matthew 24:24**

Ver. 24. **For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets,**

Such as the above mentioned: these false Christs had their false prophets, who endeavoured to persuade the people to believe them to be the Messiah, as Barcochab had Akiba, who applied many prophecies to him. This man was called Barcochab, which signifies the son of a star, in allusion to Nu 24:17 he was crowned by the Jews, and proclaimed the Messiah by Akiba; upon which a Roman army was sent against him, and a place called Bitter was besieged, and taken, and he, and a prodigious number of Jews were destroyed. This deceiver was afterwards, by them, called Barcoziba, the son of a lie:

**and shall show great signs and wonders;**

make an appearance of doing them, though they really did them not: so that Jonathan, before mentioned, pretended to show signs and sights; and Barcochab made as if flame came out of his mouth; and many of the Jewish doctors in these times, and following, gave themselves up to sorcery, and the magic art; and are, many of them, often said <sup>470</sup> to be מְלֻמְדֵי בְּנֵי אֱדֹמִים, “expert in wonders”, or miracles:

**if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.**

By whom we are to understand, not the choicest believers, or the persevering Christians: not but that such who are truly converted, are choice believers in Christ, and persevering Christians are undoubtedly the elect of God; but then the reason why they are elect, and why they are so called, is not because they are converted, are choice believers, and persevering Christians; but, on the contrary, the reason why they are converted, become true believers, and persevere to the end, is, because they are elected; conversion, faith, and perseverance being not the causes or conditions, but the fruits and effects of election: besides to talk of the final seduction of a persevering Christian, is a contradiction in terms. Such an interpretation of the phrase must be absurd and impertinent; for who knows not that a

<sup>468</sup> Joseph. Antiq. l. 7. c. 12.

<sup>469</sup> Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 2.

<sup>470</sup> 1319 T. Bab. Meila, fol. 17. 2. Juchasin, fol. 20. 1, 2. & 42. 2. & 56. 2. & 77. 1. & 96. 2.

persevering Christian cannot be finally and totally deceived? But by the elect are meant, a select number of particular persons of Adam's posterity, whom God, of his sovereign goodwill and pleasure, without respect to their faith, holiness, and good works, has chosen, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, both to grace and glory: and to deceive these finally and totally, is impossible, as is here suggested; not impossible, considering their own weakness, and the craftiness of deceivers, who, if left to themselves, and the power of such deception, and the working of Satan with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, might easily be seduced; but considering the purposes and promises of God concerning them, the provisions of his grace for them, the security of them in the hands of Christ, and their preservation by the mighty power of God, their final and total deception is not only difficult, but impossible. They may be, and are deceived before conversion; this is one part of their character whilst unregenerate, “foolish, disobedient, deceived”, Tit 3:3 yea, they may be, and oftentimes are, deceived after conversion; but then this is in part only, and not totally; in some lesser, and not in the greater matters of faith; not so as to let go their hold of Christ their head, and quit the doctrine of salvation by him, or fall into damnable heresies: they may be seduced from the simplicity of the Gospel, but not finally; for they shall be recovered out of the snare of the devil, and not to be left to perish in such deceivings. This clause, as it expresses the power of deceivers, and the efficacy of Satan, so the influence and certainty of electing grace and the sure and firm perseverance of the saints, to the end, notwithstanding the cunning and craft of men and devils; for if these, with all their signs and wonders, could not deceive them, it may be pronounced impossible that they ever should be finally and totally deceived.

**Matthew 24:25**

Ver. 25. **Behold, I have told you before.**

Meaning not before in this discourse, though he had in Mt 24:5 signified also, that false Christs, and false prophets should arise, but before these things came to pass; so that they had sufficient notice and warning of them, and would be inexcusable if they were not upon their guard against them; and which, when they came to pass, would furnish out a considerable argument in proof of him, as the true Messiah, against all these false ones, showing him to be omniscient; and so would serve to establish their faith in him, and be a means of

securing them from such deceivers.

**Matthew 24:26**

Ver. 26. **Wherefore if they shall say unto you,**

Any of the false prophets, or the deluded followers of false Christs:

**behold, he is in the desert, go not forth:**

that is, should they affirm, that the Messiah is in such a wilderness, in the wilderness of Judea, or in any other desert place, do not go out of the places where you are to see, or hear, and know the truth of things; lest you should, in any respect, be stumbled, ensnared, and brought into danger. It was usual for these impostors to lead their followers into deserts, pretending to work wonders in such solitary places: so, during the siege, Simon, the son of Giora, collected together many thousands in the mountainous and desert parts of Judea <sup>471</sup>; and the above mentioned Jonathan, after the destruction of the city, led great multitudes into the desert:

**behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not;**

or should others say behold, or for certain, the Messiah is in some one of the secret and fortified places of the temple; where, during some time of the siege, were John and Eleazar, the heads of the zealots <sup>472</sup>; do not believe them. Some reference may be had to the chamber of secrets, which was in the temple {w};

”for in the sanctuary there were two chambers; one was called Myavx tkvl, “the chamber of secrets”, and the other the chamber of vessels.”

’Or else some respect may be had to the notions of the Jews, concerning the Messiah, which they imbibed about these times, and ever since retained, that he was born the day Jerusalem was destroyed, but is hid, for their sins, in some secret place, and will in time be revealed <sup>473</sup>. Some say, that he is hid in the sea; others, in the walks of the garden of Eden; and others, that he sits among the lepers at the gates of Rome <sup>474</sup>. The Syriac version here reads in the singular number, “in the bedchamber”; in some private apartment, where he remains till a proper time of showing himself offers, for fear of the Romans: but these are all idle notions, and none of them to be believed. The true Messiah is come, and has showed himself to Israel; and even the giving out these things discovers a consciousness, and a conviction that the Messiah is come.

<sup>471</sup> Joseph de Bello. Jud. l. 5. c. 7.

<sup>472</sup> Ib. c. 6. l. 4. {w} Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 6.

<sup>473</sup> Aben Ezra in Cant. vii. 5. Targum in Mic. iv. 8.

<sup>474</sup> Vid. Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. 50.

**Matthew 24:27**

Ver. 27. **For as the lightning cometh out of the east,**

The eastern part of the horizon,

**and shineth even unto the west;**

to the western part of it, with great clearness; in a moment; in the twinkling of an eye, filling the whole intermediate space;

**so shall also the coming of the son of man be;**

which must be understood not of his last coming to judgment, though that will be sudden, visible, and universal; he will at once come to, and be seen by all, in the clouds of heaven, and not in deserts and secret chambers: nor of his spiritual coming in the more sudden, and clear, and powerful preaching of the Gospel all over the Gentile world; for this was to be done before the destruction of Jerusalem: but of his coming in his wrath and vengeance to destroy that people, their nation, city, and temple: so that after this to look for the Messiah in a desert, or secret chamber, must argue great stupidity and blindness; when his coming was as sudden, visible, powerful, and general, to the destruction of that nation, as the lightning that comes from the east, and, in a moment, shines to the west.

**Matthew 24:28**

Ver. 28. **For wheresoever the carcass is,**

Not Christ, as he is held forth in the Gospel, crucified and slain, through whose death is the savour of life, and by whom salvation is, and to whom sensible sinners flock, encouraged by the ministry of the word; and much less Christ considered as risen, exalted, and coming in great glory to judgment, to whom the word “carcass” will by no means agree, and but very poorly under the former consideration: but the people of the Jews are designed by it, in their fallen, deplorable, miserable, and lifeless state, who were like to the body of a man, or any other creature, struck dead with lightning from heaven; being destroyed by the breath of the mouth, and brightness of the coming of the son of man, like lightning, just as antichrist will be at the last day:

**there will the eagles be gathered together:**

not particular believers here, or all the saints at the day of judgment; though these may be, as they are, compared to eagles for many things; as their swiftness in flying to Christ, their sagacity and the sharpness of their spiritual sight, soaring on high, and renewing their spiritual strength and youth: but here the Roman armies are intended, whose ensigns were eagles; and the eagle still

is, to this day, the ensign of the Roman empire: formerly other creatures, with the eagle, were used for ensigns; but C. Marius, in his second consulship, banished them, and appropriated the eagle only to the legions: nor was it a single eagle that was carried before the army, but every legion had an eagle went before it, made of gold or silver, and carried upon the top of a spear<sup>475</sup>: and the sense of this passage is this, that wherever the Jews were, whether at Jerusalem, where the body and carcass of them was, in a most forlorn and desperate condition; or in any other parts of the country, the Roman eagles, or legions, would find them out, and make an utter destruction of them. The Persic version, contrary to others, and to all copies, renders it “vultures”. Though this creature is of the same nature with the eagle, with respect to feeding on carcasses: hence the proverb,

”cujus vulturis hoc erit cadaver?”

”what vulture shall have this carcass?” It has a very sharp sight, and quick smell, and will, by both, discern carcasses at almost incredible distance: it will diligently watch a man that is near death; and will follow armies going to battle, as historians relate<sup>476</sup>: and it is the eagle which is of the vulture kind, as Aristotle<sup>477</sup> observes, that takes up dead bodies, and carries them to its nest. And Pliny<sup>478</sup> says, it is that sort of eagles only which does so; and some have affirmed that eagles will by no means touch dead carcasses: but this is contrary not only to this passage of Scripture, but to others; particularly to Job 39:30 “her young ones also suck up blood, and where the slain are, there is she”: an expression much the same with this in the text, and to which it seems to refer; see also Pr 30:17. Though Chrysostom<sup>479</sup> says, both the passage in Job, and this in Matthew, are to be understood of vultures; he doubtless means the eagles that are of the vulture kind, the Gypaetos, or vulture eagle. There is one kind of eagles, naturalists say<sup>480</sup>, will not feed on flesh, which is called the bird of Jupiter; but, in common, the eagle is represented as a very rapacious creature, seizing, and feeding upon the flesh of hares, fawns, geese, &c. and the rather this creature is designed here; since, of all birds, this is the only one that is not hurt with lightning<sup>481</sup>,

475 Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 4. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 2.

476 Aelian. de Animal. Natura, l. 2. c. 46.

477 De Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 32.

478 Hist. Nat. l. 10. c. 3.

479 In Matt. Homil. 49.

480 Aelian. de Animal. l. 9. c. 10.

481 Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 55.

and so can immediately seize carcasses killed thereby; to which there seems to be an allusion here, by comparing it with the preceding verse: however, the Persic version, though it is literally a proper one, yet from the several things observed, it is not to be overlooked and slighted.

#### Matthew 24:29

Ver. 29. **Immediately after the tribulation of those days,**

That is, immediately after the distress the Jews would be in through the siege of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it; just upon the destruction of that city, and the temple in it, with the whole nation of the Jews, shall the following things come to pass; and therefore cannot be referred to the last judgment, or what should befall the church, or world, a little before that time, or should be accomplished in the whole intermediate time, between the destruction of Jerusalem, and the last judgment: for all that is said to account for such a sense, as that it was usual with the prophets to speak of judgments afar off as near; and that the apostles often speak of the coming of Christ, the last judgment, and the end of the world, as just at hand; and that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, will not answer to the word “immediately”, or show that that should be understood of two thousand years after: besides, all the following things were to be fulfilled before that present generation, in which Christ lived, passed away, Mt 24:34 and therefore must be understood of things that should directly, and immediately take place upon, or at the destruction of the city and temple.

#### Shall the sun be darkened:

not in a literal but in a figurative sense; and is to be understood not of the religion of the Jewish church; nor of the knowledge of the law among them, and the decrease of it; nor of the Gospel being obscured by heretics and false teachers; nor of the temple of Jerusalem, senses which are given into by one or another; but of the Shekinah, or the divine presence in the temple. The glory of God, who is a sun and a shield, filled the tabernacle, when it was reared up; and so it did the temple, when it was built and dedicated; in the most holy place, Jehovah took up his residence; here was the symbol of his presence, the mercy seat, and the two cherubim over it: and though God had for some time departed from this people, and a voice was heard in the temple before its destruction, saying, “let us go hence”; yet the token of the divine presence remained till the utter destruction of it; and then this sun was wholly darkened, and there was not so much as the outward

symbol of it:

**and the moon shall not give her light;**

which also is to be explained in a figurative and metaphorical sense; and refers not to the Roman empire, which quickly began to diminish; nor to the city of Jerusalem; nor to the civil polity of the nation; but to the ceremonial law, the moon, the church is said to have under her feet, Re 12:1 so called because the observance of new moons was one part of it, and the Jewish festivals were regulated by the moon; and especially, because like the moon, it was variable and changeable. Now, though this, in right, was abolished at the death of Christ, and ceased to give any true light, when he, the substance, was come; yet was kept up by the Jews, as long as their temple was standing; but when that was destroyed, the daily sacrifice, in fact, ceased, and so it has ever since; the Jews esteeming it unlawful to offer sacrifice in a strange land, or upon any other altar than that of Jerusalem; and are to this day without a sacrifice, and without an ephod: and the stars shall fall from heaven; which phrase, as it elsewhere intends the doctors of the church, and preachers falling off from purity of doctrine and conversation; so here it designs the Jewish Rabbins and doctors, who departed from the word of God, and set up their traditions above it, fell into vain and senseless interpretations of it, and into debates about things contained in their Talmud; the foundation of which began to be laid immediately upon their dispersion into other countries:

**and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken;**

meaning all the ordinances of the legal dispensation; which shaking, and even removing of them, were foretold by Hag 2:6 and explained by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Heb 12:26 whereby room and way were made for Gospel ordinances to take place, and be established; which shall not be shaken, so as to be removed, but remain till the second coming of Christ. The Jews themselves are sensible, and make heavy complaints of the great declensions and alterations among them, since the destruction of the temple; for after having taken notice of the death of several of their doctors, who died a little before, or after that; and that upon their death ceased the honour of the law, the splendour of wisdom, and the glory of the priesthood, they add <sup>482</sup>;

”from the time that the temple was destroyed, the wise men, and sons of nobles, were put to shame, and they covered their heads; liberal men

were reduced to poverty; and men of violence and calumny prevailed; and there were none that expounded, or inquired, or asked. R. Elezer the great, said, from the time the sanctuary were destroyed, the wise men began to be like Scribes, and the Scribes like to the Chazans, (or sextons that looked after the synagogues,) and the Chazans like to the common people, and the common people grew worse and worse, and there were none that inquired and asked;

”that is, of the wise men there were no scholars, or very few that studied in the law.

**Matthew 24:30**

Ver. 30 **And then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven,**

Not the sound of the great trumpet, mentioned in the following verse; nor the clouds of heaven in this; nor the sign of the cross appearing in the air, as it is said to do in the times of Constantine: not the former; for though to blow a trumpet is sometimes to give a sign, and is an alarm; and the feast which the Jews call the day of blowing the trumpets, Nu 29:1 is, by the Septuagint, rendered hmera shmasiav, “the day of signification”; yet this sign is not said to be sounded, but to appear, or to be seen, which does not agree with the sounding of a trumpet: much less can this design the last trumpet at the day of judgment, since of that the text does not speak; and, for the same reason, the clouds cannot be meant in which Christ will come to judgment, nor are clouds in themselves any sign of it: nor the latter, of which there is no hint in the word of God, nor any reason to expect it, nor any foundation for it; nor is any miraculous star intended, such as appeared at Christ’s first coming, but the son of man himself: just as circumcision is called the sign of circumcision, Ro 4:11 and Christ is sometimes called a sign, Luke 2:34 as is his resurrection from the dead, Mt 12:39 and here the glory and majesty in which he shall come: and it may be observed, that the other evangelists make no mention of the sign, only speak of the son of man, Mark 13:26 and he shall appear, not in person, but in the power of his wrath and vengeance, on the Jewish nation which will be a full sign and proof of his being come: for the sense is, that when the above calamities shall be upon the civil state of that people, and there will be such changes in their ecclesiastical state it will be as clear a point, that Christ is come in the flesh, and that he is also come in his vengeance on that nation, for their rejection and crucifixion him, as if they had

<sup>482</sup> Misn. Sotah, c. 9. sect. 15.

seen him appear in person in the heavens. They had been always seeking a sign, and were continually asking one of him; and now they will have a sign with a witness; as they had accordingly.

**And then shall the tribes of the earth,  
or land, mourn;**

that is, the land of Judea; for other lands, and countries, were not usually divided into tribes, as that was; neither were they affected with the calamities and desolations of it, and the vengeance of the son of man upon it; at least not so as to mourn on that account, but rather were glad and rejoiced:

**and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.**

The Arabic version reads it, “ye shall see”, as is expressed by Christ, in Mt 26:64. Where the high priest, chief priests, Scribes, and elders, and the whole sanhedrim of the Jews are spoken to: and as the same persons, namely, the Jews, are meant here as there; so the same coming of the son of man is intended; not his coming at the last day to judgment; though that will be in the clouds of heaven, and with great power and glory; but his coming to bring on, and give the finishing stroke to the destruction of that people, which was a dark and cloudy dispensation to them: and when they felt the power of his arm, might, if not blind and stupid to the last degree, see the glory of his person, that he was more than a mere man, and no other than the Son of God, whom they had despised, rejected, and crucified; and who came to set up his kingdom and glory in a more visible and peculiar manner, among the Gentiles.

**Matthew 24:31**

Ver. 31. **And he shall send his angels,**

Not the angels, i.e. ministering spirits, so called, not from their nature, but their office, as being sent forth by God and Christ; but men angels, or messengers, the ministers and preachers of the Gospel, whom Christ would call, qualify, and send forth into all the world of the Gentiles, to preach his Gospel, and plant churches there still more, when that at Jerusalem was broken up and dissolved. These are called “angels”, because of their mission, and commission from Christ, to preach the Gospel; and because of their knowledge and understanding in spiritual things; and because of their zeal, diligence, and watchfulness.

**With a great sound of a trumpet,**

meaning the Gospel; see Isa 27:13 so called in allusion either to the silver trumpets which Moses was ordered

to make of one piece, and use them for the calling of the assembly, the journeying of the camps, blowing an alarm for war, and on their solemn and festival days, Nu 10:1. The Gospel being rich and precious, all of a piece, useful for gathering souls to Christ, and to his churches; to direct saints in their journey to Canaan’s land; to encourage them to fight the Lord’s battles; and is a joyful sound, being a sound of love, grace, and mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, life and salvation, by Christ: or else so called, in allusion to the trumpet blown in the year of “jubilee”; which proclaimed rest to the land, liberty to prisoners, a release of debts, and restoration of inheritances; as the Gospel publishes rest in Christ, liberty to the captives of sin, Satan, and the law, a payment of debts by Christ, and a release from them upon that, and a right and title to the heavenly inheritance. The Vulgate Latin reads it, “with a trumpet, and a great voice”; and so does Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; and so it was read in four of Beza’s copies:

**and they shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other;**

that is, by the ministration of the Gospel; the Spirit of God accompanying it with his power, and grace, the ministers of the word should gather out of the world unto Christ, and to his churches, such persons as God had, before the foundation of the world, chosen in Christ, unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; wherever they are under the whole heavens, from one end to another; or in any part of the earth, though at the greatest distance; for in Mark 13:27 it is said,

“from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of the heaven”. The Jews <sup>483</sup> say, that “in the after redemption (i.e. by the Messiah) all Israel shall be gathered together by the sound of a trumpet, from the four parts of the world.”

**Matthew 24:32**

Ver. 32. **Now learn a parable of the fig tree,**

Take a similitude, or comparison from the fig tree, which was a tree well known in Judea; and the putting forth of its branches, leaves, and fruit, fell under the observation of everyone:

**when its branch is yet tender;**

through the influence of the sun, and the motion of the sap, which was bound up, and congealed in the winter season:

483 Zohar in Lev. fol. 47. 1.

**and putteth forth leaves;**

from the tender branches, which swell, and open, and put forth buds, leaves, and fruit:

**ye know the summer is nigh;**

spring being already come: the fig tree putting forth her green figs, is a sign that the winter is past, the spring is come, and summer is at hand; see So 2:11.

**Matthew 24:33**

Ver. 33. **So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things,**

That are mentioned above, relating to the signs of the destruction of the temple and city, and the destruction itself, with all those several things that should directly take place upon it; this is an accommodation of the above parable, similitude, or comparison:

**know that it is near, even at the doors;**

meaning, either that "he is near", as the Ethiopic version reads it, the son of man is near, even at the doors; or as the Vulgate Latin renders it, "in the gates", or "doors", and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and signifies, that he was already come; for to be in the doors, or within the gates, is more than to be at the doors, or at the gates: and thus the fig tree putting forth its leaves, is a sign that summer is not only nigh, but is already come, even that part of it we call spring; for the Scripture divides the whole year only into two parts, summer and winter; so these calamities and desolations on the Jews, were a sign that the son of man was come, was in the gates, displaying his power and his glory: or the redemption and deliverance of the people of God was at hand, from the persecutions of the Jews; for till the destruction of Jerusalem, the persecutions of the Christians were chiefly from the Jews, or occasioned by them; but now, they being destroyed, the summer of deliverance was at hand: or else the kingdom of God, or a more enlarged state of the Gospel dispensation was near; the winter of the legal dispensation was over, the spring of the Gospel dispensation was come, through the preaching of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles; and now the summer of it was at hand, through the general spread of it, all over the Gentile world. So the second coming of Christ, will be a summer of joy and comfort to the saints: Christ will appear most lovely and amiable to them, he will be glorified by them, and admired in them; great grace will be brought unto them, and great glory will be put upon them; they will then enjoy full redemption and salvation: the winter of sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions, and of coldness, darkness, and desertion, will be over; the sun

shall no more go down, nor the moon withdraw itself, but the Lord will be the everlasting light of his people.

**Matthew 24:34**

Ver. 34. **Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass,**

Not the generation of men in general; as if the sense was, that mankind should not cease, until the accomplishment of these things; nor the generation, or people of the Jews, who should continue to be a people, until all were fulfilled; nor the generation of Christians; as if the meaning was, that there should be always a set of Christians, or believers in Christ in the world, until all these events came to pass; but it respects that present age, or generation of men then living in it; and the sense is, that all the men of that age should not die, but some should live

**till all these things were fulfilled;**

see Mt 16:28 as many did, and as there is reason to believe they might, and must, since all these things had their accomplishment, in and about forty years after this: and certain it is, that John, one of the disciples of Christ, outlived the time by many years; and, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, many of the Jewish doctors now living, when Christ spoke these words, lived until the city was destroyed; as Rabban Simeon, who perished with it, R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who outlived it, R. Zadoch, R. Ishmael, and others: this is a full and clear proof, that not anything that is said before, relates to the second coming of Christ, the day of judgment, and end of the world; but that all belong to the coming of the son of man, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the end of the Jewish state.

**Matthew 24:35**

Ver. 35. **Heaven and earth shall pass away,**

This is either an assertion, which will be true at the end of time; not as to the substance of the heavens and earth, which will always remain, but as to the qualities of them, which will be altered: they will be renewed and refined, but not destroyed; the bad qualities, or evil circumstances, which attend them through the sin of man, will be removed and pass away, but they themselves will continue in being: or is a comparative expression, and the sense is, that the heavens and the earth, and the ordinances thereof, than which nothing can be more firm and strong, being fixed and supported by God himself, shall sooner pass away, than anything asserted and predicted by Christ shall:

**but my words shall not pass away;**

be vain and empty, and unaccomplished; which is true of anything, and everything spoken by Christ; and especially here regards all that he had said concerning the calamities that should befall the Jews, before, at, or upon the destruction of their nation, city, and temple; and the design of the expression, is to show the certainty, unalterableness, and sure accomplishment of these things; see Jer 31:36.

**Matthew 24:36**

Ver. 36. **But of that day and hour knoweth no man,**

Which is to be understood, not of the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the last judgment; but of the coming of the son of man, to take vengeance on the Jews, and of their destruction; for the words manifestly regard the date of the several things going before, which only can be applied to that catastrophe, and dreadful desolation: now, though the destruction itself was spoken of by Moses and the prophets, was foretold by Christ, and the believing Jews had some discerning of its near approach; see Heb 10:25 yet the exact and precise time was not known: it might have been: calculated to a year by Daniel's weeks, but not to the day and hour; and therefore our Lord does not say of the year, but of the day and hour no man knows; though the one week, or seven years, being separated from the rest, throws that account into some perplexity; and which perhaps is on purpose done, to conceal the precise time of Jerusalem's destruction: nor need it be wondered at, notwithstanding all the hints given, that the fatal day should not be exactly known beforehand; when those who have lived since, and were eyewitnesses of it, are not agreed on what day of the month it was; for, as Dr. Lightfoot <sup>484</sup> observes, Josephus <sup>485</sup> says,

"that the temple perished the "tenth" day of "Lous", a day fatal to the temple, as having been on that day consumed in flames, by the king of Babylon.

"And yet Rabbi Jochanan ben Zaccai, who was also at the destruction of it, as well as Josephus, with all the Jewish writers, say it was on the "ninth of Ab"; for of this day they <sup>486</sup> say, five things happened upon it:

"On the "ninth of Ab" it was decreed concerning our fathers, that they should not enter into the land (of Canaan), the first and second temple

484 In Mark xiii. 32.

485 De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 26.

486 Misu. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 7. T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 68. 3. & Maimon. Hilch. Taanioth, c. 5. sect. 2.

were destroyed, Bither was taken, and the city ploughed up."

Though the words of R. Jochanan, cited by the doctor, refer to the first, and not to the second temple, and should have been rendered thus:

"If I had been in the generation (which fixed the fast for the destruction of the first temple), I would not have fixed it but on the tenth (of Ab); for, adds he, the greatest part of the temple was burnt on that day; but the Rabbins rather regarded the beginning of the punishment <sup>487</sup>.

"And so the fasting of Rabbi, and R. Joshua ben Levi, on the "ninth" and "tenth" days, were on account of the first temple; for they were under the same difficulty about the one, as the other:

**no, not the angels of heaven;**

who dwell there, always behold the face of God, stand in his presence ready to do his will, and are made acquainted with many of his designs, and are employed in the executing of them, and yet know not the time of God's vengeance on the Jews; to this agrees the sense that is given of the day of vengeance in Isa 63:4 it is asked <sup>488</sup>,

"what is the meaning of these words, "the day of vengeance is in my heart?" Says R. Jochanan, to my heart I have revealed it, to the members I have not revealed it: says R. Simeon ben Lakish, to my heart I have revealed it, *השרת לא גליהי, לנולאבי*, "to the ministering angels I have not revealed it".

"The Ethiopic version adds here, "nor the son", and so the Cambridge copy of Beza's; which seems to be transcribed from Mark 13:32 where that phrase stands; and must be understood of Christ as the son of man, and not as the Son of God; for as such, he lay in the bosom of the Father, and knew all his purposes and designs; for these were purposed in him: he knew from the beginning who would betray him, and who would believe in him; he knew what would befall the rejecters of him, and when that would come to pass; as he must know also the day of the last judgment, since it is appointed by God, and he is ordained to execute it: but the sense is, that as he, as man and mediator, came not to destroy, but to save; so it was not any part of his

487 T. Bab, Taanith, fol. 29. 1. {n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

488 T. Bab, Taanith, fol. 29. 1.



work, as such, to know, nor had he it in commission to make known the time of Jerusalem's ruin:

**but my Father only;**

to the exclusion of all creatures, angels and men; but not to the exclusion of Christ as God, who, as such, is omniscient; nor of the Holy Spirit, who is acquainted with the deep things of God, the secrets of his heart, and this among others.

**Matthew 24:37**

Ver. 37. **But as the days of Noe were,**

So Noah is usually called Noe by the Septuagint: the sense is, as were the practices of the men of that generation, in which Noah lived, so will be the practices of the men of that age, in which the son of man comes; or as the flood, which happened in the days of Noah, was sudden and unexpected; it came upon men thoughtless about it, though they had warning of it; and was universal, swept them all away, excepting a few that were saved in the ark:

**so shall also the coming of the son of man be;**

to take vengeance on the Jews, on a sudden, at an unawares, when they would be unthoughtful about it; though they were forewarned of it by Christ and his apostles, and their destruction be as universal; all would be involved in it, excepting a few, that were directed a little before, to go out of the city of Jerusalem to Pella; where they were saved, as Noah and his family were in the ark.

**Matthew 24:38**

Ver. 38. **For as in the days that were before the flood,**

Not all the days before the flood, from the creation of the world; but those immediately preceding it, a century or two before it: they were eating and

**drinking, marrying and giving in marriage:**

not that these civil actions of life were criminal in themselves, had care been taken that they were not abused. It is lawful to eat and drink, provided it be in moderation, and not to excess; and to marry, and give in marriage, when the laws, rules, and ends thereof, are observed: and therefore this must be understood, either of their wholly giving themselves up to the pleasures of life, and lusts of the flesh, without any concern about the affairs of religion, the worship and glory of God, the welfare of their souls and their approaching danger, of which Noah had given them warning; or of their luxury and intemperance, in eating and drinking, and of their libidinous and unlawful marriages; for the word here used for eating, signifies eating after the manner of

brute beasts: they indulged themselves in a brutish way, in gluttony and drunkenness; and it is certain from the account given of them, in Ge 6:2 that they entered into unlawful marriages, and unclean copulations: wherefore these things may be spoken of them, as what were really sinful and wicked, and denote a course of sinning, a constant practice of these sins of intemperance and lust, and which is still more fully expressed in the next clause:

**until the day that Noe entered into the ark.**

The Arabic version renders it, "the ship"; the vessel which God directed him to make, for the saving of himself and family. Now the men of that generation persisted in their wicked course of living, after, and notwithstanding, the warning God had given them by Noah, of the flood that would come upon them; and all the while the ark was building, even to the very day that Noah and his family, by the order of God, went into the ark.

**Matthew 24:39**

Ver. 39. **And knew not until the flood came,**

That is, they did not advert or give heed to what Noah said to them about it: they slighted and despised his warnings; they did not believe, that what he said of the flood was true; they had notice of it, but they would not know it, and therefore God gave them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and so they remained, until it came upon them at once:

**and took them all away;**

the whole world of the ungodly, every man, woman, and child, except eight persons only; Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives; for the deluge was universal, and reached to all the inhabitants of the world, who all perished in it, excepting the above persons. So shall also the coming of the son of man be: such shall be, as it was, the case of the Jews, before the destruction of Jerusalem: they gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness and uncleanness; they disregarded the warnings of Christ and his apostles; they were careless and secure of danger; they would not believe their ruin was at hand, when it was just upon them; they buoyed themselves up to the very last, that a deliverer would arise, and save them; they cried peace, peace, when sudden destruction was nigh; even of them all, their nation, city, and temple, a few only excepted, as in the days of Noah: and though they were so much like the men of that generation, yet they themselves say of them, that

"the generation of the flood have no part in the world to come, nor shall they stand in judgment,

according to Ge 6:3<sup>489</sup>’

**Matthew 24:40**

Ver. 40. **Then shall two be in the field,**

About their proper business, of husbandry, ploughing, or sowing, or any other rural employment:

**the one shall be taken;**

not by the preaching of the Gospel, into the kingdom of God, or Gospel dispensation; though such a distinction God makes, by the ministry of the word, accompanied by his Spirit and power; nor by angels, to meet Christ in the air, and to be introduced into his kingdom and glory; but by the eagles, the Roman army, and either killed or carried captive by them:

**and the other left;**

not in a state of nature and unregeneracy, as many are, to whom the Gospel is preached; nor with devils at the last day, to be thrust down by them into the infernal regions; but by the Romans, being by some remarkable providence, or another, delivered out of their hands; which was the case of some few, and these of the meaner sort; and therefore persons of a rural life and occupation are instanced in.

**Matthew 24:41**

Ver. 41. **Two women shall be grinding at the mill,**

Though the word women is not in the Greek text, yet it is rightly supplied by our translators, as it is in the Persic version; for the word rendered grinding, is in the feminine gender, and was the work of women, as appears both from the Scripture, Ex 11:5 and from several passages in the Jewish writings, concerning which their canons run thus<sup>490</sup>;

”These are the works which a woman is to do for her husband, tnxwj, “she must grind”, and bake, and wash, and boil, and make his bed, &c.’

’And elsewhere it is asked<sup>491</sup>,

”how does she grind? she sits at the mill, and watches the flour, but she does not grind, or go after a beast, that so the mill may not stop; but if their custom is to grind at a hand mill, she may grind. The sanhedrim order this to poor people; for if she brings one handmaid, or money, or goods, sufficient to purchase, she is not obliged to grind, &c.

489 Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3.

490 Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 5. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 47. 9. & 48. 1.

491 Maimon. Hilch. Ishot. c. 21. sect. 5, 6.

”Frequent mention is made, of women grinding together at the same mill: a case is put concerning two women grinding at an hand mill<sup>492</sup>, and various rules are given about it; as, that<sup>493</sup>

”a woman may lend her neighbour that is suspected of eating the fruits of the seventh year after time, a meal sieve, a fan, a mill, or a furnace, but she may not winnow, nor “grind with her”.

’Which it supposes she might do, if she was not suspected: again<sup>494</sup>’

the wife of a plebeian, טרוחמ, “may grind” with the wife of a learned man, in the time that she is unclean, but not when she is clean.

”Nor was this the custom of the Jews only, for women to grind, but also of other countries, as of the Abyssines<sup>495</sup>, and of both Greeks and Barbarians<sup>496</sup>:

**the one shall be taken, and the other left;**

as before, one shall be taken by the Romans, and either put to death, or carried captive; and the other shall escape their hands, through the singular providence of God. The Ethiopic version, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel add, “two shall be in one bed, one shall be taken, and the other left”; but these words are not in the copies of Matthew in common, but are taken out of Luke 17:34 though they are in the Cambridge copy of Beza’s, and in one of Stephens’s.

**Matthew 24:42**

Ver. 42. Watch therefore,... Since the time of this desolation is so uncertain, and since it will come upon the Jews unawares, and some wilt escape, whilst others perish; for the words are plainly an inference from what precedes, and clearly relate to things going before, and are not a transition to a new subject: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come; to avenge himself of the unbelieving Jews, and fulfil what he in person, and by his apostles, had predicted and warned them of: though I will not deny, but that what follows may be much better accommodated and applied to the second coming of Christ, and the last judgment, and the behaviour of men with regard to both, than anything said before; and it may be our Lord’s intention, to lead his disciples gradually, and as it were imperceptibly, to

492 T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 60. 2.

493 Misn. Sheviith, c. 5. 9. & Gittin, c. 5. sect. 9.

494 T. Hieros. Teruot, fol. 46. 3. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 61. 2. & Cholin, fol. 6. 2. Misn. Taharot, c. 7. sect. 4.

495 Ludolph. Hist. Ethiop. l. 4. c. 4.

496 Plutarch apud Beza. in loc.

the last scene of things on earth, to make way for the parables and description of the future judgment, in the next chapter; still keeping in view, and having reference to, the subject he had been so long upon.

**Matthew 24:43**

Ver. 43. **But know this,**

Or you do know this: this may be illustrated by supposing a case well known to men, and in which common prudence would direct a man how to behave:

**that if the good man of the house,**

or householder, or master of the family,

**had known in what watch the thief would come;**

whether at the first, second, third, or fourth watch; for the night was divided into four watches; had he any previous notice given by any of the associates of the thief, or by those that had overheard, or by any means had got intelligence of his design and measures, and the time of his pursuing them,

**he would have watched;**

in every watch either in person, or by employing others, or both:

**and would not have suffered his house to be broken up:**

or "dug through"; see Job 24:16 concerning which, there is a law in Ex 22:2 and is explained by the Jewish canonists thus:

"He that comes in by digging, whether by day or by night, there is no blood for him (i.e. to be shed for him, if he is killed); but if the master of the house, or any other man kill him, they are free; and every man has power to kill him, whether on a weekday, or on a sabbath day; and with whatsoever death he can put him to, as it is said, there is no blood for him, Ex 22:2. And one that comes *בְּמַחְתֵּר* "by digging", or a thief that is found in the midst of a man's roof, or in his court, or within his hedge, whether in the day or in the night, (may be killed;) and wherefore is it called digging? because it is the way of most thieves to come in by digging in the night <sup>497</sup>."

'Wherefore no doubt since the master of the house had such a law on his side, he would never suffer, if possible, his house to be entered by digging, when he had, especially, any previous notice of it. Now the application of this case, or parabolical way of speaking, is to the coming of Christ, and the watchfulness of every good

man who has notice of it, that he may not be surprised with it, but be in a readiness to receive him. The coming of the son of man, is here represented by the coming of the thief in the night: but when he is compared to a thief, this is not to be understood in a bad sense, in which Satan is called one, who comes to kill and to destroy the souls of men; and likewise heretics and false teachers, and everyone that climbs up, and gets into the church of God in a wrong way; but this only respects the manner of Christ's coming, which is like that of a thief, secretly, suddenly, and at unawares. The "good man of the house", or householder, is every Christian, or believer in Christ, who has a house to look after, his own soul, the spiritual affairs and everlasting salvation of it, things of moment and concern unto him: and as the Christians, before the destruction of Jerusalem, had notices of Christ's coming in that way, by our Lord's predictions, by the hints the apostles gave, to refresh their memories with them, and by the signs of the times and voices that were heard; so the saints have of Christ's coming to judgment: wherefore as it became the one, so it does the other, to watch, to be upon their guard, to be in a readiness, to have their loins girt about, and their lights burning, and they like men that wait for their Lord; that so when he comes, their houses may not be broken up, may not be surprised, and the several powers and faculties of their souls may not be thrown into disorder and confusion; wherefore it follows,

**Matthew 24:44**

Ver. 44. **Therefore be ye also ready,**

Or prepared for the coming of the son of man; which as it is said to be like a thief in the night, expresses the suddenness of it, may excite to watchfulness and readiness; which readiness is to be understood, not of a readiness to do the will and work of God, though this is absolutely necessary; as to watch and pray, to hear the word preached, to confess Christ, and give a reason of the hope that is in us, to communicate to the support of the cause and interest of Christ, and to suffer for his sake; but of a preparedness to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, when desolating judgments are coming on the earth, such as these in Jerusalem; by faith and trust in the power, providence, and care of God; by humiliation before him, and resignation to his will: and if this can be applied to a readiness for a future state after death; for the second coming of Christ, and last judgment; this lies not in a dependence on the absolute mercy of God; nor in an external humiliation for sin; nor in an abstinence

<sup>497</sup> Mairmon. Hilch. Genibah, c. 9. sect. 7, 8.

from grosser sins, or in mere negative holiness; nor in any outward, legal, civil, and moral righteousness; nor in a submission to Gospel ordinances; nor in a mere profession of religion; but in being in Christ, having on his righteousness, and being washed in his blood; and also in regeneration and sanctification, in having true knowledge of Christ, and faith in him; for all which it becomes men to be concerned, as also all believers to be actually, as well as habitually ready; being in the lively exercise of grace, and cheerful discharge of duty, though without trusting to either. And such a readiness in either branch of it, is not of themselves, but lies in the grace of God, which gives a meetness for glory; and in the righteousness of Christ, the fine linen, clean and white, which being granted by him, his people are made ready for him: and as for their faith, and the exercise of it, and their constant performance of duty, these are not from the strength of nature and the power of freewill, but from the Spirit of God and his grace; who makes ready a people prepared for the Lord, and all according to the ancient settlements of grace, in which provision is made for the vessels of mercy, afore prepared for glory: though there should be a studious concern in men for such readiness, for nothing is more certain than death, and nothing more uncertain than when it will be; and after death, no readiness can be had, but he that is then righteous, shall be righteous still, and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still, and a deathbed is by no means to be trusted to; and though a person may not be snatched away suddenly, but may have space given him to repent, yet if grace is not given him, to repent and believe in Christ, he never will; the grave is ready for men, and in a little time all will be brought to this house, appointed for all living, where there is no wisdom, knowledge, and device; and therefore whatever we are directed to do, should be now done, with all that might, and strength, and grace, that is given us; to which may be added, that after death comes judgment; the day is fixed, the judge is appointed, and all must stand before his judgment seat; and nothing is more sure than that Christ will come a second time, to judge both quick and dead; and happy will those be that are ready; they will be received by Christ into everlasting habitations, and be for ever with him: and miserable will those be, who will not be ready, who will not have the oil of grace in their hearts with their lamps, nor the wedding garment on them; they will be shut out, and bid to depart into everlasting burnings: how fit and proper is such an advice and exhortation as this, “be ye also ready”. A readiness the Jews report Bath Kol, or the voice from

heaven, gave out concerning the Israelites.

”Bath Kol (say <sup>498</sup> they) went out, and said to them, כולכם מוזמנין לחיי העולם הבא, “ye are all of you ready for the life of the world to come”.

And elsewhere it is said of Bath Kol, that it went forth and affirmed of some particular Rabbins, that they were ready for eternal life; as of Ketiah bar Shalom, R. Eleazar ben Durdia, and R. Chanina <sup>499</sup>:

**for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh:**

this is true of his coming in power to destroy Jerusalem, and of his second coming to judgment. The Jews say much the same of the coming of the Messiah, whom they expect:

”there are three things, they say <sup>500</sup>, which come, ביהיהדרת, “without knowledge”, or unthought of, at an unawares; and they are these, the Messiah, anything that is found, and a scorpion.”

#### Matthew 24:45

Ver. 45. **Who then is a faithful and wise servant,**

The Vulgate Latin adds, “do you think?” and is a question put to the disciples, which they might apply to themselves: in Luke 12:42, it is spoken in answer to a question of Peter’s, in relation to the above exhortation, whether it was spoken to them, or to all; and by this answer, it looks as if it was more especially designed for them, though it may be applied to other. The “servant” is there called a “steward”, for such a servant is meant; and a name that is very proper for the apostles and ministers of the word, who are stewards of the mysteries of Christ, and of the manifold grace of God; and whose characters are, that they are “faithful”: for this is required in stewards, that they be faithful to the trust reposed in them; as ministers are, when they preach the pure Gospel of Christ, and the whole of it; conceal no part, nor keep anything of it; seek not to please men, but God; neither seek their own things, their ease, honour, and profit, but the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; and abide by the truths, cause, and interest of a Redeemer, at all hazards. And they are “wise”, who know and are well instructed in divine things; who make Christ the main subject of their ministry; who improve their talents and time for

<sup>498</sup> T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 9. 1.

<sup>499</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 10. 2. & 17. 1. & 18. 1. & Callah, fol. 17. 2. & Cetubot, fol. 103. 2.

<sup>500</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

their master's use, and the advantage of those that are under their care; who seek for, and deliver acceptable words and matter; and manage their whole trust, so as to be able to give in a good account of their stewardship another day. The post that such a person is put in, and the work he is to do, follow:

**whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household;** or "family", the church of God, which is the household of God, and of faith, in which are believers of various growths and sizes; some fathers, some young men, some children; and over these, the ministers are, by their Lord, made and placed as rulers; not as lords and tyrants over God's heritage, to govern them in an arbitrary way, but as over them in the Lord, to rule them according to the word of God, and the laws of his house; by preaching the Gospel, administering ordinances, and keeping up his worship and the discipline of the church; and whose principal business it is,

**to give them meat in due season;**

even "their portion" of it, as in Luke 12:42: for the word of God is to be cut and rightly divided, and everyone in the family, according to his age, appetite, and digestion, is to have his proper part and portion given him: it must be meat, proper food, such as is solid, substantial, and nourishing; even the wholesome words of Christ Jesus, that must be given them, and not husks and empty trash; and all in due season, in its proper time, as their cases and circumstances require, and call for; as whether weary, or uncomfortable, or in the dark, or under temptations and afflictions: for a word fitly and seasonably spoken, how useful is it!

**Matthew 24:46**

Ver. 46. **Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh,**

Whether in a way of judgment, as against Jerusalem; or at death, when he comes to remove him out of time, into eternity; or at the day of judgment, when he, the righteous judge, will give the crown of righteousness to him:

**shall find so doing;**

acting the faithful and wise part, ruling the household of God well; giving to all wholesome food, a proper portion of it, and that in the right time.

**Matthew 24:47**

Ver. 47. **Verily I say unto you,**

Nothing is a greater truth, more certain, or to be depended on, than this; all such wise, faithful, diligent, and industrious servants may expect it:

**that he, shall make him ruler over all his goods;**

will honour him with greater gifts, bestow a larger degree of Gospel light and knowledge on him, make him more useful in the church below, and at last cause him to inherit all things in the other world, all glory, happiness, and bliss.

**Matthew 24:48**

Ver. 48. **But and if that evil servant,**

Or should there be an evil servant, an unwise and faithless one, who though he may have gifts and talents, yet destitute of the grace of God; and though he may be in the highest post and office in the church of God for sometimes wicked and graceless men are in such places; yet if he

**shall say in his heart;**

secretly to himself, and with pleasure to his mind, and strengthen himself in a full persuasion of this,

**my Lord delayeth his coming;**

and begins to think that either he will not come at all, to call him to an account for the use of his time, gifts, and talents; or if he does, it will be long first ere he will come, and visit the people of the Jews, by desolating calamities; or by death, to summon him to his bar; or at judgment, to give in his account of his stewardship.

**Matthew 24:49**

Ver. 49. **And shall begin to smite his fellow servants,**

By abusing the power lodged in him, usurping a dominion over their faith, and imposing on their consciences things which Christ has never commanded; vexing and burdening them with trifling rites and ceremonies, and other unnecessary things; wounding, grieving, offending weak minds by his conduct and example; or persecuting the saints, such of them as cannot come into everything in his way of believing and practising:

**and to eat and drink with the drunken;**

giving himself up to luxury and intemperance; feeding himself instead of the family; serving his own belly, and not his Lord and Master Christ; living an ungodly and licentious life, altogether unbecoming the Gospel of Christ: such servants and stewards have been, and are in the church of God; but sad will be their case, when their Lord comes, as follows. Respect seems to be had either to the ecclesiastical rulers among the Jews, who went under the name of the servants of the Lord, but persecuted the apostles, and those that believed in Christ; or the "Judaizing" Christians, and false teachers, that were for imposing the ceremonies of the law upon

believers; or Simon Magus, and his followers, a set of licentious, men; or all of them; who lived in this period of time, between the death of Christ, and the destruction of the temple.

**Matthew 24:50**

Ver. 50. **The lord of that servant,**

Not by redemption and grace, but by creation and profession; shall

**come in a day when he looked not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of:**

suddenly and unexpectedly: such was his coming in wrath and vengeance on the Jewish nation; and such is his coming oftentimes by death; and such will be his coming at the day of judgment.

**Matthew 24:51**

Ver. 51. **And shall cut him asunder,**

The Persic version renders it, “he shall separate him from himself”: he shall separate soul and body by death; he shall take away all his gifts and talents from him; and remove him from his place and office, and from the church of God, and communion of the saints, and out of this world. Some think the allusion is to the cutting up of the sacrifices, and dividing them into pieces; and the sense is, that this wicked servant should have no share in the sacrifice of Christ; but should fall himself a victim to divine justice, and be used as sacrifices were; or, in other words, be severely punished for his sins; though the allusion seems rather to be to the manner of punishing treacherous and unfaithful persons, by dismembering them, cutting them in pieces, or in two: and so the Arabic version renders it, “he shall cut him in the middle”: this was certainly a way of putting persons to death; though some say it was not known to the Jews; but the following instances show the contrary. Mention is made of some that were sawn asunder, Heb 11:37 and the Jews say <sup>501</sup>, that Isaiah was sawn asunder by Manasseh; and such a kind of death is spoken of in the Targum <sup>502</sup>; where it is said, that

”the priests went before Mordecai, and proclaimed, saying, whoever does not salute, or wish prosperity to Mordecai, and to the Jews, מִיִּן יִתְבַּיֵּד הָרָה “he shall be cut into pieces”, and his house be made a dunghill.’

’And elsewhere <sup>503</sup> it is said of a wicked man, that they

<sup>501</sup> T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 3. & T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2.

<sup>502</sup> Targum in Esth. viii. 15.

<sup>503</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 58. 4.

put him upon a carpenter’s block, and w<sup>b</sup> Myronm, “sawed him asunder”; and he cried out, woe, woe, woe, that I have provoked my Creator. This was also a punishment used among the Heathens, as Gataker <sup>504</sup>, and others out of Heathen writers, have shown. It must not here be understood literally, that this wicked servant should be put to such a corporeal death; but that he should be punished in the severest manner, and should be the object of the fierce wrath and sore displeasure of God;

**and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.**

Luke says, “with the unbelievers” Luke 12:46: very likely both phrases were used by Christ; intimating, that such as make a profession of him, and have only a form of godliness, without the power of it, and are wicked and hypocritical men, will share the same fate with those that believe not; and the portion of these is the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; see Re 21:8 or all such persons are intended, who put on the mask of religion, and do not answer to the character they bear: and are unfaithful to the trust reposed in them, and therefore will made examples of righteous judgment, and have their part in the lowest hell:

**there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth:**

See Gill on “Mt 13:42”

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

### CHAPTER XXV

*1 The parable of the ten virgins. 14 and of the talents. 31 Also the description of the last judgement.*

Matthew 25

- [1] Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.
- [2] And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.
- [3] They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:
- [4] But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
- [5] While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.
- [6] And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.
- [7] Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.
- [8] And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

<sup>504</sup> Adversaria, p. 455.

- [9] But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.
- [10] And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.
- [11] Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.
- [12] But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.
- [13] Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.
- [14] For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.
- [15] And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.
- [16] Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.
- [17] And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.
- [18] But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.
- [19] After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.
- [20] And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.
- [21] His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.
- [22] He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.
- [23] His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.
- [24] Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:
- [25] And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.
- [26] His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:
- [27] Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.
- [28] Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.
- [29] For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.
- [30] And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- [31] When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
- [32] And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:
- [33] And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.
- [34] Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
- [35] For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
- [36] Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.
- [37] Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?
- [38] When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?
- [39] Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?
- [40] And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.
- [41] Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:
- [42] For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:
- [43] I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.
- [44] Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when

saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

[45] Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

[46] And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

### JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW CHAPTER XXV

#### Matthew 25:1

Ver. 1. **Then shall the kingdom of heaven,**

The Gospel church state; See Gill on "Mt 13:24" either as it would be a little before the coming of the son of man to take vengeance on the Jews; or as it will be a little before his second coming to judgment: for the parable is manifestly connected with, and refers to the preceding chapter, which chiefly treats of Jerusalem's destruction: but though the Jews were in great security before their utter ruin, yet it does not appear that the Christian church was then in such a lukewarm, drowsy, and sleepy condition, as this parable represents; and since, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, there are some hints of Christ's second and last coming; when the servant found doing his Lord's will, will be greatly honoured, and the wicked, cruel, and licentious servant will be severely punished; and since, at the close of this and the following parable, there is a very lively description given of the last judgment; as also, because it appears elsewhere, that such will be the formal, lukewarm, cold, indifferent, secure, and sleepy state of the church, before the second coming of Christ: it seems right and best to understand this parable, and the following, as having respect to that: and that the design of it is to show, what will be the case of professors at that time; the difference between nominal and real Christians; how far persons may go in a profession of religion, and yet, at last, be shut out of heaven: as also the suddenness of Christ's coming; the necessity of being ready for it; and how watchful the saints should be, that they be not surprised with it. Now some time before this, the Gospel church state, or the body of professing Christians, will

**be likened unto ten virgins;**

to "virgins" for quality; being betrothed ones to Christ, at least in profession; and because of the singleness of their love, and chaste adherence to him, however, as they will declare, and which, in some of

them, will be fact; and for their beauty, comeliness, and gay attire, being, as they will profess, clothed with the righteousness of Christ; with that fine linen, clean and white, with cloth of gold, and raiment of needlework, and so perfectly comely through his comeliness: and for their purity and uncorruptness of doctrine, worship, and conversation, at least in appearance, and which will be true of many of them; and all, from their profession, will bear the same character: these for their quantity and number, are compared to "ten" virgins; which may, perhaps, denote the small number of professors at this time; see Ge 18:32 that there will be but few, that will then name the name of Christ, and fewer still who will not have defiled their garments, and be virgins indeed. The number "ten" was greatly taken notice of, and used among the Jews: a congregation, with them, consisted of ten persons, and less than that number did not make one<sup>505</sup>: and wherever there were ten persons in a place, they were obliged to build a synagogue<sup>506</sup>. Ten elders of the city were witnesses of Boaz's taking Ruth to be his wife, Ru 4:2. Now it may be in reference to the former of these, that this number ten is here expressed, since the parable relates to the congregated churches of Christ, or to Christ's visible church on earth: moreover, they say, that

"with less than ten they did not divide the "shema",

(i.e. "hear O Israel", and say any part of the blessings that went before it;) nor did (the messenger of the congregation) go before the ark (to pray); nor did (the priests) lift up their hands (to bless the people); nor did they read in the law (in the congregation); nor did they dismiss (the people) with (a passage out of one of) the prophets; nor did they make a standing, and a sitting (when they carried the dead to the grave, which used to be done seven times, to weep over the dead); nor did they say the blessing of the mourners, nor the comforts of the mourners (when they returned from the grave, and stood in a row to comfort the mourner; and there was no row less than ten); וְבֵרַכְתָּ הַתְּנִיּוֹת "nor the blessing of the bridegrooms",

which consisted of seven blessings, and this was

<sup>505</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 6. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 11. 3.

<sup>506</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephillah, c. 11. sect. 1.



not said but in the presence of ten persons<sup>507</sup>: to which there may be an allusion here: for the whole alludes to the solemnities of a marriage among the Jews, when the bridegroom fetched home his bride from her father's house, attended with his friends, the children of the bridechamber, and which was usually done in the night: and, at the same time, the bride was waiting for him, accompanied with virgins, or bridemaids; see Ps 45:14 who, when they perceived the bridegroom coming, went out with lamps, or torches, to meet him, and conduct him to her; hence it follows,

**which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.**

The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions, add, "and the bride", contrary to the "Greek" copies, excepting the Cambridge copy of Beza's. Nor do the Arabic and Ethiopic versions so read; nor Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor does it agree with the above custom. By "the bridegroom" is meant Christ, who stands in this relation to his church and people; he saw them in the glass of the purposes and decrees of God, and loved them, and asked them of his father to be given him as his spouse and bride; and who did give them to him, when he secretly betrothed them to himself, in the everlasting covenant, as he does their particular persons at conversion, and will consummate the marriage of them all at the last day; and, in the mean while, acts the part of a bridegroom to them; he loves them as a bridegroom loves his bride, with a love prior to theirs, free and unmerited; with a love of complacency and delight, which is single and chaste, strong and affectionate; constant and perpetual, wonderful, matchless, and inconceivable: he sympathizes with them, nourishes, and cherishes them as his own flesh; providing spiritual food, and rich clothing for them; and indulging them with intimate communion with himself, and interests them in all he has; and when he comes again a second time, he will appear under this character. His first appearance was mean, in the form of a servant, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in garments rolled in blood; but when he comes a second time, he will appear as a bridegroom in his nuptial robes; all his elect will be prepared for him, beautified and adorned as a bride for her husband; when he will come and take them home to himself, and will avow them to be his before his Father, and his holy angels: and which will be a time of great glory, and great joy. Now these virgins are said

<sup>507</sup> Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 3. Maimon, Hilch. Tephilla, c. 8. sect. 4, 5.

to take their lamps, and go forth to meet him: by their lamps are meant, either the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, particularly the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; which, like a lamp, were lighted in the evening of the Jewish dispensation, and will shine the brightest towards the end of the world: these are like lamps both to walk by, and work by, and were a light to all these virgins; some were savingly enlightened into them, and by them; and others only notionally, but were taken up, owned, and professed, as the rule of faith and practice, by them all; and that in order to meet and find the bridegroom, for they testify of him: or rather an external profession of religion is designed by the lamps, which is distinct from the oil of grace, and the vessel of the heart, in which that is; and is that into which the oil is put and burns, so as to become visible: and must be daily recruited, and trimmed with fresh supplies of grace from Christ, without which it cannot be kept up, nor will be of any use and service; and is what may go out, or be dropped and lost, as some of these lamps. Now this was what was taken up by them all; they all made a profession of Christ, and his Gospel: some of them took it up aright, upon an experience of the grace of God, and principles of grace wrought in their souls; others, without any experience, and without considering the nature, importance, and consequences of a profession: and so they all went forth to meet the bridegroom: some in the exercise of faith on him, and in his coming; in love to him, and his appearance; desiring, and longing to see him; expecting, and waiting for him: others only in a way of a visible profession of religion, and an outward attendance on ordinances. The custom here alluded to of meeting the bridegroom, and attending the bride home to his house in the night, with lighted torches, or lamps, and such a number of them as here mentioned, was not only the custom of the Jews, but of other eastern nations<sup>508</sup>. Jarchi says<sup>509</sup>, it was the custom of the Ishmaelites; his words are these:

"it was a custom in the land of Ishmael, to bring the bride from her father's house to her husband's house, hlylb, "in the night", before she entered the nuptial chamber; and to carry before her Nyod-nwq rvek, "about ten staves"; and upon the top of the staff was the form of a brazen dish, and in the midst of it, pieces of garments, oil, and pitch, which they set fire to, and lighted before her."

<sup>508</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 3. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 8. 2.

<sup>509</sup> In Misn. Celim, c. 2. sect. 8.

Something like this is the custom of the East Indians now, which is thus related <sup>510</sup>:

“on the day of their marriage, the husband and wife being both in the same “palki”, or “palanquin”, (which is the ordinary way of carriage in the country, and is carried by four men upon their shoulders,) go out between seven and eight o'clock “at night”, accompanied with all their kindred and friends; the trumpets and drums go before them; and they are “lighted” by a multitude of “massals”, which are a kind of flambeaux; immediately behind the “palanquin” of the newly married couple, walk many “women”, whose business is to sing verses, wherein they wish them all kind of prosperity.--The newly married couple go abroad in this equipage, for the space of some hours; after which they return to their own house, where the “women” and domestics wait for them: the whole house is enlightened with little lamps, and many of these “massals”, already mentioned, are kept ready for their arrival, besides those that accompany them, and go before their “palanquin”. This sort of lights are nothing else, but many pieces of old linen squeezed hard against one another, in a round figure, and forcibly thrust down into a mould of copper; those who hold them in one hand, have, in the other, a bottle of the same metal, with the mould copper, which is full of oil; and they take care to pour out of it, from time to time, upon the linen, which otherwise gives no light.”

### Matthew 25:2

Ver. 2. **And five of them were wise,**

The order of these words is inverted in some versions, as in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, which read, “and five of them were foolish, and five of them were wise”; but this is of no great consequence. There is a parable of R. Jochanan ben Zaccai <sup>511</sup>, who lived before, and after the destruction of the second temple, which bears some likeness to this part of the parable, and others in it, and is this;

“a certain king invited his servants, but did not fix any time for them; those of them that were <sup>בְּקָדִים</sup>, “wise”, adorned themselves, and sat at the

gate of the king's house, and said, is there any want at the king's house? but those of them that were <sup>טֹפְשִׁים</sup> “fools”, went and did their work, and said, is there any feast without trouble? on a sudden, the king inquired after his servants: the wise went in before him, as they were, adorned; but the fools went in before him, as they were, filthy: the king rejoiced at meeting the wise, and was angry at meeting the foolish; and ordered, that those who had adorned themselves for the feast should sit and eat, and those that had not adorned themselves for the feast should stand.”

The wise virgins are such, who are wise, not in their own conceits, which is the case of natural men, and empty professors; nor in the things of nature, or in the things of the world, of which the saints are oftentimes less knowing than others; nor in notional and speculative knowledge, much less in things that are evil: but they are such who are wise unto salvation; who not only know the scheme of it, but are sensible of their need of it; apply to Christ for it; venture their souls on him, and commit them to him: they trust in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; in his sacrifice for atonement; in his fulness for daily supplies; in his grace and strength to perform every duty; and expect eternal life in, and from him: they know him, prize him, and value him as their Saviour; rejoice in him, and give him all the glory; and they are such who are also wise in the business of a profession, as well as in the affair of salvation; they are such who take up a profession of religion aright, upon principles of grace, and after mature thought and deliberation; and when they have so done, hold it fast without wavering, walk becoming it in their lives and conversations; and yet do not depend on it, or trust to it:

### **and five were foolish;**

not in their own apprehension, in which they might be wise enough; nor in the judgment of others; nor in natural knowledge; or with respect to the things of the world; nor in speculative notions of the Gospel; nor merely so called, because unconverted; every unconverted man being a foolish man: but they were so in the business of salvation; as all are who build their hopes of it on birth privileges; on a carnal descent from good men; on a religious education; on their own righteousness; or on the absolute mercy of God; and not on Christ, the one only, and sure foundation: they are such who know not themselves; the impurity of

<sup>510</sup> The Agreement of Customs between the East Indiana and Jews, art. 17. p. 68, 69.

<sup>511</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 153. 1. Vid. R. David Kimchi in Isa. lxx. 13.

their hearts, and nature; their impotency to that which is spiritually good; and the imperfection and insufficiency of their own righteousness: they know not Christ, and his salvation, neither the worth, nor want of him, or that; and are altogether strangers to the power of godliness, and spiritual experience: and are also as foolish in the affair of a profession, which they take up without a work of the Spirit of God upon their souls, and without considering the cost and charge of it; and either in a little time wholly drop it, or, if they hold it, they foolishly depend upon it, or lead lives unsuitable to it. The number of wise and foolish virgins being equal, does not imply that there will be just the same number of nominal, as of real believers in the churches, in the latter day, a little before the coming of Christ; only that there will be a large number of such among them.

**Matthew 25:3**

Ver. 3. **They that were foolish took their lamps,**

The Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, read, "the five foolish", whose folly is here exposed; and which lay not merely, or only in taking up the lamps of a profession in a wrong way, and upon a wrong bottom, but chiefly in what follows;

**and took no oil with them:**

by oil is meant, not temporal blessings, nor spiritual ones, nor the Gospel, nor the gifts of the Spirit, all which are sometimes signified by oil; but either the Spirit of God himself, who is the oil of gladness, and the anointing which teacheth all things; or the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit, even all the graces which are implanted by him in conversion: this is so called, in allusion to the anointing oil under the law, in its excellent nature, its costly matter, its curious make, and particular application; and in the use of it to anoint both things, the tabernacle and its vessels, and persons, prophets, priests, and kings; see Ex 30:23, &c. The grace of the Spirit being of an holy and sanctifying nature, exceeding valuable and precious, and a curious piece of workmanship, and what is only applied unto, and bestowed on the elect of God; and with which all the vessels of mercy, small and great, are anointed, and are made prophets, priests, and kings, and is what is, as that was, lasting and abiding: or else with respect to the precious oil, or ointment poured on Aaron's head, which was emblematical of the grace of the Spirit, which was poured forth, without measure, on Christ, and from him descends to all his members: or to the lamp oil for the candlestick in the tabernacle, which was oil olive, pure, beaten, and was for light, to cause the lamp to burn always; and fitly represented grace, which

comes from Christ, the true olive tree; is pure, and of a purifying nature; and comes through a bruised, crucified Christ; and being put into the heart, causes the light of good works, and a becoming conversation, to shine forth: or else to oil in common, which is of a cheering and refreshing nature; is beautifying and adorning, supplying and healing, feeding and fattening, searching and penetrating, and will not mix with any thing else; upon all which accounts grace may be compared to it. Now these foolish virgins, though they took up a lamp of a profession, yet were unconcerned for the oil of grace, to fill, maintain, and trim this lamp: they were ignorant of the nature and use of true grace; they saw no need of it, and therefore did not ask for it, or about it; they neglected it, made light of it, and denied it as useless; and being destitute of it, took up their profession without it; and in this lay their folly.

**Matthew 25:4**

Ver. 4 **But the wise took oil**

They were concerned for the true grace of God, being enlightened by the Spirit of God; they saw their need of the grace of God, and being directed by him where it was to be had, went to Christ for it; and having received it from him, through the power of the Holy Ghost, exercised it on him; and herein lay their wisdom: for a stock of this in the heart, daily renewed by Christ, will supply the lamp of a profession well. This they had

**in their vessels,**

their oil vessels; by which are meant their hearts; so called in allusion either to the vessels in which the oil was put, when pressed out of the olives, Jer 40:10 or to the oil vessels of the candlestick, Nu 4:9. These are vessels of God's making, though through sin are become impure, and empty of all spiritual good: they are indeed large and capacious; here's room for Father, Son, and Spirit, and for abundance of grace; they are capable of comprehending much of the love of God, and besides natural, a great deal of spiritual knowledge: here, in these vessels, sanctified by the Spirit of God, the wise virgins had the oil of grace, which is an internal thing: it is nothing in the head, in the tongue, or in the hand, but something in the heart: it does not lie in notion, in talking, nor in doing; a man may know much, say a great deal, and do many external works, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; nothing external is that: it is not a mere outward reformation of life, an external humiliation for sin, an abstinence from the grosser sins of life, or a conformity to the ordinances of the Gospel, or a profession of religion: it is a principle

of light, life, love, and holiness wrought in a man's heart; it has its seat in the mind, understanding, and judgment, in the will, conscience, and the affections. This oil of grace was not naturally in them; nor was it obtained by the power of their freewill; but was freely given unto them, and powerfully wrought in them: the case is this; all grace was put into Christ's hands for them; the Spirit of God was sent down to apply it to them, and work it in them; Which is generally done by means, which they made use of by his direction and assistance, and so may be said to take it:

**with their lamps,**

of an external profession; they did not take up a profession before they had grace, or without it; but when they received the one, they took up the other; and which was acting the wise part.

**Matthew 25:5**

**Ver. 5. While the bridegroom tarried,**

The space of time here referred to, is either from the ascension of Christ, to his coming to take vengeance on the Jews; or from thence to his second coming; or rather from the time of some general expectation by the saints, of the near approach of Christ, till such time he does come: for as there was a general expectation of the coming of Christ before he came in the flesh, so there will be a general expectation of Christ being near at hand some time before his second coming; and because such an expectation will not be answered, or Christ will not come so soon as was hoped for, and expected, a general drowsiness, and security, and unconcernedness, especially about the coming of Christ, will fall upon the churches. Thus, in the last century, there was among the people of God, in these kingdoms, a general expectation of Christ's speedy coming; but being in this disappointed, professors of all sorts are fallen asleep, and do not at all, or very little, at least very few, concern themselves about it: in a word, this interval of time seems to regard that period which is pointed out by the Laodicean church state, which will usher in the coming of Christ, and the last judgment. Now Christ, the bridegroom, may be said to tarry, not with respect to the time fixed by the Father and himself; for as this is settled, though unknown to man, it will not be passed by him; he does not, nor will he tarry beyond the appointed time: but either with respect to the time fixed by men; or with respect to the declaration of Christ, and his apostles, that he would come "quickly", and the length of time since; or rather with respect to the expectations of the saints, and their impatience. The

reason why he tarries is, because his time is not come, and there are many things to be done first; there is to be a glorious spread of the Gospel all over the world; all the elect must be gathered in, both among Jews and Gentiles; and the man of sin must be destroyed; and the ungodly must fill up the measure of their iniquities; and Christ tarries to try the graces of his people, who should exercise faith in his coming, by looking, watching, and waiting for it, desirous of it, and hastening unto it; being ready for him, prepared to receive him, and to go with him to the nuptial-chamber; but instead of this

**they all slumbered and slept:**

which is not to be understood as if that one only slumbered, and the other slept; that is, that the wise virgins slumbered, and the foolish virgins slept; for the wise virgins, or true believers, are elsewhere said to sleep, and formal professors to slumber; but both these are spoken of them all: and by this slumber, and sleep, is not meant a natural death; though that is sometimes called a sleep, and to which true believers are subject, as well as others; yet all at the coming of Christ will not be asleep in this sense: and were this intended, their resurrection would be designed by their "arising", in the seventh verse; and so the resurrection of the saints, and of others, would be together, which is not true, for the dead in Christ will rise first; and would be also before the coming of Christ, whereas the resurrection of the saints is not till at his coming; and it would look, by the account in some following verses, as if grace might be had, or, at least, be thought to be had, after the resurrection: nor is this to be understood of the dead sleep of sin: a death in sin may be signified by sleeping, and be so called, and conviction be an awakening out of it; but the foolish virgins were always asleep in this sense, and were never truly and thoroughly awaked; and wise virgins never do, nor can, fall into this sleep; for being quickened by Christ, they never die again: nor of a judicial slumber and sleep, which the saints are never given up to; but a dead, lifeless, and sleepy frame of spirit in the wise virgins: which lies in grace not being in exercise; in a slothfulness to perform religious duties; in taking up a satisfaction with the outward parts of religion; in an indifference about the interest of Christ; in an unconcernedness at the omission of duty, or commission of sin; and in an entire ease of mind with regard to such a frame and state: the causes of it are a body of sin; an anxious care of the world; a being weary of spiritual exercises, and a leaving them off; abstaining from an awakening ministry, and spiritual conversation; and keeping company with

sleepy and slothful professors, or the men of the world: and often it arises from ease, peace, and liberty; and sometimes from long watchfulness, and waiting for the bridegroom's coming; in which, being disappointed, such a frame of spirit ensues: and also in the foolish virgins it intends great carnal security in themselves; a rest and confidence in their external profession; and a laying aside all thoughts of Christ, and his coming to judgment: for a difference there is between the sleep and slumbering of the one and of the other; the wise virgins are children of the day, and not of the night; though they sleep, their hearts wake, and they sleep with grace in their hearts; neither of which can be said of the foolish virgins, or formal professors: as to the phraseology here used, the Jews would distinguish upon it, for they make a difference between slumbering and sleeping:

“they do not dismiss (the company) after the passover with the sweet-meats: if some of them sleep, they may eat, but if all of them, they may not eat. R. Jose says, נחמנו, “if they slumber” they may eat; נרדמו “if they sleep they may not eat”<sup>512</sup>: which Maimonides thus<sup>513</sup> explains, “if they slumber”; that is, if they begin to sleep, but are not yet overwhelmed with sleep, but bear when others speak to them, and answer immediately to them that call them: “if they sleep”: if they are oppressed with a deep sleep.”

Though the phrase ושיכב וניימ, which I should choose to render, “he slumbered and slept”, is often said<sup>514</sup> of the same person, without any distinction, as here.

#### Matthew 25:6

Ver. 6. **And at midnight there was a cry made;**

Which is no other than the following notice of the bridegroom's coming, expressed in these words:

**behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him:**

which supposes that then all things will be ready for his coming: all things respecting this world; all the strange and surprising events that were to come to pass, before the coming of Christ, will now be accomplished; an end put to all the monarchies of the earth; and all the preparations in nature, for the burning of the world finished: all things respecting the ungodly of the world: they will have filled up the measure of their iniquities,

<sup>512</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 8. & Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 14.

<sup>513</sup> In Misn. ib.

<sup>514</sup> T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 47. 2. & 65. 1. & 67. 2.

and finished their persecutions of the saints: and all things respecting the elect of God, they will be all born, and born again; they will have gone through all their sufferings for Christ, and have all their graces tried and perfected; for when the bridegroom comes, he will come to espouse them openly to himself, for which they must be prepared and adorned, and to take them to himself, that they may be for ever with him. It also supposes, that his coming will be very nigh at hand; it was so represented long ago; it is greatly desired by the saints to be quickly; and it will be in a very short time after this notice: and it signifies that there will be some notice given of it, a little before he comes; and that partly for the glory of his majesty; and that his own people, the wise virgins, may be ready; and that the foolish ones may be left without excuse: and this being prefaced with a “behold”, shows the certainty of his coming, than which nothing is more certain, and to be depended on; as appears from Enoch's prophecy, and others of the Old Testament; from Christ's own promise; from the testimony of angels: from the words of the apostles; and from the ordinance of the Lord's supper: and also the importance of it; for things of the greatest moment will follow on it; such as the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the whole world, the complete happiness of the saints, and the destruction of the wicked: and likewise, that it will be wonderful and astonishing; Christ will come in amazing glory, in his own, in his Father's, and in the glory of the holy angels, and of his power and authority, as the judge of quick and dead. And in this notice advice is given to the virgins,

#### **go ye out to meet him;**

see So 3:11, and may intend either a going forth internally, as the wise virgins did in the exercise of grace, of faith in the coming of Christ, of love of his appearance, and earnest desire after it; or a going forth externally, as all the virgins did in a way of visible profession, taking up and trimming their lamps; or literally and corporeally, as the saints will, that will be found alive at Christ's coming. Now this notice is called “a cry”; and refers not to the voice of Christ in raising the dead, for this will be before the coming of Christ, whereas that will be when he is come; and for the same reason, not to the voice of the archangel, if he can be thought to be distinct from Christ. Some think it regards a secret general impulse, that will be upon the spirits of the people of God, with respect to the bridegroom's coming, but this does not seem to answer to a cry; rather it should intend some remarkable providence, as the earthquake in Re 11:13 when a tenth

part of the city shall fall, seven thousand men of note be slain, and the rest affrighted; or the sounding of the seventh angel, Re 11:15, or, what is most likely, the voice of a great multitude, as of many waters, and of mighty thunderings, declaring, that the marriage of the Lamb was come, and the bride ready, Re 19:6, and will be a very loud one: it will awaken all the virgins, and will be the cry, not of one, but of many; and will be very sudden and surprising, though joyful to the saints: this cry will be made, not by the virgins, for they will be asleep; nor by Christ himself, for he will not be come; nor by the angels, for they will come with him, and not before; rather by the ministers of the Gospel, who are the angels so often spoken of in the book of the Revelations, who sound the trumpets at different times, and on different occasions; who also will sound this trumpet, and give this last and general notice of Christ's coming; who will be all at once apprized of it, and give an universal alarm of it together in all the churches: thus, as the notice of Christ's first coming was made by the prophets, the notice of his second coming will be made by the ministers of the Gospel: and this will be at "midnight": which expresses the state of the church a little before the coming of Christ: it will be a night season with it, a time of darkness both with respect to Gospel light, and the presence of God with his people; a time of coldness and lukewarmness, as to zeal for God, love to his people, and concern for the interest of Christ; a time of drowsiness and sleep, of insensibility and security, of indolence and inactivity: so as the coming of Christ will be later than was first expected; it will be sudden, and at unawares, and like a thief in the night; but whether it will be literally in the night season, as his first coming, is not certain. The Jews expect<sup>515</sup>, that at the end of the world Moses and Messiah will come in the night, the one from the wilderness, and the other from Rome: and they make frequent mention of God's going into the garden of Eden, or paradise, at midnight, and there rejoicing with good men. It is said<sup>516</sup>, that R. Eliezer and R. Jose

"were sitting one night, and studying in the law, and about midnight, a man cried (or the cock crowed), bless ye the blessing; says R. Eliezer, now is, the time that the holy, blessed God goes into the garden of Eden, to rejoice with the righteous."

<sup>515</sup> Targum Hieros. in Exod. xii. 42.

<sup>516</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 76. 4. & in Lev. fol. 21. 1. & 23.

### Matthew 25:7

Ver. 7. **Then all these virgins arose,**

Not out of their graves; for the righteous and wicked will not rise together; the dead in Christ will rise first, and this first resurrection will not be till Christ is come; nor will grace be to be had, or be thought to be had after the resurrection; nor will there be any trimming of lamps then, in order to meet the bridegroom, for he will be come: nor out of the graves of sin; for the wise virgins were not in such a state, and the foolish virgins were never brought out of it: but the meaning is, that they arose out of their sleepy and slumbering frame. True believers may fall into a very low condition, with respect to the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; but they shall arise again, for they are held and upheld by the right hand of God: it is sometimes midnight with them, and they are fallen fast asleep, but they shall be awaked, and arise; which arising here, as it respects them, signifies, that they were thoroughly awaked, that they quitted their former place and posture, were upon their feet, and ready to meet the bridegroom. The foolish virgins also arose; which may intend some awakenings of conscience, and reformation of life, and a more diligent attendance on duties and ordinances; all which they did to make them meet for Christ, and to obtain salvation; but after all it appears, they were destitute of the oil of grace:

and trimmed their lamps: both wise and foolish: the former by removing what hindered the clear burning of them; by casting off the works of darkness, and causing the light of good works to shine before men, in the discharge of them, from a principle of grace; and chiefly by applying to Christ for fresh supplies of the oil of grace, to fill their lamps, revive their light and heat, and keep them burning: and the latter, only by a few outward decorations, and external performances; to make their outward profession of religion look as bright as possibly they could.

### Matthew 25:8

Ver. 8. **And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil,**

A graceless person may be able to see the grace of God in others, be convinced of it, and acknowledge it, as these foolish virgins did: they saw that the wise virgins had oil, that is, grace; this they knew by the bright burning of their lamps, by their readiness in trimming them, and that in a different way from them; by their sedate composure of mind, and confidence of

soul, notwithstanding the midnight cry; and by their ardent and affectionate desire to meet the bridegroom. A graceless person may also see a need of grace: these foolish virgins had no such sense, when they first took up their profession; they went on a long time in a course of religion, without any thoughts of it; and the sense they had now was not of the need of it, in the vessels of their hearts, but in their lamps only; nor was it from the Spirit of God, but through the surprise and terror of the midnight cry. Such persons may also be desirous of the grace of God; not because of the intrinsic nature and worth of it, nor for the service and glory of God, but from a mere principle of self-love; and when they can go on no longer with the lamp of profession; and then they desire to have it any where, rather than from Christ, as did these foolish virgins; and who betrayed their folly by applying to saints for it. Had they asked their advice in this their distress, it would have been wisely done; or had they desired their prayers for them; or that they would impart some spiritual instructions to them; but to ask their grace of them was exceeding foolish; when grace only comes from God, who is the God of all grace, through Christ as mediator, in whom the fulness of it dwells, and by the Spirit, who is a Spirit of grace and of supplication; but is never to be had from men, no, not from the best men on earth, nor from the angels in heaven. The reason of this their request follows,

**for our lamps are gone out;**

which may be said to be when professors neglect the duties of religion, drop, or deny the doctrines of the Gospel formerly professed by them, become bad in their principles, and scandalous in their lives, or withdraw themselves from the churches of Christ; though neither of these seem to be the case here: wherefore this going out of their lamps seems to intend the insufficiency of an external profession of religion to meet the bridegroom, and support a person with confidence and intrepidity in his presence: these foolish virgins now saw, when too late, that their lamps availed them nothing; they were gone out, and become useless and unprofitable, because they had not the oil of grace with them; or what they had was only counterfeit grace, or only an appearance of it; a mere form of godliness, without its power; or only gifts which are perishable, and now failed, ceased, and were vanishing away; wherefore this is no instance of the loss of true grace, nor at all militates against the perseverance of the saints.

**Matthew 25:9**

Ver. 9. **But the wise answered, saying, not so,....**

A flat denial; and which sprung not from want or compassion; for the saints are taught not only to compassionate one another, and to pity fallen professors, but even to regard their very enemies in distress: nor from a narrow, niggardly spirit, since such are directed and exhorted to communicate freely, both in things temporal and spiritual, they are capable of, to them that are in need, and even to lay down their lives for the brethren; nor from an uncivil, morose, and churlish disposition; or from a careless and indolent one, as being unconcerned what became of these persons; but from an indignation at the honour put upon them, and the slight put upon God and Christ, and the Spirit of grace: saints know that all grace comes from Father, Son, and Spirit; and frankly own, that what they have is from thence; and they give God all the glory of it, and cannot bear any such application to them for it, as this; but show the same spirit, as Paul and Barnabas did, when the Lystrians were going to sacrifice to them. Moreover, this denial arose from a consciousness of insufficiency to help them in this respect: it is the saints' mercy that they cannot lose the grace they have, nor can any take it away from them, and it is not in their power to give it away; nor can any be sanctified, or justified, or saved, by another man's grace: the reason alleged by them is,

**lest there be not enough for us and you;**

saints have a large abundance of grace communicated to them; some have more, others less; at least it so appears, as to exercise; but they that have the most, have none to spare, and see their need of more; and ask for more, being sensible that present grace in them, is not sufficient for time to come, but grace in Christ only; wherefore their answer, and the reason of it, were like themselves, wise; and this destroys the notion of supererogation;

**but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.**

This advice is thought by some, to be ironical and sarcastic; but it seems rather to be serious, and in good earnest; directing them to go to proper persons for grace; not to men, even ministers of the Gospel, nor to angels; but to God the Father, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who sits on a throne of grace, and gives it liberally to them that come to him for it through Christ, and ask it of him; and to Christ the mediator, who is full of grace and truth, and counsels persons to buy of him gold tried in the fire, grace more precious than the purest gold; and to the Spirit of grace, who gives it to all severally as he will: who are said to "sell", and "men" to buy; not in

a proper sense, by giving any valuable consideration for the grace of God, which is impossible to be done; but in an improper sense, without money and without price; or in other words, by giving and receiving freely.

**Matthew 25:10**

Ver. 10. **And while they went to buy,**

The foolish virgins so far took the advice of the wise, as to go forth to buy oil for themselves: they not only had some thoughts about it, and resolutions to do it, but they really did go out to buy; which may design their attendance on the word and ordinances, where they stopped: they did not go to Christ for grace, for if they had gone directly to him, they had met him; but they went another way, and missed him; they took buying in a proper sense, and thought to have obtained grace by their own works: wherefore, though they went to buy, they did not, nor could they, their attempts were vain and fruitless; and while they were employing themselves in this way, to no purpose,

**the bridegroom came;**

in person, to raise the saints that were dead, to change the living ones, to espouse them all openly, and take them all to himself, and to judge the world; for this must be understood of his second and personal coming:

**and they that were ready;**

not by a mere profession of religion, or submission to Gospel ordinances, or by an external righteousness, or negative holiness, and abstinence from the grosser sins of life, or an outward humiliation for them, or by a dependence on the absolute mercy of God; but through being clothed with the wedding garment, washed in the blood of Christ, being regenerated and sanctified, and having the oil of grace in their hearts, a spiritual knowledge of Christ, faith in him, and interest in him: such are ready for every good work, and to give a reason of their faith and hope, to confess Christ, and suffer for his sake; and are ready for death and eternity, and to meet the bridegroom, and for the marriage of the Lamb, to enter into the new Jerusalem. The Jews say<sup>517</sup>, that

“the Jerusalem of the world to come, is not as the Jerusalem of this world: the Jerusalem of this world, everyone may go into it that will; but the Jerusalem of the world to come, none may go into it, but *הַמְּזוּמָנִי לָהּ* “those that are prepared for it”.

And these

**went in with him to the marriage:**

the Syriac reads it, “into the wedding house”, and the

517 T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75.2.

Persic, “the nuptial parlour”; the marriage chamber, where the bridegroom and bride celebrated their marriage; kept their marriage feast; and where were received the bridesmaids, and friends of the bridegroom, called in Talmudic language, *בְּנֵי לַיִּיה* “the children of the bridechamber”<sup>518</sup>. Such as were these that went in: and the marriage may here denote, either heaven, Christ’s Father’s house, and the mansions of glory in it, which the saints shall enter into along with Christ; or the act of celebrating the marriage between Christ and the Lamb, and the whole body of the elect; when these virgins will not be bare spectators and witnesses, but parties concerned; and which will only be a publication before his Father and the holy angels, of what has been already done: for these were secretly betrothed to him from everlasting, and were particularly espoused to him, one by one, in conversion; but it now will be declared of them all together, that they are his spouse and bride: or the marriage feast, or supper, is here intended; and which designs not the provision of the Gospel in Christ’s house, or church on earth, in general, nor the ordinance of the Lord’s supper in particular, nor the feast in the latter day, but the heavenly glory; and happy are those, who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and who will be ready when he comes; these shall partake of it: they will go in with Christ, and be for ever with him, and never return more.

**And the door was shut:**

which expresses both the happy and comfortable case of the wise virgins, and the sad and miserable state of the foolish ones. The door being shut, the wise virgins will at once be freed from the disagreeable company of profane sinners, and formal professors; their state and condition will be everlastingly settled, their communion with Christ will be free and uninterrupted, and that, for ever; no enemy of their souls can follow them, to give them any disturbance; and they shall never return to a state of sin, sorrow, and imperfection: and it also represents, the woeful and miserable condition of the foolish virgins, in whatsoever sense the word “door” is taken. The church is a door, So 8:9, and an open one, to receive in proper persons, and will be so more especially in the latter day; but this will be shut, when all the elect of God are called and gathered in; there will be no longer a church state on earth, or ordinances. Christ himself is called a door, Joh 10:7, he is the door into the church and into the blessings of grace, and into heaven itself; and which stands open in the ministry

518 T. Bab. Succa, fol. 45. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2



of the word, to receive sinners, but will now be shut; Christ will be no more preached, and held forth in the word, as God's salvation: and there is the door of faith, Ac 14:27, which is the Gospel, so called, because faith is hereby let into the soul, and souls are by it let into the doctrine of faith; and this is sometimes an open door, when ministers have a fair opportunity of preaching it, and have freedom and liberty in it; when attention is given to it, and many souls are gathered in by it; and this will be shut when Christ comes; there will be no more preaching; and there is also the door of hope, Ho 2:15, which now stands open, whilst the Gospel church state lasts: whilst Christ is preached, the word and ordinances administered, and whilst there is life, and Christ not yet come, there is hope of salvation, pardon, and eternal life; but when Christ comes, either by death, or at judgment, and finds persons in a graceless state, there is then no hope: add to all this, that the door of Christ's heart is now open, to receive all coming sinners; but then will be shut, against all their cries, entreaties, and importunities: it will be shut by himself, who opens and no man shuts, shuts and no man opens; and that against all wicked and profane sinners, all hypocrites and formal professors; even all without his righteousness, and the grace of the Spirit of God.

#### **Matthew 25:11**

Ver. 11. **Afterwards came also the other virgins,**

The "other five virgins", as the Persic version reads. The "other"; that were only virgins in name, not in reality; they were different from the wise, they were foolish ones; they were other than those that were ready, they were unprepared ones; and in another situation than those that entered in; they were without, they were now separated from the company of the wise virgins, with whom they had been so long; and what was worst of all, they were to be so for ever. These "also came"; from buying oil: they went about, and came just as they went without any; they came to the door of the bridechamber, being desirous to be let in, and hoping to partake of the marriage feast, and join in the solemnity: but alas! they came too late, they came "afterwards"; after the bridegroom was come, after they that were ready had entered in, and after the door was shut;

**saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.**

They do not call him their Lord, for they had no interest in him, nor could they claim any; though the Syriac version reads it, "our Lord, our Lord": they give him the title, and the bare title, without having yielded

that obedience, which was due unto him. They double the word, to show their importunity, earnestness, sense of danger, and confusion: this title or character is the rather used, because Christ will then appear more clearly to be Lord and God, and every tongue shall confess him to be such: their request to him is, that he would "open" the door unto them, and let them in: they were sensible that the door was shut, and that none but Christ could open it; they did not at once conclude that their case was desperate, but were willing to hope the door might be opened, through their entreaties, and what they had to say for themselves; for though no pleas or arguments are here mentioned, yet, as elsewhere, such as these will be made by the foolish virgins; namely, prophesying in the name of Christ, casting out devils in his name, doing many wonderful works in his name, hearing his word preached, and eating and drinking in his presence; but all in vain, and to no purpose.

#### **Matthew 25:12**

Ver. 12. **But he answered and said,**

The Lord and bridegroom from within, thought fit to give them an answer, but an unexpected and awful one to them:

**verily I say unto you, I know you not;**

which must be understood in consistence with the omniscience of Christ: he knew their persons, conduct, and state; he knew they were foolish virgins, graceless professors, who had made no account of him and his righteousness; but had trusted to, and depended upon, their external profession of religion: they were none of the people whom he foreknew, or knew as his own, and loved with an everlasting love; he never knew them as his father's choice in him, or as this father's gift to him; he never knew them in the everlasting covenant, or as his sheep, for whom he died; he never knew them to believe in him, or love him; nor ever exalt his person, blood and sacrifice, at his table, nor do any good work with a single eye to his glory; he never approved of them, liked their persons, or their conduct; or ever owned them as the true companions, either of his bride, or of himself: which answer implies, that as the door was shut, so it should remain; there was no admittance for them, nor any to be hoped for; and it is all one as if he had said, begone, and depart hence. The Persic version adds such a clause, "begone from my door".

#### **Matthew 25:13**

Ver. 13. **Watch therefore,**

In ordinances, in prayer, public and private, in hearing

the word, at the Lord's supper, and in every religious exercise; over the heart, the thoughts and affections of it; over words, actions, life, and conversation; and against all sin and unbelief, Satan's temptations, the world, and its charms and snares, false teachers, and their doctrines, and for the bridegroom's coming. This is the use and application of the whole parable, and shows the general design of it; the reason to enforce watchfulness follows:

**for ye know neither the day nor the hour;**

of death, or of judgment, or of the coming of the son of man, of one or the other; for it is added,

**wherein the son of man cometh:**

that he will come is certain, and that quickly; the time is fixed, but when it will be is unknown; and therefore it becomes us to be our watch and guard. This last clause is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and was wanting in three of Beza's copies, but is in most Greek copies, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and seems to be necessary.

**Matthew 25:14**

Ver. 14. **For [the kingdom of heaven] is as a man travelling,**

Our Lord adds another parable to illustrate the Gospel dispensation, or its visible church state; or the state of things respecting the church of Christ, before, and at his second coming, and during the interval between his ascension and that: for by the man here, is meant Christ, who in the everlasting covenant agreed to become man, was prophesied of as such, frequently appeared in human form, under the Old Testament dispensation; and in the fulness of time, really became man; though he was not a mere man, but was God as well as man; having all the perfections and fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in him: this man is said to travel

**into a far country;**

by which heaven is designed, and is so called, not only because of its great distance from the earth, and which is very great indeed; but because the better country and land afar off, is out of sight; and what views we have of it, are very distant ones; and is afar off, in respect of our state of pilgrimage in this world, in which, whilst Christ was here, he was a pilgrim and a stranger too; who might be said to be as a "man travelling", whilst he was in it, and when going out of it, and ascending to heaven: he came from thence, and stayed here a while, walking up and down, and doing good; and when he had finished what he came about, he ascended on high, went to his God and Father, entered into heaven, where he is received

until the times of the restitution of all things:

**who called his own servants;**

before he took his journey, to commit some things to their trust and management; and to give them some instructions how to behave during his absence: for, according to the Jewish <sup>519</sup> canons,

"a master that had a mind to go out of the land (of Israel) could not take his servant with him, unless he pleased; and this is a rule at all times, even at this time, that the land is in the hand of the Gentiles."

And here no mention is made of any going with him, only how they were to be employed whilst he was gone: by "his own servants" are meant, not all mankind; for though they are all in some sense his servants, or ought to be, yet they are not so called in Scripture, much less with such an emphasis, his own servants; and besides, more than what are in the kingdom of heaven, or Gospel church state, cannot be intended; since the parable reaches to, and concerns no other: nor all the elect of God only, or all are not the elect of God that are designed; for though these are the servants of Christ, and his own peculiarly, yet all intrusted with talents, are not such; one of these was wicked, slothful, graceless, and at last was eternally lost, and perished; which is not true of anyone of the elect: but ministers of the word are here meant, who are eminently the servants of Christ, his own, whom he has called, qualified, commissioned, and sent forth; for the ministers of the word, whether faithful or slothful, good or bad, are in a very lively manner described in this parable, which is a distinct one from the former; for whereas that gives an account of the different members of the visible church, this describes the several ministers of it: nor can it be any objection to this sense of it, that these servants are all of them said to be his own servants, and called, commissioned, and gifted by him; since Judas, as well as the rest, was called, ordained, qualified, and sent forth by Christ, as an apostle.

**And delivered unto them his goods;**

the Gospel, that rich treasure of divine truths, the dispensation of it, and gifts to preach it; all which are Christ's goods and his gifts, and not man's; and which was in a very eminent manner done, when Christ ascended on high, and received gifts for, and gave them unto men. Just before it, as he was ready to go, he gathered his disciples together; he renewed and enlarged

<sup>519</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Abadim, c. 8. sect. 9.

their commission to preach the Gospel; and quickly after it, gave them greater and larger gifts of the Spirit than before; and has been ever since giving ministerial gifts to men, to some more, others less, and which are signified by the talents following.

**Matthew 25:15**

Ver. 15. **And unto one he gave five talents,**

A “talent” with the Jews, is of silver, was, according to Brerewood <sup>520</sup>, of the value of £375 of our money; according to Bishop Cumberland, £353 11 s. 10 1/2 d.; and if of gold, was equal to £4500 and, according to the latter, £5075 15 s. 7 1/2 d.: so that five of these talents, if of silver, were £1875 and if of gold, £22,500 according to Brerewood; a very large sum for one servant to be intrusted with. The Persic version reads “pounds”, as in Luke 19:13. By these talents, special grace is not meant; for the parable speaks not of what was wrought in these servants, but of what was committed to their trust, and of what might lie useless by them, and be taken away from them; whereas special grace is internal, something, implanted in man, and is an incorruptible seed, that can never be lost, or will be taken away; and it is certain, that one of these servants had not special and saving grace, but was wicked, slothful, and unprofitable, and was cast into utter darkness: but outward gifts are designed by the talents; and these not merely the gifts of natural knowledge and riches, the gifts of nature and of providence; nor the external ministry of the word, Gospel ordinances, and opportunities of enjoying them; but ministerial gifts, such as fit and qualify men to be preachers of the Gospel, as appears from their name, “talents”: they being the greatest gifts for usefulness and service in the church, as talents were the greatest of weights and coins among the Jews; from the nature of them, being what may be improved or lost, and for which men are accountable; from the persons to whom they were delivered, the servants of Christ; from the time of their delivery, when Christ went into a far country, to heaven, when he ascended on high, and received gifts for men, and gave them to them; and from the unequal distribution of them, being given to some more, and others less; all which perfectly agree with ministerial gifts: for it follows,

**to another two, and to another one;**

and these were given

**to every man, according to his several ability,**

or “according to his own power”; his proper power

that belonged to him, as the Lord of these servants: for the sense is, not that he gave these talents, or gifts, according to the different capacities, abilities, stations, and employments of these men; but according to that power and authority which he, as Mediator, had, to dispense these gifts to each as he would; to some more, others less, as he knew would best serve his interest and kingdom:

**and straightway took his journey;**

after he had signified, that all power in heaven and earth was given to him, by virtue of which he ordered them to go into all the world, and preach his Gospel, and administer his ordinances; for which he had, and would abundantly qualify them; with a promise of his presence with them to the end of the world; he took his leave of them, blessed them, and was parted from them, and went up into heaven.

**Matthew 25:16**

Ver. 16. **Then he that had received the five talents,**

The largest measure of gifts; an account is first given of him, how he behaved, and conducted in his Lord's absence, and what use he made of the gifts bestowed upon him: this must be understood, not of a single man, but of that sort of the servants of Christ, who have the greatest ministerial gifts: he

**went;**

it denotes immediate application to business, and signifies that such servants went according to their commission, preached the Gospel to every creature, and administered the ordinances to proper subjects; they went directly, as soon as they had their talents; they did not stay to consult with flesh and blood, whether it would be for their interest and credit or not; they did not stick at any difficulties and discouragements, nor were deterred by the cross, reproaches, and persecutions; but went forth with courage and boldness, not in their own name and strength, but in the name and strength of Christ, who sent them, and promised them his presence and assistance, on which they depended:

**and traded with the same:**

with the five talents, or their ministerial gifts. The ministers of the Gospel are traders, not in their own name, nor on their own stock, and for themselves, but for Christ, and for the good of immortal souls: they closely attend unto, and work at, their business and employment; by constant reading, and diligent search into the word of God; by studious meditation on it; by frequent prayer; and continual preaching the Gospel, and administering

<sup>520</sup> De Nummis Jud. c. 4.

ordinances; and their success follows:

**and made them other five talents;**

that is, increased in spiritual knowledge; gifts were improved and enlarged; a greater stock of divine things were laid in; and many souls gained to Christ: such are they whom Christ has ordained to go forth, and bear and bring forth fruit in their ministry, and whose fruit remain.

**Matthew 25:17**

Ver. 17 **And likewise he that received two,**

Talents, or a lesser measure of ministerial gifts:

**he also gained other two;**

he worked and laboured, and traded, in proportion to the gifts he had received; and his improvements and success, under a divine blessing, were answerable.

**Matthew 25:18**

Ver. 18. **But he that received one,**

Talent, or the least degree of gifts, for the ministry of the word:

**went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money.**

The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "silver", and the Ethiopic, "gold"; but whether these talents were silver or gold, is not certain. Where he buried it; that is, he neglected the gift that was in him, he made no use of it, either to his own advantage, or to the good of others, and the interest of his Lord; he either never went into the ministry, or if he did, he left it as Demas did, having too great affection for the world, and the things of it: he minded earth and earthly things, and employed himself in them, and not in his master's work and service. The phrase seems to point out the earthly mindedness of the man, his worldly disposition, and his eager pursuit after the things of life; which were the reason why he disregarded his talent, and made no use of his ministerial gifts: he could not deny worldly self, nor leave all to follow Christ; but rather than drop the world, he chose to bury his talent in it: it was his Lord's money and not his own, and he was accountable to him for it, and should have used it in another manner.

**Matthew 25:19**

Ver. 19. **After a long time, the Lord of these servants cometh,**

Either in a providential way, by a fit of illness, or in a time of persecution, and awakens the conscience, and calls them to give an account of their stewardship; or by death, when their trading or working time is over, and they become accountable for their whole conduct,

throughout their ministrations; or rather, at the last judgment, when all must appear before the judge of quick and dead, ministers as well as others, and give an account of their gifts, and the use of them, to their Lord, from whom they have received them, and whose servants they profess to be. Which coming of his is after a long time; for seventeen hundred years are now past, and he is not yet come; which is a long time in man's account, though not in God's account, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and in the apprehension of the saints, who love long for, and hasten to, the coming of Christ, are desirous of it, and impatient for it. But though it may seem long, he will certainly come: he stays long, to give time to his laborious ministers to exercise all those gifts he has bestowed upon them, and to leave slothful ones without excuse. It is not to be inferred from his delay, that he will not come: he is not unmindful of his promise, or slack concerning it; though he tarries long, he will not tarry beyond the appointed time; at the end he will come, though it is long first:

**and reckoneth with them;**

what talents they received from him, what they had done with them, and what they had gained by them. The things that ministers of the word are intrusted with, are things of value; the Gospel is a pearl of great price, or rich treasure, that is put into their earthen vessels; it is the unsearchable riches of Christ; gifts to preach it are spiritual, and preferable to gifts of nature, and providence; and the souls of men committed to their care, are of great worth and esteem with Christ; nor are any of these their own, but Christ's, and therefore must give an account of them: this shows both the awfulness and usefulness of the Gospel ministry.

**Matthew 25:20**

Ver. 20. **And so he that had received five talents,**

Or the greatest gifts: as this man is the first to whom his Lord gave any talents, and the first that went and traded with them; he is also the first that is reckoned with; who

**came and brought other five talents:**

he came freely and cheerfully, with a holy confidence and intrepidity of mind, and gave in his account very readily, both of what he had received, and of what he had gained;

**saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents, behold I have gained besides them five talents more.**

True ministers of the Gospel frankly own, that

what gifts they have are delivered to them by Christ; and such are willing that he should have all returned to him, principal and increase: it is not to be imagined that this will be said in so many express words by them, nor will there be any need thereof; for Christ will not be ignorant of what they have been doing, and of what use they have been of; but the sense is, that as all will be manifest to Christ the searcher of hearts, with whom they have to do, so the account will stand fair and open; and it will be seen and known by all, that such and such faithful ministers of Christ have behaved in this agreeable manner, and have been thus and thus serviceable in his interest.

**Matthew 25:21**

Ver. 21. **His Lord said unto him, well done,**

Gospel ministers do not say so to themselves; they know they can do nothing well of themselves, and when they have done all they can, they own they are but unprofitable servants; they acknowledge all they do is owing to the grace of God, and strength of Christ, and that no praise is due to them; nor do they expect or seek for such eulogies from men: but this is said, to show how acceptable a diligent laborious ministry is to Christ, and to encourage industry in the preachers of the word, whose works will follow them, though not go before them:

**thou good and faithful servant:**

such may be said to be good, who have the grace of God implanted in them, some good thing in them towards the Lord God; a good work begun in their hearts, without which men can never be good ministers of Christ; and who have good abilities, not only natural and acquired parts, but ministerial gifts; which are the good things committed to them, and that dwell in them, which they are to keep by the Holy Ghost; and who make a good use of them, and freely communicate and impart their spiritual gifts, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; and who being employed in a good work, as that of the ministry is, do it well, and abide in it: and such may be said to be "faithful", who preach the pure Gospel of Christ, and the whole of it; who neither mix it with the inventions of men, nor keep back any part of it from the saints; who seek not to please men, but their Lord and Master; and not their own honour and applause, but his glory; and who abide by him and his cause, notwithstanding all reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions. In such language as this, the Jews used to praise their servants,

”הוי איש טוב ונאמן” “O man! good and faithful”, and

from whose labour one had <sup>521</sup> profit.

**”Thou hast been faithful over a few things:**

not as considered in themselves; for the truths of the Gospel which ministers are intrusted with, and in which they are faithful, are neither few, nor inconsiderable; they are the manifold grace of God, and the unsearchable riches of Christ: nor are their gifts mean and despicable; nor are their labours worthless, and of no account; but in comparison of the unseen and eternal things of glory, which are prepared and laid up for them; so that there is no proportion between their works, and the glory that shall be revealed in them:

**I will make thee ruler over many things;**

either on earth, where they shall reign with Christ a thousand years; and when the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of it, will be given to the saints of the Most High; and when they who have turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in that kingdom: or else in heaven, where as kings, they shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them, sit down with Christ in his throne, and wear the never fading crown of glory, life, and righteousness;

**enter thou into the joy of our Lord;**

not their own, or what was of their own procuring, but their Lord's; which Jehovah the Father has prepared for his people, and gives unto them; which the son possesses for them, and will bestow on them; and which the Holy Spirit makes them meet for; and which will chiefly lie in the enjoyment of Christ their Lord: this happiness of theirs is expressed by "joy", which will be full and perfect, and without any interruption or mixture; will be unspeakable and glorious, and continue for ever; for when the saints shall enter into it, as into an house or mansion, they shall take possession of it, and abide in it for ever. It was usual with the Jews to express the happiness of the world to come by "joy"; not only that which is from the Lord, but that with which he himself rejoices with his people: for they say <sup>522</sup>,

”there is no joy before, or in the presence of the holy blessed God, since the world was created, hxm v htwak, “like that joy”, with which he will rejoice with the righteous, in the world to come.”

**Matthew 25:22**

Ver. 22. **He also that had received two talents,**

A lesser degree of ministerial gifts; and who as he received next to the other, and was the next, who in

521 T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2.

522 Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 4.

proportion to what he had received, had traded and gained, he is mentioned in the next: place, as giving in his account; who

**came and said, Lord, thou deliverdst unto me two talents, behold I have gained two other talents besides them:**

his account, abating the sum and gains, is given in, in the same form as the other.

**Matthew 25:23**

Ver. 23. **His Lord said unto him,**

The same words as he did to the other servant,

**well done good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord:**

where the same commendation is made, and the same characters are given, as before; for a man that has lesser gifts, and is of less usefulness, may be as good and as faithful in his service, and as praise worthy, as a man of greater gifts, and more extensive usefulness; and the same happiness is bestowed on one, as the other, which in neither is of merit; but of grace; and whatever difference may be made between the saints, or between one minister and another in the Millennium state, yet in the ultimate glory, their joy, bliss, and happiness, will be alike. It is not to be established from this parable, that man has a power to improve the stock of sufficient grace given him, and by his improvement procure eternal happiness to himself; since such a stock of grace is not designed by the talents; nor is that either gotten or improved, by the industry of man; nor does the parable suggest, that men by their improvement of the talents committed to them, do, or can, procure eternal happiness: "good and faithful" servants are indeed commended by Christ, and he graciously promises great things to them, which are not proportioned to their deserts; for whereas they have been "faithful over a few things", he promises to make them "rulers over many things"; and bids them "enter into the joy of their Lord"; into the joy, which of his grace and goodness, he has provided for them, and not which they have merited and procured for themselves: nor is it to be inferred from hence, that true grace once given, or implanted, may be taken away or lost; for the parable speaks not of what is wrought in men, but of goods and talents bestowed on them, and committed to their trust; which may be lost or taken away, or be wrapped up in a napkin, and lie useless by them; when true grace is the incorruptible seed which never dies, but always remains; that good part which shall never be taken away nor lost,

but is inseparably connected with eternal glory.

**Matthew 25:24**

Ver. 24. **Then he which had received the one talent came,**

For he that has the least gifts, is accountable for them; and therefore ought to make use of them to the good of his fellow creatures, and the interest of his Lord and Master; though these often lie neglected, and frivolous, and even wicked pretences are formed to excuse such neglect, as here:

**and said, Lord, I knew that thou art an hard man;**

he calls him "Lord", though he had not served him, and pretends he knew him; but if he had, he would have had a true affection for him, faith in him, and would have observed his commands; and he would also have appeared altogether lovely to him, and of an amiable character, and not in such a light as he represents him; which makes it a clear case, that he was ignorant of him, or he would never have said, that he was an hard, severe, or austere man; one very difficult of being pleased, cruel and uncompassionate to his servants, unjustly withholding from them what was due unto them, and rigorously exacting service that could not be performed by them: all which is the reverse of Christ's true character; who accepts of the meanest services of his people: and takes what is done, though ever so little, as even a cup of cold water, given to the least of his disciples, as done to himself; is merciful and compassionate, both to the bodies and souls of men; and is not unrighteous to forget any labour of love, shown to him or his; and makes his strength perfect in the weakness of his servants, and his grace always to be sufficient for them: but this wicked servant goes on to traduce him, and adds,

**reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:**

which seem to be proverbial expressions; see Joh 4:37, describing either a covetous man, that is desirous of that which does not belong to him; or an hard master that requires work to be done, and gives neither tools nor matter to work with; like the Egyptian task masters, who demanded the full tale of bricks, but gave no straw: whereas Christ is neither niggardly, nor exacting; he requires nothing that is not his, and gives his grace, and bestows his gifts liberally, and upbraids not; nor does he call any to service, of whatsoever sort, but he gives them grace, strength, and abilities, proportionate to it; and as he has promised, he makes it good, that as their day is, so shall their strength be.

**Matthew 25:25**

Ver. 25. **And I was afraid,**

The Persic version adds, “to negotiate with thy money”: he was afraid, lest by trading he should not gain what his Lord expected; and most of all, lest he should lose the talent itself; and dreaded his Lord’s austerity, should that be the case, fearing that he would have no mercy on him. This was his pretence; but the true causes were sloth and earthly mindedness:

**and went and hid thy talent in the earth;**

that it might not be lost, though it lay useless, and turned to no account. The Arabic version renders it, “and buried thy goods in the earth”: he owned the money to be his Lord’s, and thought he did very well, and enough, that he preserved it, though he had not improved it; and this he hoped would be a sufficient excuse, and on which he laid the greatest stress:

**lo! there thou hast that is thine:**

he again acknowledges, that the gifts he had were not his own, but his master’s; and whereas he had kept them entire, as he had received them, and there was the full sum he was intrusted with, he hoped no more would be required: but it is not sufficient to retain what is given, it must be made use of and improved; for every spiritual gift is given to profit with: and besides, there seems to be a degree of rudeness in these words; he does not bring the talent with him, and return it, but only signifies that he had hid it in the earth, in such a place, and “there” it was, where his Lord might take it, and have it again, if he pleased.

**Matthew 25:26**

Ver. 26. **His Lord answered and said unto him,**

Resenting, as he well might, not only his indolence and sloth, his neglect of his duty, and his worldly disposition, but the abusive character he had given of him, in order to cover his own wickedness:

**thou wicked and slothful servant;**

a very just character of him: he was a “wicked” servant; all men in a state of nature are wicked; they lie in wickedness, and are under the power of the wicked one; and there are many wicked men among professors of religion, and many wicked ministers, who, though not openly profane, yet either trusting to their works, or doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, or wholly neglecting it, justly merit this character. This man’s wickedness lay in his slothfulness, in not doing the good he might, and had gifts and abilities for; and in entertaining wrong thoughts of, and in bringing false charges against his Lord: and

he might be truly said to be “slothful”; since he took no pains to improve in spiritual knowledge; and instead of digging for that, as for silver and hid treasure, dug in the earth, and hid his talent there: he neglected the gift that was in him; did not stir it up, or study to show himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; did not give himself up to reading, meditation, and prayer; but trusted to, and depended on what other men had done; stole away his neighbour’s words, reaped that for which he had not laboured, and entered into the labours of others; and being afraid of difficulties, indulged himself in ease and pleasure, served his own belly, and not the Lord Jesus; he gratified his worldly lusts, and had no regard to his master’s interest.

**Thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:**

not granting that he was such an one, and that his servant knew him to be such, and had given a true character of him; but supposing he was such a person he had wickedly represented him to be; he turns the argument upon him, that therefore he must needs know, that he expected to have had his money improved, and to have received it with an increase; and that upon such a consideration he ought to have been the more diligent and industrious, in using and improving his talent, and not to have indulged sloth, and idleness; and thus he convicts, judges, and condemns him, as a wicked, slothful servant, by his own words.

**Matthew 25:27**

Ver. 27. **Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers,**

“Trapezites”, or “tablets”, the same whom the Jews<sup>523</sup> call שילחניט, and is the same word which is here used in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; who were so called from the table that stood before them, on which they told, and paid their money, and the exchange and use: hence all the Oriental versions here read, “thou shouldest have put my money to, or on the table”; put it into the hand of these bankers, where it would have been not only safe, as in the earth, where it was hid, but also would have made some increase, and would have been returned with profit;

**and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury:**

this is said not so much to encourage usury, though it may be lawful; and it seems to have been a practice in those times to put money out to use upon a reasonable

523 Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 9. & c. 2. sect. 1.

interest; but to reprove the sloth and inactivity of this servant, upon his own reasonings, and the character he had given of his master.

**Matthew 25:28**

Ver. 28. **Take therefore the talent from him,...** This shows it was not special grace, which is intended by the talent; for the gift and calling of special grace are without repentance, and are that good part which shall not be taken away: but gifts may fail, cease, and vanish; they may be taken away from men, and men from them; a right arm may be clean dried up, and a right eye be utterly darkened:

**and give it unto him which hath ten talents;**

for to diligent and laborious ministers of the word, more spiritual light and knowledge is given: but this is not to be understood, as though other men's gifts are, properly speaking, taken away from them, and bestowed on them; but that their gifts appear the more illustrious through the slothfulness of others.

**Matthew 25:29**

Ver. 29. **For unto everyone that hath shall be given,**

This seems to be a frequent saying of Christ's, or a common maxim of his, which he made use of on different occasions; See Gill on "Mt 13:12", and accords with some usual sayings, and proverbial expressions of the Jews; who say<sup>524</sup>, that "the blessed God does not give wisdom, but to him that has wisdom"; and of a man, in other respects, they use this is a common proverb<sup>525</sup>,

"if he adds or increases, they add unto him, and if he lessens, they lessen to him:"

and so here; he that has gifts; and talents, shall have an addition to them.

**And he shall have abundance**

of spiritual gifts and knowledge;

**but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath.**

The Vulgate Latin reads, "that which he seemed to have", and so reads Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and so it is read in some Greek copies; though it seems to be taken out of Luke 8:18.

**Matthew 25:30**

Ver. 30. **And cast ye the unprofitable servant,**

All the servants of Christ are unprofitable with respect to God; for no man can be profitable to him, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself, or others; or

in a way of merit, since when they have done the most and best, they have done but their duty: but this man was unprofitable with respect to himself, having not improved the gift and talent bestowed on him; and with respect to men, being of no use for the conversion of sinners, or the comfort of saints, or the edifying of the body of Christ; and brought no honour to his master, and was of no service for the spreading of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom and interest; and therefore, as one good for nothing, the ministering angels are bid to take him, and cast him

**into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth:**

he shall be turned out of doors into outer darkness, to be a companion of other unhappy creatures; who are also without, bewailing their miserable condition, and reflecting on their past conduct; whilst faithful, diligent, and laborious servants will be within, partaking of a rich entertainment, prepared by their Lord, accompanied with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: See Gill on "Mt 8:12".

**Matthew 25:31**

Ver. 31. **When the son of man shall come in his glory,...** What is before signified in the two preceding parables, is here clearly and distinctly represented without a parable: and it should be observed, that as the foregoing parables only regard the Gospel church state, and the ministers and members of it, good and bad, or all sorts of Christian professors; so this account of the last judgment only concerns them; for though all men that ever have been, are, or shall be in every nation under heaven, from Adam to the last man that will be born, will be judged; yet the part or it here described, though it gives a general and lively idea of the whole, only regards the judgment and final state of such who have made a profession of the Christian religion. The judge himself is first described, who is said to be "the son of man"; a name by which Christ is frequently called, and by which he styles himself in his state of humiliation; expressing both the truth of his human nature, and the meanness of it in that state: but as despicable as he appeared then in human nature, in the form of a servant, a man of sorrows, despised by men, and subject to sufferings and death; yet when he comes again, it will be in another guise manner: he will appear "in his glory"; in the glory of the only begotten of the Father, in the glory of his proper deity, in the glory of all the perfections of the divine nature; which glory

<sup>524</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 55. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 89. 4.

<sup>525</sup> Vajikra Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 170. 2.



was, in a great measure, and from most persons, hid in the days of his flesh, though he was in the form of God, and equal with him. He will also come in his mediatorial glory, which he had with the Father before the world was, and with all the honour, power, and authority of the judge of the whole earth, to execute judgment upon men; and in the glory of his human nature, of which his transfiguration on the mount was a pledge and emblem.

**And all the holy angels with him;**

which splendid retinue will add to the glory of his appearance; and who will accompany him not merely, or only as his attendants, to make the solemnity more grand, pompous, and magnificent; but as ministering spirits, who will be employed by him in gathering all before him, separating the wicked the good, and conducting each to their several apartments of bliss or woe: and when he thus appears,

**then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory;**

or glorious throne, upon the clouds of heaven, where he will sit as judge, and be visible to all.

**Matthew 25:32**

Ver. 32. **And before him shall be gathered all nations.**

That is, all that have professed the Christian religion in all the nations of the world, whether Jews or Gentiles, high or low, rich or poor, wise and foolish, such as have had greater or lesser talents; though it is also true of every individual of mankind of every nation, tribe and family, of every sex, age, and state, that ever has been, is, or will be. Yet Christian professors seem only here intended, as the following distinction of them, their final state, and the reasons of it show. This collection of them before Christ, the righteous judge, will be made by the holy angels, who will come with him for this purpose; and being mighty, as they are, will be able to accomplish great a work; and especially as being under the direction, influence, and authority of so divine, glorious, and illustrious a person, as the son of man will then to all appear to be.

**And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:**

they shall be gathered before him, as they were together in their visible church state, as being all under a profession of religion; some wise, some foolish virgins; some sheep, and others goats; some industrious, diligent, faithful, and laborious servants; others wicked, slothful, and unprofitable ones; many of whom pass undistinguished and undiscovered now: but then the judge, who is of quick understanding, will easily discern

the one from the other; such as have the oil of grace in the vessels of their hearts, together with their lamps, from such as have only the outward visible lamp of a profession, but destitute of the grace of God; and good and faithful servants, who have made a right use of their gifts, from such who have been negligent, careless, and remiss; and though these have been folded together, sheep and goats, in the sheepfold of the church, where they have all bore the character of the sheep of Christ; yet now when the chief shepherd appears, who knows his own sheep, and calls them by name, he will as easily separate the one from the other, and more so, than any shepherd, among men, can part a flock consisting of sheep and goats. Hypocrites in Zion shall now be no more, nor sinners stand any longer in the congregation of the righteous, nor both together as one body, and on one side in judgment.

**Matthew 25:33**

Ver. 33. **And he shall set the sheep on his right hand,**

That is, the elect of God, and true believers, such as have the grace of God truly implanted in them; the sheep the Father gave unto Christ, and made his care and charge, whom he, as the good shepherd, laid down his life for; and who know his voice in effectual calling, and follow him in the way of his ordinances and appointments; and are comparable to sheep for their meekness and innocence, their simplicity and usefulness, and their harmless and inoffensive lives, and conversations: these Christ will set on his right hand, as a token of his affection for them, and a mark of respect and honour shown them, and as a pledge of that exaltation and glory he will be about to raise them to.

**But the goats on the left;**

that is, the foolish virgins, wicked, and slothful servants, graceless professors, who, because of the impurity of their hearts, the filthiness of their lives, and their offensiveness to Christ, are compared to goats: these he will place at his left hand, in token of his disaffection for them, as a brand of disgrace upon them, and as an intimation of that dishonour, and miserable condition they will quickly be in. These different situations plainly pre-signify how things will go with each, that one will be acquitted, and made happy, the other will be condemned, and become miserable. Agreeable to which the Jews say<sup>526</sup>, that there is a right hand and a left hand with the Lord: they that are on the right hand, are such as have

<sup>526</sup> Jarchi in Gen. i. 26. Kimchi in 1 Kings xxii. 19. Lex. Cabalist. p. 132. Zohar in Numb. fol. 93. 4.

done well, and are לְיָכוֹחַ “for absolution”; and they that are on the left hand are criminals, and are חֲבוּרָה, “for condemnation”. Some think the allusion is to the two Scribes in the sanhedrim, who stood before the judges, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, and wrote the sentences; the one of those that were acquitted, and the other of those that were condemned <sup>527</sup>.

**Matthew 25:34**

Ver. 34. **Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand,**

Before Christ is called “the son of man”, now “the king”; who is not only king of saints, but king of the whole world; the king of kings, and lord of lords, the judge of all the earth; he appearing in glory and majesty, sitting on a throne of glory, being attended with his glorious angels, and all nations gathered before him, waiting for the final sentence to be pronounced upon them by him; and who accordingly begins with those on his right hand, his sheep, the chosen, redeemed, and called of God, saying to them,

**come.**

The Arabic version adds, “to me”: by such a phrase he sometimes had invited, and encouraged poor sensible sinners: to come and partake of his grace: and here by it he calls the righteous, and bespeaks them in the most tender and endearing manner, and yet with the majesty of a king, and the authority of a judge, to come near unto him, with intrepidity and confidence, and take possession of a glorious kingdom; bestowing on them this high and illustrious character,

**ye blessed of my Father:**

so called, partly because they were his Father’s, not only by creation, but by his choice of them to grace and glory, and therefore most happy and blessed; and partly, because, as such a choice shows, they were dear unto him, highly in his favour, and loved by him with an everlasting love; as also, because they were blessed by him as the Father of Christ, and theirs, with all the spiritual blessings of the everlasting covenant in him; with the pardon of their sins, the justification of their persons, the sanctification of their nature, with adoption, and a right unto, and meetness for the eternal inheritance: hence it follows,

**inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

The happiness of the saints, in the other world, is here

<sup>527</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 9. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. affirm. 97.

expressed by a “kingdom”, because of the glory, riches, grandeur, and magnificence of it; as it is sometimes by a crown, for the same reason, suitable to their character and dignity, who are made kings and priests by Christ: and is likewise represented as an “inheritance”, as it is elsewhere, being not acquired by industry, or obtained by merit; but is the gift of their heavenly Father, and in right of adoption, as the children of God, being made such by his free grace and favour, and denotes the stability and perpetuity of it: and this is said to be prepared, not only appointed and designed in the council purposes, and decrees of God, but got ready; it is a kingdom erected, an inheritance reserved, and a crown of righteousness laid up in heaven; a glory really provided and secured in an everlasting covenant, and that for you: for some, and not others; for the sheep on the right hand, and not the goats on the left; for the peculiar favourites of God, the objects of his love and choice, the redeemed of the Lamb, and that are born of the Spirit; and that for them,

**from the foundation of the world.**

The place itself, where this happiness is to be enjoyed, was actually made on the first day of the creation, when the heavens were formed, and the foundations of the earth were laid, and the glory itself long before. The Ethiopic version here reads, “before the world”; and the Persic, “before the foundation of the world was laid”; and Grotius himself owns, that the phrase is the same as “before the foundation of the world”; and Dr. Hammond’s paraphrase is, “before all eternity”: for as early were these persons, the beloved, the chosen, and blessed of the Father: so that this glory must be of free grace, and not merit, or owing to any works of righteousness done by men; since it was not only designed and appointed, but prepared and laid up for persons before they had a being, and had done neither good nor evil. The Jews <sup>528</sup> speak of the law being an inheritance for all Israel, from the six days of the creation; but a much more glorious one is here spoken of: nearer to this is what they say <sup>529</sup> that Bathsheba was appointed to be David’s wife from the day that the world was created; and add, but the mystery of the thing is, מַלְכוּתָא דְלִילָא, “the kingdom that is above”, which is called by her name. So in 2 Esdras, “the kingdom is already prepared for you”:

”Go, and ye shall receive: pray for few days unto

<sup>528</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

<sup>529</sup> Zohar in Exod. fol. 44. 3.

you, that they may be shortened: the kingdom is already prepared for you: watch.” (2 Esdras 2:13)

**Matthew 25:35**

Ver. 35. **For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat.....** This, and the following, are not mentioned as causes of the kingdom being prepared for them, or of their being entitled to it, or of their being put into the possession of it; but as descriptive of their characters, and as testimonies and evidences of the grace of God in them; by which it appeared, that they were the blessed of his Father, having his special grace vouchsafed unto them; and that they were the children of God, to whom the inheritance of the kingdom belonged, and for whom it was prepared: for what was done by them in time, could never be the cause of what was done for them in eternity, or before, or from the foundation of the world; nor is there any proportion between a kingdom, and such services as here mentioned: and besides, this kingdom is by inheritance, and not, merit; is prepared by God, and not procured by men, and was got ready for them before they had a being; and therefore could not be caused by any actions of theirs: what is here, and in the following instances, said to be done to Christ, is not to be understood of him personally, but mystically, of the members of his body, as he himself explains it, Mt 25:40, and the sense is, that when some of the servants of Christ, ministers, or private Christians, were in distress for want of the necessaries of life, these gracious souls supplied them with food; which to do, especially in a time of persecution, showed not only love to Christ, but great faith in him, and that they were not ashamed of him, and their profession of him, nor of his poor ministers and members; for this was done by them, not as the effect of mere humanity to the poor in general, but as an instance of affection to Christ's poor; and was done for his sake, and because they belonged to him, were preachers of his Gospel, and professors of his name; and therefore was considered as if done to himself personally:

**I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink;**

not gall and vinegar, as the Jews did, but a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, prophet, and righteous person, and because belonging to Christ: this is taken notice of with acceptance by him; and such shall not lose the reward of grace. The Targumist<sup>530</sup> has a passage which may be compared with this:

”Solomon said, by a spirit of prophecy from before the Lord; the Lord of the world shall say to

<sup>530</sup> Zohar in Eccl. ix. 7.

all the righteous in the presence of everyone, go taste, with joy, thy bread which is returned unto thee, for thy bread which thou hast given to the poor and needy, who were hungry; and drink with a good heart the wine which is laid up for thee in paradise, instead of thy wine, which thou hast mingled for the poor and needy, who were thirsty; for, lo! now are thy works accepted before the Lord.”

**I was a stranger, and ye took me in,**

or “gathered me”: an Hebraism; see 2Sa 11:27, and the Septuagint there. Such servants of Christ as were obliged to quit their habitations through the violence of persecution, and were scattered abroad, or went about preaching the Gospel; such were by these righteous ones taken into their houses, and provided for with food and lodging, and every convenience of life; as they were by Gaius, and others.

**Matthew 25:36**

Ver. 36. **Naked, and ye clothed me,**

For in such a condition sometimes are the dear children of God, and members of Christ; see 1Co 4:11, when others, who, Dorcas like, have made coats and garments for them, and clothed them with them; and which will be shown another day, or taken notice of as the fruits, and so evidences of the grace of God in them.

**I was sick, and ye visited me,**

or “looked after me”, or “over me”: or, as the Persic version renders it, ye had the care of me; and which is the true sense and import of the word: for it not only intends visits paid to sick persons in a Christian manner, relieving them with their substance, giving good advice, or speaking comfortable words to them; but attending them, and waiting on them, and doing such things for them which, in their weak state, they are not capable of doing for themselves. Visiting of the sick was reckoned, by the Jews, a very worthy action: they speak great things of it, and as what will be highly rewarded hereafter.

”Six things, (they say<sup>531</sup>,) a man eats the fruit of them in this world, and there is a stable portion for him in the world to come: ”

and the two first of them are, הכנת אורחין “the taking in of travellers”, or “strangers”, which is mentioned in the preceding verse, and ביקור חולים “visiting the sick”. One of their Rabbins<sup>532</sup> says, “he that does not visit the sick,

<sup>531</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol, 127.

<sup>532</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 40. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 14. sect. 4, 5, 6.

is as if he shed blood: says another, he that visits the sick is the cause of his living; and he that does not visit the sick, is the cause of his death: and, says a third, whoever visits the sick shall be preserved from the damnation of hell."I was in prison, and ye came unto me: which has been often the lot of the saints, as it was frequently of the Apostle Paul, who had this respect shown him by many of the people of God, as by the house of Onesiphorus, and by Epaphroditus, who brought him a present from the Philippians, when in bonds; and which will be remembered another day.

**Matthew 25:37**

Ver. 37. **Then shall the righteous answer him,**

From whence it appears, that only such shall be at the right hand of Christ, who are righteous persons, who have the righteousness of Christ imputed to them; and, in consequence of which, are created anew unto righteousness and true holiness; and, under the influence of divine grace, live soberly, righteously, and godly: and those, upon hearing such works ascribed unto them, will, with wonder and astonishment, reply,

**saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?**

which answer arises partly from not attending to, or thoroughly understanding the words of Christ, which they seem to take in such sense, as if he meant these things were personally done to him; whereas the far greater part of them had never seen him in the flesh, and much less in such circumstances as required such things to be done to him; and partly from surprise and astonishment, that he should take notice of such mean actions, and so highly extol them, and graciously reward them; as also from a forgetfulness of them, their left hand not knowing what their right hand had done: which shows, that they had put no confidence in their works, or depended upon them for their justification before God, and acceptance, with him; these were out of sight, and mind; their only trust being in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ.

**Matthew 25:38**

Ver. 38. **When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in?**

As they had never seen him hungry and thirsty, in his own person, though he was both in the days of his flesh, and were ministered to, both by angels, and by good women out of their substance; so they had never seen him a stranger, and took him into their houses; yet they had, seen him hungry and thirsty, and as a stranger

in his members, and had done these good offices to him in them, and to them for his sake:

**or naked, and clothed thee?**

for so Christ in person never was, until stripped of his raiment by the soldiers, and officers; but they had seen many of his poor saints without clothing, and had covered their nakedness.

**Matthew 25:39**

Ver. 39. **Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?**

For though he bore the sicknesses of his people, yet we never read of his being sick himself, nor was he ever cast into prison; but this has been the case of many of his servants, as John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul, and multitudes of others, who have been tenderly and affectionately used by their fellow Christians.

**Matthew 25:40**

Ver. 40. **And the king shall answer, and say unto them,**

Christ, though a king, and now appearing in great glory and majesty, yet such will be his goodness and condescension, as to return an answer to the queries of his people; blushing and astonished at his notice of their poor services, which they know to be so imperfect, and are always ready to own themselves unprofitable servants; and this he will do in the following manner:

**verily I say unto you;**

a way of speaking often used by him, when here on earth, when he, in the strongest manner, would asseverate anything as truth, and remove all doubt and hesitation about it.

**Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me:**

which is to be understood, not in so limited a sense, as to regard only the apostles, and the least of them, for these were not the only brethren of Christ; nor in so large a sense, as to include all in human nature; but the saints only, the children of God, and household of faith: for though acts of charity and humanity are to be done to all men, yet especially to these; and indeed, these only can be considered as the brethren of Christ, who are born of God, and do the will of Christ; for such he accounts his mother, brethren, and sisters; and who are not only of the same human nature, but in the same covenant with him, and the sons of God, not by nature, as he is the Son of God, but by adoption, and so are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: now he that does any of the above acts of kindness to these

“brethren” of Christ, and because they stand in such a relation to him, even the “least” of them: though he is not an apostle, or a martyr, or a preacher of the Gospel, or has any considerable gifts and abilities for usefulness, but is a weak believer in spiritual things, as well as poor in temporal things; and though it is but to “one” of these opportunity and circumstances not allowing it to be done to more; yet as such is the humility and condescension of this great king, as to account such mean persons his brethren; such also is his grace and goodness, as to reckon every instance of kindness and respect shown to them, as done to himself in person; and will take notice of it, accept and reward it, as if it had been so done.

**Matthew 25:41**

Ver. 41. **Then shall he also say unto them on his left hand,**

The goats, the foolish virgins, and slothful and wicked servants,

**depart from me:**

a like expression is used by him to preachers of the word, and professors of religion, that are mere nominal ones. Mt 7:23 and such are intended here, who professed to be on Christ’s side, had been in his visible church, and hoped to have been with him for ever; but having nothing but the lamp of a profession, and some external works to trust to, they are bid to be gone from him; they are banished his presence, which is what is commonly called the punishment of loss; the loss of the presence of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, angels, and saints; and is thought to be greater than the punishment of sense, hereafter expressed. The character given of them, which is the reverse of the former, is,

**ye cursed;**

for having sinned against God, and his righteous law, they are cursed by it, which curses everyone that is under its works, as these were, and do not perfectly fulfil whatsoever it requires; and so were justly rejected of God, and hated by him: and therefore are condemned and sent,

**into everlasting fire:**

by which is meant, the wrath of God; and the phrase expresses the intolerable fierceness of it, and its perpetual continuance; the sense of which, without intermission, will ever be felt in the conscience; and is the punishment of sense, the wicked will for ever endure: it may also intend the pit and prison of hell, where these torments will be for ever inflicted; and so hell is called by the

Jews<sup>533</sup>, the hell יקירוח לֵם, “eternal fire”, or “everlasting burning”: and is here said to be

**prepared for the devil and his angels;**

for Satan, or Beelzebub, the prince of devils, and all his principalities and powers under him: it is not said to be prepared for these persons, though it was, and who were foreordained to this condemnation, but for the devil and his angels; showing, that the same punishment will be inflicted on hypocrites and carnal professors, as on the devils themselves; and it is indeed of such, that the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings are spoken, in Isa 33:14, to which this passage seems to have some respect; for no where else is mention made of this everlasting fire: it is not said neither when it was prepared. It is a notion of the Jews<sup>534</sup>, that the angels were created on the second day; and it should seem by them, that they fell the same day; hence it is a prevailing opinion among them<sup>535</sup>, that hell was made on the second day of the creation; though at, other times, they reckon hell among the seven things which were created before the world was<sup>536</sup>, and which may be reconciled together: for as heaven, the place of the saints’ happiness, was prepared from the foundation of the world, or on the first day of its creation, though the happiness itself was provided long before; so hell, the place of the torments of the devils and wicked, though it was not made or prepared until the second day of the creation, when, according to this opinion, the angels were made and fell; yet the punishment they were to endure there, was appointed before the world was; and so hell is said to מִדְּרָא מִן לְמִינֵי “be ordained from eternity”, because of their sins<sup>537</sup>.

**Matthew 25:42**

Ver. 42. **For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat,**

Hence it appears, that these were such as dwelt among Christians, and professed the Christian name, and yet disregarded the poor members of Christ in distress, when it was in the power of their hands to help them; but when they were hungry and ready to starve for

<sup>533</sup> Targum in Isa. xxxiii. 14.

<sup>534</sup> Targum Jon. in Gen. i. 26. Pirke Eliezer, c. 4.

<sup>535</sup> Targum in Cant. viii. 6. T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 54. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 3. & 30. 2. & in Exod. fol. 61. 4. & in Deut. fol. 120. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 4. 1. & sect. 21. fol. 19. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 101. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 2. & 121. & 1. 2. & 130. 3.

<sup>536</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 54. 1. & Nedar. fol. 39. 2. Zokar in Lev. fol. 14. 4. Targum Jon. in Gen iii. 24.

<sup>537</sup> Targum in Isa. xxx. 33.

want of food, did not communicate to them for Christ's sake; which showed I that they had no true faith in him, and love to him, and therefore are justly condemned by him; whereas such who never knew Christ, nor any of his people, or any obligation they were under to regard any for Christ's sake, these will never be condemned for the non-performance of these things:

**I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink;**

as not the least morsel of bread to eat, so not so much as a cup of cold water to drink; which with what follows, are manifest tokens and evidences, that they did not belong to Christ, were not true believers in him, nor had they any real love to him: the grace of God was not in them, and therefore had neither right unto, nor meetness for, the kingdom of heaven; but were righteously banished from the presence of the Lord, and sent to dwell among everlasting burnings; for righteous it was, that such as they who would not show any love to him here, should not dwell with him for ever hereafter.

**Matthew 25:43**

Ver. 43. **I was a stranger, and ye took me not in,**

Did not take the poor members of Christ into their houses, and take care of them in their families, when they were obliged to flee from their places of abode, or wandered about preaching the Gospel; and who must have perished in the streets, if others, that bore the Christian name; had not been more compassionate than they:

**naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not:**

their conduct, behaviour, and character, are just the reverse of the righteous, and therefore it is no wonder that their sentence is different.

**Matthew 25:44**

Ver. 44. **Then shall they also answer him,**

As well as the righteous, being likewise astonished at what he had said, but on a different account;

**saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee?**

Hence it is clear again, that these men were nominal Christians, who had made a profession of Christ: they own him as Lord; and suggest that they had seen him, and known him, though never in such circumstances; for if they had, such was their love to him, and great respect and veneration for him, as they pretend, they would, to be sure, have ministered unto him; and if ever they had seen him in such a case, which they could not

call to mind, they could not believe, but they must have supplied him with all things necessary and convenient.

**Matthew 25:45**

Ver. 45. **Then shall he answer them,**

With a stern countenance, in great resentment, as one highly offended, and with the authority of a judge:

**saying, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me:**

since they had given no food not to the least of his brethren and friends that stood at his right hand, no not to anyone of them; not so much as the least bit of bread to them when hungry, nor a drop of water to them when thirsty; had not taken them into their houses, nor provided the meanest lodging for them, when they were exposed in the streets to the inclemency of the weather, and insults of men; nor gave them the least rag to cover them, when they were almost naked, and ready to perish; nor did they minister to their wants, either physical, or food, or give attendance, when on sick beds, and in prison houses; therefore he reckoned this neglect of them, and want of compassion to them, all one as if he himself in person had been so treated: and if then judgment will righteously proceed against men for sins of omission, much more for sins of commission; and if such will be dealt with in this manner, who have taken no notice, and shown no respect to the members of Christ; what will the end be of those, who are injurious to them, their persons, and properties, and persecute and kill them?

**Matthew 25:46**

Ver. 46. **And these shall go away into everlasting punishment,**

Their excuses will not be regarded, their pleas will be of no avail, their pretensions to interest in Christ, and love to him, will be set aside; the sentence will remain irrevocable, and there will be no appeal from it, for there is no higher tribunal to bring the cause before; judgment having passed, the execution of it immediately follows: these goats, or formal professors, shall be obliged, whether they will or not, to depart from the presence of Christ; the angels will be ordered to take and cast them into everlasting burnings; they will be driven by them into hell, the place appointed for them; where they shall endure עוֹשֵׁי נֶחֱסִים "everlasting punishment", as the Jews<sup>538</sup> also express it; and that both in soul and body, as the just desert of sin; which being committed against an infinite God, cannot be

538 Caphtor, fol. 113. 1. Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 71. 1.

satisfied for by a finite creature; who therefore must ever bear the punishment of it, because its pollution and guilt will always remain:

**but the righteous into life eternal;**

such as are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and who, though they have done works of righteousness under the influence, and by the assistance of the grace of God, yet have not depended upon them, but upon Christ, for life and salvation: these shall go into heaven, the place appointed for them, to enjoy that eternal life in soul and body, which is the free gift of God, through Christ; and will be a life free from all the sorrows of the present one; a life of perfect holiness and knowledge, and inconceivable pleasure; a life of vision of God, and communion with him, and which will continue for ever; and which ascertains the eternity of the punishment of the wicked: for as the happiness of the righteous will be eternal, the punishment of the wicked will be so too; for no reason can be given why the word which is the same in both clauses, should be taken in the one for a limited time, and in the other for an eternal duration. The Jews have a saying<sup>539</sup> which agrees with this last clause, "the world to come is not made but for the righteous".

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

**CHAPTER XXVI**

*1 The rulers conspired against Christ. 6 The woman anointeth his head. 14 Judas selleth him. 17 Christ eateth the passover. 26 instituteth his holy supper. 36 prayeth in the garden. 47 and being betrayed with a kiss. 57 is carried to Caiaphas. 69 and denied of Peter.*

Matthew 26

- [1] And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,  
 [2] Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.  
 [3] Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,  
 [4] And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.  
 [5] But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.  
 [6] Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,  
 [7] There came unto him a woman having an alabaster

box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.

- [8] But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?  
 [9] For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.  
 [10] When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.  
 [11] For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.  
 [12] For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.  
 [13] Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.  
 [14] Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,  
 [15] And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.  
 [16] And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.  
 [17] Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?  
 [18] And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.  
 [19] And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.  
 [20] Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.  
 [21] And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.  
 [22] And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?  
 [23] And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.  
 [24] The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.  
 [25] Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.  
 [26] And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

539 T. Bab. Yebamot, fol, 47. 1.

- [27] And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;
- [28] For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.
- [29] But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.
- [30] And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.
- [31] Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.
- [32] But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.
- [33] Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.
- [34] Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.
- [35] Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.
- [36] Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.
- [37] And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.
- [38] Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.
- [39] And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.
- [40] And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?
- [41] Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
- [42] He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.
- [43] And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.
- [44] And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.
- [45] Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
- [46] Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.
- [47] And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.
- [48] Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.
- [49] And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.
- [50] And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.
- [51] And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.
- [52] Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.
- [53] Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?
- [54] But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?
- [55] In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.
- [56] But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.
- [57] And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.
- [58] But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.
- [59] Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;
- [60] But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,
- [61] And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the



temple of God, and to build it in three days.

[62] And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

[63] But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

[64] Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

[65] Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

[66] What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

[67] Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

[68] Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

[69] Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

[70] But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

[71] And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

[72] And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

[73] And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

[74] Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

[75] And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

#### JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW CHAPTER XXVI

##### Matthew 26:1

Ver. 1. **And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings,**.... Meaning either all that are recorded by this evangelist, all the sermons and discourses of Christ, delivered both to the people of the Jews, and to his disciples; his conversation with the former, and his divine instructions and prudent advice to the latter,

together with all his excellent parables, which are largely related in this book; or else what is said in the two preceding chapters, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world, the state of the church, and conduct of his servants to the end of time, expressed in the parables of the virgins and talents, and concerning the last judgment and final state of all men:

##### **he said unto his disciples;**

who now were alone with him: having finished his prophetic, and being about to enter on his priestly office, he gives his disciples some intimations of its near approach.

##### Matthew 26:2

Ver. 2. **Ye know that after two days is [the feast of] the passover,**

Which was kept in commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt; and was typical of Christ the passover, who was now to be sacrificed for his people. This was said on Tuesday, and on the Thursday following, the passover began. Christ speaks of this as a thing well known to the disciples, as it must be, since it always began on a certain day, the fourteenth of the month Nisan; which month answered to part of our March, and part of our April; and though there was very frequently an intercalation of a whole month in a year, made by the sanhedrim, to keep their festivals regularly in the proper season of the year; yet previous public notice was always given of this, either by fixing a paper upon the door of the sanhedrim <sup>540</sup>, signifying such an intercalation made, which served for the inhabitants of Jerusalem; or by sending messengers with letters into all distant places {s}, acquainting them with it. So that the times of these festivals were always well known; even to the common people:

##### **and the son of man is betrayed to be crucified;**

it must not be thought that this was equally known by the disciples, as the former; for though they might know, or at least remember, that Christ had told them that he should suffer many things of the priests, Scribes, and elders, who would deliver him to the Gentiles, to be crucified; yet might not understand that this passover was to be the time, when this should be done: by "the son of man", Christ means himself, who was truly and really man, the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham and of David; a character by which the Messiah is described in the Old Testament, Ps 80:17 Da 7:13, and hence frequently

<sup>540</sup> Targum in Cant. vii. 4. {s} Maimon Hilch. Kiddush Hachodesh, c. 4. sect. 17.

used by Christ of himself; which, as it expresses the truth of his human nature, so the weaknesses and infirmities he bore in it; and is very properly used here, when he is speaking of his being to be betrayed and crucified. What he says of himself is, that he is “betrayed”; that is, is to be betrayed, or will be betrayed, meaning at the passover, which was to be in two days time. Christ speaks of his being betrayed, as if it was already done; not only because it was so near being done, there being but two days before it would be done; but because it was a sure and certain thing, being determined in the purpose of God, and foretold in prophecy that it should be; and besides, Judas had now resolved upon it within himself, and was forming a scheme how to bring it about. And this respects not only the act of Judas in betraying him into the hands of the chief priests, but also the delivery, as the word here used signifies, of him by them, to the Roman governors; for they, as Stephen says, were also his betrayers and murderers; yea, it may include the delivery of him by Pilate, to the Jews and Roman soldiers; and the rather, because it follows, “to be crucified”; which was a Roman, and not a Jewish punishment. This was typified by the lifting up the brazen serpent on a pole, and foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, Ps 22:16, and predicted by Christ himself, sometimes more covertly, Joh 12:32, and sometimes in express words, Mt 20:19, and was a very painful and shameful death, and which showed him to be made a curse for his people. It appears from hence; that the crucifixion and death of Christ, were not casual and contingent events, but were determined by the counsel of God, with all circumstances attending: the betraying and delivery of him were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; and not only his death, but the manner of it by crucifixion, was pointed out in prophecy, and was a certain thing; and the very time of his death was fixed; which shows the early concern of God for the salvation of his people, and his wonderful grace and mercy to them: and it is clear from hence, that Christ had perfect knowledge of all this: he knew not only that he should be betrayed, but he knew from the beginning who would betray him; he not only knew that he should die, but he knew what kind of death he should die, even the death of the cross; and he knew the exact time when he should die, that it would be at the following passover, which was just at hand; and he had suggested this to his disciples, and therefore he speaks of it as a thing known unto them; at least what they might have known, and concluded from what he had said to them, Mt 20:18, and the whole is a considerable proof

of his being God omniscient. And he thought fit to put his disciples in mind of it, because the time drew nigh; that their memories being refreshed with it, they might be prepared for it, and not be surprised, shocked, and offended at it, when it came to pass; which shows the tender concern our Lord had for them.

### **Matthew 26:3**

**Ver. 3. Then assembled together the chief priests,**

About the same time, two days before the passover, that Jesus said these things to his disciples, as is plain from Mark 14:1. By “the chief priests” are meant, either such who had been high priests, or such as were the heads of the twenty four courses of the priests; or rather, the principal men of the priesthood, who were chosen out of the rest, to be members of the great sanhedrim:

### **and the Scribes;**

the doctors, of the law, who wrote out copies of the law for the people, and interpreted it to them in a literal way: this clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, and in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, but is retained in, the Syriac version; and no doubt, but these men had a place in this grand council:

### **and the elders of the people;**

these were the civil magistrates; so that this assembly consisted both of ecclesiastics and laymen, as the sanhedrim did, of priests, Levites, and Israelites <sup>541</sup>: these came

**unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas;**

his name was Joseph, but his surname Caiaphas; a word not of the same original with Cephas, as Camero thought; for these two words begin with different letters, nor are the rest the same. Now, though a king of Israel might not sit in the sanhedrim, yet an high priest might, provided he was sufficiently qualified with wisdom <sup>542</sup>. The president of this grand council at this time, should be Rabban Gamaliel, Paul’s master; unless it was Caiaphas, at whose house they were: how they came to meet at the high priest’s palace, deserves inquiry; since their proper and usual place of meeting, was a chamber in the temple, called Gazith <sup>543</sup>, or the paved chamber: now let it be observed, that according to the accounts the Jews themselves give, the sanhedrim removed from this chamber, forty years before the destruction of the temple

541 Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1.

542 lb. sect. 4.

543 Misn. Middot c. 5. sect. 3.

<sup>544</sup>; and which, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, was about a year and a half before the death of Christ; and as others say <sup>545</sup>, four years; at least three years and a half before that time: but then, though the sanhedrim removed from the paved chamber, they met at Chanoth, “the sheds”, which was a place within the bounds of the temple, in the mountain of the house; and the question still returns, how came it to pass they did not meet there? To me the reason seems to be, that they chose not to meet there, but at the high priest’s palace, because of privacy, that it might not be known they were together, and about any affair of moment; and particularly this: the high priest’s house was always in Jerusalem, and he never removed from thence; nor did he go from the temple thither only in the night, or an hour or two in the day; for he had an apartment in the temple, which was called the chamber of the high priest, where he was the whole day <sup>546</sup>.

#### Matthew 26:4

Ver. 4. **And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety,**

The Jews had often attempted his life, but he escaped out of their hands; they had sent officers to apprehend him, but to no purpose; they therefore meet and consult together, to form some scheme, and make use of some stratagem, that they might lay hold on him, and keep him; they were for doing this in the most private manner they could:

#### and kill him;

not with their own hands, nor privately; but their scheme was to apprehend him privately, by some secret artifice, and then deliver him to the Roman governor; to put him to death according to law, publicly, for crimes they had to charge him with; hereby Ps 2:2, had its accomplishment, at least in part.

#### Matthew 26:5

Ver. 5. **And they said, not on the feast day,**

Upon mature deliberation, it was an agreed point with them, at least it was carried by a majority, that nothing of this kind should be attempted to be done on the feast day, on any of the days of the feast of passover, which was now at hand; though this was contrary to their common rules and usages: for, a person that sinned presumptuously, and such an one they accounted Jesus

<sup>544</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 15. 1. Avoda Zara, fol. 8. 2. Sanhedrin, fol. 41. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 14. sect. 13. Juchasin, fol. 21. 1.

<sup>545</sup> Edzard. not. in Avoda Zara, c. 1. p. 236.

<sup>546</sup> Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 7.

to be, they say <sup>547</sup>,

“they do not put him to death by the order of the sanhedrim of his own city, nor by the sanhedrim of Jabneh; but they bring him up to the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and keep him “until the feast”, and put him to death, lgrb, “on a feast day”; as it is said, De 17:13, “and all the people shall hear and fear”, &c.”

But what influenced them at this time to take another course, is the reason following;

#### lest there be an uproar among the people:

they had no fear of God before their eyes, or in their hearts, only the fear of the people; many of whom believed in Christ, and others that did not, yet had a great veneration for him, having seen his miracles, and received favours from him; themselves, or their friends and relations, being cured by him of various diseases: besides, at the feast, people from all parts came up to Jerusalem; and they knew that large numbers from Galilee, where he had the greatest interest, would be present; and they feared, should they attempt anything of this nature at this time, the people would rise, and rescue him out of their hands. But God had determined otherwise, and his counsel shall stand; it was his pleasure, that he should be put to death at this feast, that the truth might answer the type of the passover lamb; and that all Israel, whose males now met together, might be witnesses of it: and so it was, that though these men had concluded otherwise in their council; yet an opportunity offering by Judas, to get him into their hands, they embrace it; and risk the danger of the people’s uprising, who they found compliant enough to their wishes.

#### Matthew 26:6

Ver. 6. **Now when Jesus was in Bethany,**

Which was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, Joh 11:18, or about two miles from it. The time of Christ’s death being at hand, he keeps nigh to Jerusalem, where he was to suffer and die, in the room and stead of sinners:

#### in the house of Simon the leper;

so called, to distinguish him from others of the name. This epithet was either a family one, some person of note in it having been a leper; or else he is so named, because he himself had been one, but was now cured; though the reason interpreters give for this, that otherwise he would not have been suffered to live in a town, is not a

<sup>547</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Memarim, c. 3. sect 8.

good one; for lepers, according to the Jewish <sup>548</sup> canons, were only forbid Jerusalem, and towns and cities that were walled round, and not others, such as the village of Bethany. There were many lepers healed by Christ, which, among other things, was an evidence of his being the Messiah, and a proof of his deity, and this Simon was one of them; whether the same mention is made of in Mt 8:1, is not certain, nor very probable; since that man lived in Galilee, at, or near Capernaum; this at Bethany, near Jerusalem: however, he was one of those lepers that had a sense of his mercy, and was grateful for it, as appears by his entertaining Christ at his house; and may teach us thankfulness to Christ, who has healed all our diseases; and particularly, the spreading leprosy of sin, with which all the powers and faculties of our souls were infected; and which was not in our own power, or any creature's, to cure, but his blood cleanses from it: and it may be observed, that Christ goes in and dwells with such whom he heals, and with such he is always welcome.

**Matthew 26:7**

Ver. 7. **There came unto him a woman,**

By some thought to be the same that is spoken of in Luke 7:37, and by most, to be Mary, the sister of Lazarus, Joh 12:3, which may be true; for it is possible that one and the same woman, might perform a like action at different times; for to neither of the above, at the same time, will the following agree: not to the former, for though that was done in the house of one Simon, yet not Simon the leper, but Simon the Pharisee; who though he had a particular respect for Christ, which few of that sect had, yet appeared to be then of a Pharisaiical spirit; that was done in Galilee, this near Jerusalem in Bethany; the woman there anointed the feet of Christ, but this woman poured the ointment on his head; nor did any such conversation as here follow upon it, between Christ and his disciples; but what discourse was had on that occasion, was between Simon and Christ. Not to the latter, for that does not appear to be done in Simon's house, but rather in the house of Lazarus; no mention is made of the alabaster box, nor was the ointment poured on his head, but on his feet; besides, that was done six days before the passover, whereas this was but two; moreover, Judas only objected to that, but the disciples in general had indignation at this; and though the objections to it, and Christ's defence of it, are much in the same language, in one place as in the other, yet it was no unusual thing

with Christ, to make use of the same words on a like incident, or when the same objections were made. The fact here recorded, is the same as in Mark 14:3, where it stands in the same order as here, and seems to have been done at the supper, of which mention is made,

Joh 13:2, when Satan entered into Judas, and put it into his heart to betray his master, the account of which follows this here:

**having an alabaster box of very precious ointment;**

Mark calls it, "ointment of spikenard", Mark 14:3, which was very odorous, and of a very fragrant smell; see So 1:12. Some there render it, "pure nard"; unadulterated, unmixed, sincere and genuine; others, "liquid nard", which was drinkable, and easy to be poured out; and some "Pistic" nard, so called, either from "Pista", the name of a place in India, from whence it was brought, as some think; or as Dr. Lightfoot, from aqtoyp, "Pistaca", which is the maste of a tree <sup>549</sup>, and of which, among other things, Pliny says <sup>550</sup>, the ointment of nard was made. The Persic version in both places read it, "ointment of Gallia"; and the just now mentioned writer <sup>551</sup>, speaks of "nardum Gallicum", "Gallic nard", which is what may be meant by that interpreter; but be it what ointment it will; it was ointment, very precious: very costly, and of a very great price; for the disciples observe, it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence: and for the better preserving of such ointments incorrupt, they used to be put into vessels made of "alabaster" <sup>552</sup>; though some think not the matter, but the form of these vessels is referred to; and observe, that vessels of gold, silver, and glass, for this use, being made in the form of "alabasters", were called by that name; and that this might be made of the latter, since Mark says, that she brake the box; not into pieces, for then she could not be said to pour it out; but either the top, or side of it: though some critics observe, that the word signifies no more, than that she shook it, that the thicker parts of the ointment might liquify, and be the more easily poured out. The Arabic version has omitted that clause, and the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic, read it, "she opened it"; that is, as the Persic adds, "the top of the vessel": she took off the covering of the box, or took out the stopple,

**and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat:**

which was usually done at festivals, or at any

<sup>548</sup> Misn. Celim, c. 1. sect. 7. Maimon. Beth Hamikdash, c. 3. sect. 8.

<sup>549</sup> T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 69. 1. Gloss. in ib.

<sup>550</sup> Hist. Nat. l. 13. c. 1.

<sup>551</sup> Ib. c. 2. & l. 12. c. 12.

<sup>552</sup> Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. 2. & 36. 8.

considerable entertainments, as at weddings, &c.

“Says Rab, they “pour ointment on the heads of the doctors”; (the gloss is, the women put ointment on the heads of the scholars;) says R. Papa to Abai, does the doctor speak of the ointment of the bridechamber? He replies, thou orphan, did not thy mother cause for thee, that “they poured out ointment on the heads of the doctors”, at thy wedding? for lo! one of the Rabbins got a wife for his son, in the house of R. Bar Ula; and they say, that R. Bar Ula got a wife for his son in the house of one of the Rabbins, Nnbrd avyra axvym gydrdw, “and poured ointment on the head of the doctors”<sup>553</sup>.”

to this custom are the allusions in Ps 23:5. The pouring of this ointment on the head of Christ was emblematical of his being anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; of his having the holy Spirit, and his gifts and graces without measure; which, like the ointment poured on Aaron’s head, that ran down to his beard, and the skirts of his garments, descends to all the members of his mystical body: and was a symbol of the Gospel, which is like ointment poured forth; and of the sweet savour of the knowledge of Christ, which was to be diffused, throughout all the world, by the preaching of it; and was done by this woman in the faith of him, as the true Messiah, the Lord’s anointed, as the prophet, priest, and king of his church.

#### **Matthew 26:8**

Ver. 8. **But when his disciples saw it,**

What the woman did, what a costly box of ointment it was, and with what profusion she used it,

#### **they had indignation:**

Mark says, “within themselves”, Mark 14:4; either among themselves, or their indignation was secret in their breasts; their resentment was private, though it might be betrayed by their looks, and afterwards showed itself in words. This indignation was either at the woman, for the Evangelist Mark observes, that “they murmured against her”, Mark 14:5, that she should act such an imprudent part, and be guilty of such extravagance; or at Christ himself, for suffering such an action to be done unto him; for so the Syriac version reads the above clause in Mark, and “they murmured wb, against him”; so De Dieu observes it should be rendered; though Tremellius, Boderianus, and others, translate it, “against her”: or else their indignation was neither at Christ, whom they

dearly loved; nor at the woman, they being taught to love their enemies, and much more the friends of Christ; but at the action, which they looked upon as an ill judged thing, that sprung from misguided zeal, and which they thought could never be acceptable to their master, who was not used to encourage such profuseness and extravagance.

#### **Saying, to what purpose is this waste,**

or “loss?” They call that waste, or loss, which was spent on Christ himself; whereas, whatever is laid out for the honour of Christ, or the good of his interest, ought not to be reckoned loss, for it will be returned with great increase and advantage; but they could not see what end was to be answered by this expense. It is easy to observe the variableness and inconstancy of the disciples: one time, because the inhabitants of a certain village did not receive Christ, they were for calling for fire from heaven to destroy them; and here is a poor woman that exceeds, as they thought, in her respects to him, and they are filled with indignation.

#### **Matthew 26:9**

Ver. 9. **For this ointment might have been sold for much,**

Mark says, “for more than three hundred pence”, Mark 14:5: now if this is to be understood of Roman pence, each penny being seven pence half penny of our money, three hundred pence come to nine pounds, seven shillings, and six pence; but if it is to be understood of the penny of the sanctuary, which was one shilling and three pence, they come to just as much more: it might well be called very precious and costly ointment; and this was the reason of the disciples indignation, that so much cost and expense should be thrown away, as they thought, in such a manner, which might have been applied, in their opinion, to a better purpose. For had it been sold for its worth, so much might have been had for it,

#### **and given to the poor;**

which was a very plausible objection to the action; and which they seem to have taken from Judas, who had made the same, on a like occasion, about four days before this, and he might instigate the disciples now: which shows what mischief an hypocrite may do in a church, and what influence he may have over good men to draw them into his measures, under the specious pretences of carefulness, frugality, and doing good to the poor. It seems our Lord inured his disciples to this good work of relieving the poor: they kept one common purse, and one of them, who was Judas, was appointed the bearer of it;

whatever they collected, or was made a present to them, they put into this purse; out of which they were provided with the necessaries of life; and the rest expended on the poor.

**Matthew 26:10**

Ver. 10. **When Jesus understood it,**

The indignation of his disciples at this action of the woman's; which he might know, as man, partly by their looks, and partly by their words; though without these, as God, he knew the secret indignation, and private resentment of their minds:

**he said unto them, why trouble ye the woman?**

by blaming her, and censuring the action she had done; as it must, no doubt, greatly trouble her to meet with such treatment from the disciples of Christ: had any of the Pharisees blamed her conduct, it would have given her no pain or uneasiness; but that Christ's own disciples should show indignation at an action done by her from a sincere love to Christ, and to do honour to him, must cut her to the heart: and so it is when either ministers of the Gospel, or private believers, are blamed for their honest zeal in the cause of Christ, by any that profess to love him; this grieves them more than all the enemies of religion say or do unto them:

**for she hath wrought a good work upon me;**

upon his body, by pouring the ointment on it: the Persic version reads it, "according to my mind": it was done, in the faith of him, as the Messiah; it sprung from real and sincere love to him, and was designed for his honour and glory; and so had the essentials of a good work in it. This is the first part of our Lord's defence of the woman: he goes on in the next verse.

**Matthew 26:11**

Ver. 11. **For ye have the poor always with you,**

This is said in answer to the objection of the disciples, that the ointment might have been sold, and the money given to the poor. Christ seems to have respect to De 15:11, and which, agreeably to the sense of the Jews, refers to the times of the Messiah: for they say<sup>554</sup>,

"there is no difference between this world (this present time) and the times of the Messiah, but the subduing of kingdoms only; as it is said, De 15:11, "for the poor shall never cease out of the land": the gloss on it is, from hence it may be concluded, that therefore, לְעַלְמָא יֵשׁ נְיוּחַ, "for ever there will be poverty, and riches"."

554 T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 1.

Our Lord's words also show, that there will be always poor persons in the world; that there will be always such with his people, and in his churches; for God has chosen, and he calls such by his grace; so that men may always have opportunities of showing kindness and respect to such objects: in Mark it is added, "and whensoever ye will ye may do them good", Mark 14:7; by relieving their wants, and distributing to their necessities:

**but me ye have not always;**

referring not to his divine and spiritual presence, which he has promised to his people, churches, and ministers, to the end of the world, but to his corporeal presence; for he was to be but a little while with them, and then go to the Father; be taken up to heaven, where he now is, and will be until the restitution of all things; so that the time was very short in which any outward respect could be shown to him in person, as man.

**Matthew 26:12**

Ver. 12. **For in that she hath poured this ointment,**

Which was so very precious, and cost so much,

**upon my body:**

for being poured on his head, it ran down all over his body.

**She did it for my burial;**

not for the interment of his body, but for the embalming of it, previous to it: the Jews used to embalm their dead, to show their constant respect to the deceased, and their belief of the resurrection; at least not only used to wash them, but anoint them with oil; for so runs one of their canons<sup>555</sup>:

"they do all things necessary to the dead, (i.e. on the sabbath day,) כִּינִי, "they anoint him": that is, as Bartenora adds, "with oil"; and they wash him;"

but the body of Christ, when dead, was not to be so used: the women intended it, and prepared materials for it, but the sabbath coming on, they rested according to the commandment; though, according to this canon, they might have anointed him, but they waited till the sabbath was over; and early on the first day, in the morning, they came to the sepulchre, in order to do it, but it was too late, Christ was risen; see Luke 23:56. Now either this woman had some revelation made to her, that the death of Christ was near at hand, and she feared, or knew, she should not be able to anoint him when dead; and therefore, as Mark has it, "she hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint

555 Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. sect. 5.

my body to the burying”;

Mark 14:8: or if she had no knowledge of all this, nor any such intention, yet the Holy Ghost directed her to this action, with this view, as it were, for the performing of these funeral rites before he was dead; and so the Syriac version renders it, “she hath done it, איב דלמקברני, as it were, to bury me”.

**Matthew 26:13**

Ver. 13. **Verily I say unto you,**

The following words are prefaced in this manner, to excite attention, and command belief:

**wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world.**

The Syriac version reads it, בְּרַחֲמֵי “my Gospel”; and so the Persic version; and has respect chiefly to the doctrine of his death, burial, and resurrection, which this action of the woman had relation to; for though the incarnation of Christ, and all the actions of his life, and whatsoever he did for the good, and in the room and stead of his people, are good news and glad tidings to the sons of men, and so the Gospel; yet his dying for sin, and making atonement for it, thereby satisfying justice, fulfilling the law, destroying death, and him that had the power of it, and his lying in the grave, and leaving the sins of his people behind him, and rising again for their justification, which were the ends of his coming into the world, make up the most glorious and principal part of the Gospel: and these words of Christ show that “this” Gospel should be preached; for which purpose he gave a commission and gifts to his disciples, and has done so, more or less, to men, ever since, for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, and the glory of his name; and that this Gospel shall be preached all over the world, as it was by the apostles, agreeably to the commission; and will be again, towards the close of time, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and then

**there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her;**

of her faith, love, and gratitude; for the memory of the just is blessed, and the righteous are had in everlasting remembrance. Christ suggests, that, though the disciples blamed this action, it should be spoken of by others to her praise and commendation, in all succeeding ages, throughout the world: “a good name”, the wise man says, “is better than precious ointment”, Ec 7:1. This woman got a good name, and obtained a good report by her precious ointment; and if this woman’s action was to be

told for a memorial of her, much more what Christ has done and suffered should be told as a memorial of him.

**Matthew 26:14**

Ver. 14. **Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot,**

Who was provoked and exasperated, to the last degree, by this action of the woman, and Christ’s defence of it, and because the ointment was not sold, and the money put into his hand; and being instigated by Satan, who had now entered into him, formed a scheme in his mind to betray his master, and was resolved to put it in execution, whereby he might, in some measure, satisfy both his avarice and revenge; and, as an aggravation of this his wickedness, he is described, as “one of the twelve”: of his twelve disciples; so the Persic and Ethiopic versions: this is a way of speaking used by the Jews<sup>556</sup>; they call the twelve lesser prophets, הַרֵי שְׁרָר שְׁנֵימָּר “the twelve”, without any other word added thereunto. He was not an open enemy, nor one of Christ’s common hearers, nor one of the seventy disciples, but one of his twelve apostles, whom he made his intimates and associates; whom he selected from all others, and called, qualified, and sent forth to preach his Gospel, and perform miracles: it was one of these that meditated the delivery of him into the hands of his enemies, and never left pursuing his scheme till he had effected it, even Judas Iscariot by name; so called, to distinguish him from another disciple, whose name was also Judas. This

**man went to the chief priests;**

of his own accord, unasked, from Bethany, to Jerusalem, to Caiaphas’s palace, where the chief priests, the implacable enemies of Christ, with the Scribes, and elders of the people, were met together, to consult his death: Mark adds, “to betray him unto them”, Mark 14:10, which was manifestly his intent in going to them; and Luke, that he “communed” with them “how he might betray him unto them”, Luke 22:4; in the safest, and most private manner; and both observe that they were glad; for nothing could have fallen out more to their wishes, who were met together on this design. The Jews, in their blasphemous account of Jesus<sup>557</sup>, say as much: they own, that Judas, or Juda, as they call him, offered to betray him into the hands of the wise men, saying to them, almost in the words expressed in the following verse,

”if you will hearken unto me, wtwa rwoma, “I will deliver him into your hands tomorrow”;

and which agrees very well with the time also: for

<sup>556</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1.

<sup>557</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 16.

it was two days before the passover that Jesus was in Bethany, where he supped with his disciples, and washed their feet, and had the box of ointment poured on his head; and on the night of the day after all this was done, Judas set out from thence to Jerusalem; see Joh 13:30, so that it must be the next day before he could meet the high priests, and on the morrow, at night, he delivered him into their hands; on the proposal of which, they say, that Simeon ben Shetach, whom they make to be present at this time, and all the wise men and elders, שמחה גדולה שמוחו “rejoiced exceedingly”.

**Matthew 26:15**

Ver. 15. **And said [unto them],**

Though the words, “to them”, are not in the original text, they are rightly supplied; as they are by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; and mean the chief priests to whom Judas went, and to whom he made the following proposal;

**what will ye give me, and I will deliver him to you?**

They did not ask him to do it, he first made the motion; a barbarous and shocking one! to deliver his Lord and Master, with whom he had familiarly conversed, and from whom he had received so many favours, into the hands of those that hated him; nor was he concerned what they would do to him, or what would become of him, when in their hands: all his view, and what he was intent upon, was, what they would give him for doing it. They did not tempt him, by first offering him so much money, if he would betray him; but he himself first moves it to them, and tempts them with it to offer him an handsome reward: and it is to be observed, that he does not mention the name of Jesus, either because they might be talking of him, when he came into their company; or else as suiting his language to theirs, who, when they spake of him, usually said, “he”, or “that man”, or “this fellow”. And in the same rude way Judas now treats his master:

**and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver;**

that is, thirty shekels of silver; for it is a rule with the Jews, that when mention is made in Scripture of pieces of silver, without expressing the species, shekels are meant: so Onkelos, and Jonathan ben Uzziel, in their Targums on Ge 20:16, render pieces of silver, by shekels of silver; so pieces of gold signify shekels of gold: thus the 1700 pieces of gold in Jud 8:26, are, in the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions, called so many shekels of

gold; and our version supplies the word “shekels” also, as it does in 2Ch 9:15, and yet some learned men have asserted <sup>558</sup>, that there were no shekels of gold among the Jews, though express mention is made of them in 1Ch 21:25. The value of a shekel of gold, according to Brerewood <sup>559</sup>, was, of our money, “fifteen shillings”; and some make it to come to a great deal more; to “one pound sixteen shillings and sixpence” sterling: had these thirty pieces been pieces, or shekels of gold, they would have amounted to a considerable sum of money; but they were pieces of silver, and not talents, or pounds, but shekels. The silver shekel had on one side stamped upon it the pot of manna, or, as others think, “a censer”, or incense cup, with these words around it, in Samaritan letters, “shekel Israel”, “the shekel of Israel”; and, on the other, “Aaron’s rod” budding, with this inscription about it, “Jerusalem Hakedushah”, “Jerusalem the holy” <sup>560</sup>. As for the weight and value of it, R. Gedaliah says <sup>561</sup>, we know by tradition that the holy shekel weighs 320 grains of barley of pure silver; and the same writer observes <sup>562</sup>, that the “selah”, or holy shekel, is four “denarii”, or pence; that is, Roman pence, each being of the value of seven pence halfpenny of our money: and to this agrees what Josephus <sup>563</sup> says, that a “shekel” is a coin of the Hebrews, which contains four Attic drachms, or drams; and an Attic dram is of the same value with a Roman penny: so that one of these shekels was worth about “half a crown”; and it usually weighed half an ounce, as not only some Jewish writers affirm, who profess to have seen them, and weighed them themselves, as Jarchi <sup>564</sup>, Gerundensis <sup>565</sup>, Abarbanel <sup>566</sup>, and Gedaliah ben Jechaiiah <sup>567</sup>; but other writers also, as Masius <sup>568</sup> Arias Montanus <sup>569</sup>, Waserus <sup>570</sup> and Bishop Cumberland. Now thirty shekels of silver were the price of a servant, Ex 21:32. So <sup>571</sup> Maimonides observes, that the atonement of “servants”, whether

<sup>558</sup> Waserus de numis Heb. l. 2. c. 3.

<sup>559</sup> De numis Jud. c. 3.

<sup>560</sup> Waser ib. & Ar. Montan. Ephron. sive de Siclo in Jud. Antiq. p. 126. Brerewood de ponder. & pret. vet. num. c. 1.

<sup>561</sup> Shaishet Hakabala, fol.

<sup>562</sup> Ib.

<sup>563</sup> Antiq. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 2.

<sup>564</sup> Perush in Exod. xxi. 32.

<sup>565</sup> Ad fin. Expos. in Pentateuch.

<sup>566</sup> Comment. in 1 Reg. 7. fol. 221. 2.

<sup>567</sup> Shalshet Hahohala, fol. 72. 2.

<sup>568</sup> In Joshua, 7. 21. p. 135.

<sup>569</sup> De Siclo, ut supra. (in Jud. Antiq. p. 126)

<sup>570</sup> De numis Heb. l. 2. c. 3.

<sup>571</sup> Hilch. Niske Mammon. c. 11. sect. 1.



great or small, whether male or female, the fixed sum in the law is “thirty shekels of good silver”, whether “the servant” is worth an hundred pound, or whether he is not worth but a farthing; and which was in value of our money about “three pounds fifteen shillings”. This was the “goodly price”, which Christ, who appeared in the form of a servant, was prized at, according to the prophecy in Zec 11:12, and which the high priests thought a very sufficient one; and the wretch Judas, as covetous as he was, was contented with.

**Matthew 26:16**

Ver. 16. **And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.**

Luke adds, “in the absence of the multitude”, Luke 22:6; in the most private manner, when he was alone, and in some solitary place, that no tumult might arise, and that there might be no danger of a rescue: for so he, and the chief priests, had consulted, and settled it, as what would be most prudent and advisable; and therefore, from that time forward, being prompted on by Satan, and the lucre of the money he was to receive, he narrowly watched, and diligently observed, the best and most fitting season to perform his enterprise, and quickly offered.

**Matthew 26:17**

Ver. 17. **Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread,**

There were seven of these days, and this was the first of them, in which the Jews might not eat leavened bread, from the fourteenth, to the twenty first of the month Nisan; in commemoration of their being thrust out of Egypt, in so much haste, that they had not time to leaven the dough, which was in their kneading troughs: wherefore, according to their canons<sup>572</sup>, on the night of the fourteenth day; that is, as Bartenora explains it, the night, the day following of which is the fourteenth, they search for leaven in all private places and corners, to bring; it out, and burn it, or break it into small pieces, and scatter it in the wind, or throw it into the sea. Mark adds, “when they killed the passover”, Mark 14:12; and Luke says, “when the passover must be killed”, Luke 22:7; which was to be done on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, after the middle of the day; and this was an indispensable duty, which all were obliged to: for so they say<sup>573</sup>,

”every man, and every woman, are bound to ob-

<sup>572</sup> Misn. Pesach. c. 1. sect. 1. Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 2. sect. 3, 4. & 3. 11.

<sup>573</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Korban Pesaeh. c. 1. sect. 1. 2.

serve this precept; and whoever makes void this commandment presumptuously, if he is not defiled, or afar off, lo! he is guilty of cutting off.”

The time of killing the passover was after the middle of the day; and it is said<sup>574</sup> that

”if they killed it before the middle of the day it was not right; and they did not kill it till after the evening sacrifice, and after they had offered the evening incense; and after they had trimmed the lamps, they began to slay the passovers, or paschal lambs, unto the end of the day; and if they slayed after the middle of the day, before the evening sacrifice, it was right.”

The reason of this was, because the lamb was to be slain between the two evenings; the first of which began at noon, as soon as ever the day declined: and this was not done privately, but in the temple; for thus it is<sup>575</sup> affirmed,

”they do not kill the passover but in the court, as the rest of the holy things.”

The time and manner of killing the lamb, and by whom, of the sprinkling of the blood, and of their flaying it, and taking out the fat, and burning it on the altar, may be seen in the Misna<sup>576</sup>.

**The disciples came to Jesus;**

that is, Peter and John, as may be learnt from Luke 22:8, for these only seem to have had any notion of Judas’s betraying Christ, from what had been said at the supper in Bethany, two days before; the rest thought he was gone to prepare for the feast, and therefore were under no concern about it; but these two judged otherwise, and therefore came to Christ to know his mind concerning it; for it was high time that a preparation should be made; for this was Thursday morning, and the lamb was to be killed in the afternoon, and ate at even.

**Saying unto him, where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?**

This question in Luke follows upon an order which Christ gave to these disciples; “saying, go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat”, Luke 22:8: for masters used to give their servants orders to get ready the passover for them; and which were expressed in much such language

<sup>574</sup> Ib. sect. 4. Moses Kotsensis Mitavot Tora pr. affirm. 39.

<sup>575</sup> Maimon. lb. sect. 3.

<sup>576</sup> Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10.

as this <sup>577</sup>:

”he that says to his servant, אַ וְשׁוּט לִי אֶת פֶּה, “go and slay the passover for me”: if he kills a kid, he may eat of it.”

It is reported <sup>578</sup> of

”Rabban Gamaliel, that he said to his servant Tabi, hluw au, “go and roast” the passover for us upon an iron grate.” The disciples having received such an order from their master, inquire not in what town or city they must prepare the passover, for that was always ate in Jerusalem; see De 16:5, where they were obliged, by the Jewish canon <sup>579</sup>, to lodge that night; though they might eat the unleavened bread, and keep the other days of the feast any where, and in every place <sup>580</sup>; but they inquire in what house he would have it got ready; for they might make use of any house, and the furniture of it, where they could find room, and conveniency, without any charge; for they did not let out their houses, or any of their rooms, or beds, in Jerusalem; but, at festivals, the owners of them gave the use of them freely to all that came <sup>581</sup>: and it is <sup>582</sup> observed among the wonders and miracles done at Jerusalem, that though there were such multitudes at their feasts, yet

”a man could never say to his friend, I have not found a fire to roast the passover lambs in Jerusalem, nor I have not found a bed to sleep on in Jerusalem, nor the place is too strait for me to lodge in, in Jerusalem.”

### Matthew 26:18

Ver. 18. **And he said, go into the city to such a man,**

That is, to such a man in the city of Jerusalem, for, as yet, they were in Bethany, or at the Mount of Olives however, without the city; he does not mention the man’s name, but describes him, as Mark and Luke say, and tells them, “there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house, where he entereth in”, Mark 14:13; who seems to be not the master of the house, but a servant, that was sent on such an errand. This is a very considerable instance of our Lord’s prescience of future contingencies; he knew beforehand, that exactly at the time that the disciples would enter Jerusalem, such

a man, belonging to such a house, would be returning with a pitcher of water in his hand; and they should meet him; and follow him, where he went, which would be a direction to them what house to prepare the passover in;

**and say unto him;**

not to the man bearing the pitcher of water; but, as the other Evangelists say, to the good man of the house, the owner of it, who probably might be one of Christ’s disciples secretly; for many of the chief rulers in Jerusalem believed on Christ, though they did not openly confess him, for fear of the Pharisees, as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea; and this man might be one of them, or some other man of note and wealth; since they were to find, as they did, a large upper room furnished and prepared. For, it seems, that without mentioning his name, the man would know him by their language, he dictates to them in the following clause, who they meant;

**the master saith;**

the Syriac and Persic versions read, our master; thine and ours, the great master in Israel, the teacher sent from God:

**my time is at hand;**

not of eating the passover, as if it was distinct from that of the Jews, and peculiar to himself, for he ate it at the usual time, and when the Jews ate theirs; and which time was fixed and known by everybody, and could be no reason to move the master of the house to receive him: but he means the time of his death, that he had but a little while to live; and that this instance of respect would be the last he would have an opportunity of showing him whilst living, and the last time Christ would have an opportunity of seeing him; and he might say this to prepare him to meet the news of his death with less surprise: I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples; not with him and his family, but with his disciples, who were a family, and a society of themselves, and a sufficient number to eat the passover together; for there might be two companies eating their distinct passovers in one house, and even in one room: concerning which is the following rule,

”שתי חבורות שהיו אוכלים בבית אחד”, “two societies that eat in one house”; the one turn their faces this way and eat, and the other turn their faces that way and eat, and an heating vessel (in which they heat the water to mix with the wine) in the middle; and when the servant stands to

<sup>577</sup> Ib. c. 8. 2.

<sup>578</sup> Ib. c. 7. sect. 2.

<sup>579</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 95. 2. & Gloss in ib.

<sup>580</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 6. sect. 1.

<sup>581</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 12. 1. Megilia, fol. 26. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Maimon Hilch. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 14. & Ceseiph Misna in ib.

<sup>582</sup> Abot R. Nathan, c. 35. Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 5.

mix, he shuts his mouth, and turns his face till he comes to his company, and eats; and the bride turns her face and eats <sup>583</sup>”

### Matthew 26:19

Ver. 19. **And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them,**

They went into the city of Jerusalem; they met the man carrying a pitcher of water home; they followed him into the house he entered; they addressed the master of the house, in the manner Christ directed, who showed them a large upper room, prepared with all proper furniture for such an occasion, as Christ had foretold:

#### and they made ready the passover;

they went and bought a lamb; they carried it to the temple to be slain in the court, where it was presented as a passover lamb for such a number of persons; they had it flayed, cut up, the fat taken out, and burnt on the altar, and its blood sprinkled on the foot of it: they then brought it to the house where they were to eat it; here they roasted it, and provided bread, and wine, and bitter herbs, and a sauce called “Charoseth”, into which the herbs were dipped: and, in short, everything that was necessary.

### Matthew 26:20

Ver. 20. **Now when the even was come,**

The second evening, when the sun was set, and it was dark, and properly night; for

”on the evenings of the passovers near the Minchah, a man might not eat *רַ שְׁחֹחֶשֶׁב*, “until it was dark” <sup>584</sup>.

”This was according to the rule, Ex 12:8,

#### he sat down with the twelve,

his twelve disciples; so the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; and which also adds, “at table”; even all the twelve apostles, who were properly his family, and a sufficient number for a passover lamb <sup>585</sup>: for

”they do not kill the passover for a single man, according to the words of R. Judah, though R. Jose permits it: yea, though the society consists of an hundred, if they cannot eat the quantity of an olive, they do not kill for them: nor do they make a society of women, servants, and little ones?”

<sup>583</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 7. sect. 13.

<sup>584</sup> Ib. c. 10. sect. 1.

<sup>585</sup> Ib. c. 8. sect. 7.

Judas was now returned again, and took his place among the disciples, as if he was as innocent, and as friendly, as any of them: this he might choose to do, partly to avoid all suspicion of his designs; and partly that he might get intelligence where Christ would go after supper, that he might have the opportunity he was waiting for, to betray him into the hands of his enemies. “He sat, or lay down with them”, as the word signifies; for the posture of the Jews, at the passover table especially, was not properly sitting, but reclining, or lying along on coaches, not on their backs, nor on their right side, but on their left; See Gill on “Joh 13:23”. The first passover was eaten by them standing, with their loins girt, their shoes on, and staves in their hands, because they were just ready to depart out of Egypt: but in after passovers these circumstances were omitted; and particularly sitting, or lying along, was reckoned so necessary to be observed, that it is said <sup>586</sup>, that

”the poorest man in Israel might not eat, *רַ שִׁיב*, “until he lies along”, or leans;”

that is, as some of their commentators <sup>587</sup> note, either upon the couch, or on the table, after the manner of free men, and in remembrance of their liberty: and another of them <sup>588</sup> says,

”we are bound to eat, *בְּהִיבָה*, “lying along”, as kings and great men eat, because it is a token of liberty.”

Hence they elsewhere say <sup>589</sup>,

”it is the way of servants to eat standing; but here (in the passover) to eat, *מוֹיְבִי*, “sitting”, or “lying along”, because they (the Israelites) went out of bondage to liberty. Says R. Simon, in the name of R. Joshua ben Levi, that which a man is obliged to in the passover, though it be but the quantity of an olive, he must eat it, bowm, “lying along”.

The account Maimonides gives of this usage, is in these words <sup>590</sup>:

”even the poorest man in Israel may not eat until he “lies along”: a woman need not lie; but if she is a woman of worth and note, she ought to lie: a son by a father, and a servant before his master ought to lie: “but a disciple before his master does not lie, except his master gives him leave”

<sup>586</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 1.

<sup>587</sup> Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>588</sup> Maimonides in ib.

<sup>589</sup> T. Hieros. Pesach. fol. 37. 2.

<sup>590</sup> Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 8.

(as Christ did his); and lying on the right hand is not lying; and so he that lies upon his neck, or upon his face, this is not lying; and when ought they to lie? at the time of eating, the quantity of an olive, of unleavened bread, and at drinking of the four cups; but at the rest of eating and drinking, if he lies, lo! it is praiseworthy: but if not, there is no necessity.”

This custom was so constantly and uniformly observed at the passover, that it is taken particular notice of in the declaration, or showing forth of the passover by the master of the family, when he says <sup>591</sup>, “how different is this night from all other nights”, &c. and among the many things he mentions, this is one;

”in all other nights we eat either sitting, or lying along; that is, which way we please, but this night all of מוֹבִינִים, “lie along”.

#### Matthew 26:21

Ver. 21. **And as they did eat,**

The passover lamb, the unleavened bread, and bitter herbs: he said it was usual, whilst they were thus engaged, to discourse much about the reason and design of this institution. What they talked of may be learnt from what follows <sup>592</sup>:

”it is an affirmative precept of the law, to declare the signs and wonders which were done to our fathers in Egypt, on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, according to Ex 13:3, “remember this day”, &c. and from whence on the night of the fifteenth? from Ex 13:8, “and thou shalt show thy son”, &c. at the time that the unleavened bread, and bitter herbs lie before thee. And though he has no son, or though they are wise, and grown up, they are bound to declare the going out of Egypt; and everyone that enlarges, or dwells long on the things that happened and came to pass, lo! he is praiseworthy. It is a command to make known to children, even though they do not ask; as it is said, “and thou shalt show thy son”: according to the son’s knowledge, his father teaches him; how if he is a little one, or foolish? he says to him, my son, all of us were servants, as this handmaid, or this servant, in Egypt; and on this

night the holy, blessed God redeemed us, and brought us into liberty: and if the son is grown up and a wise man, he makes known to him what happened to us in Egypt, and the wonders which were done for us by the hands of Moses, our master; all according to the capacity of the son. And it is necessary to make a repetition on this night, that the children may see, and ask, and say, how different is this night from all other nights? until he replies to them, and says to them, so and so it happened, and thus and thus it was.--If he has no son, his wife asks him; and if he has no wife, they ask one another, how different is this night? and though they are all wise men, everyone asks himself alone, how different is this night? and it is necessary to begin with reproaches, and end with praise, how? he begins and declares, how at first our fathers were in the days of Terah, and before him, deniers (of the divine being), and wandering after vanity, and following idolatrous worship; and he ends with the law of truth, how that God brought us near to himself, and separated us from the nations, and caused us to draw nigh to his unity; and so begins and makes known, that we were servants to Pharaoh in Egypt, and all the evils he recompensed us with; and ends with the signs and wonders which were wrought for us, and with our liberties: and he that expounds from--”a Syrian was my father, ready to perish”: till he has finished the whole section: and every one that adds and enlarges in expounding this section, lo! he is praiseworthy. And everyone that does not say these three words on the night of the fifteenth, cannot be excused from blame; and they are these, the passover, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs: “the passover”, because God passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt, as it is said, Ex 12:27, “the bitter herbs”, because the Egyptians made bitter the lives of our fathers in Egypt: “the unleavened bread”, because they were redeemed: and these things all of them are called the declaration, or showing forth.”

Christ now took up some part of the time, at least, whilst they were eating, in discoursing with his disciples about the traitor: he said, verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me; meaning to the chief

<sup>591</sup> Maimon ib. c. 8. 2. Haggadah Shel Pesach. p. 5.

<sup>592</sup> Maimon. ib. c. 7. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Vid. c. 8. 2, 3, 4, 5. & Haggadah Shel. Pesach. p. 5, 6, 7, 8.

priests and Scribes, who should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, scourged, and crucified, as he had told them some time before, Mt 20:18, though he did not tell them as now, that it should be done by one of them; he had indeed signified as much as this two days before, at the supper in Bethany, but none seemed to understand whom he meant, but Peter and John, and the thing wore off their minds; and therefore he mentions it again to them, with great seriousness, and in the most solemn manner, declaring it as a certain and undoubted truth.

**Matthew 26:22**

Ver. 22. **And they were exceeding sorrowful,**

Partly that Christ should be betrayed at all, into the hands of his enemies, by whom they knew he would be ill used; and partly, that so vile an action should be done, by one from among themselves; and greatly, because they knew not, nor could not conceive, who of them could be guilty of such an horrid sin:

**and began everyone of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?**

excepting Judas, who afterwards spoke for himself. This they said, though conscious to themselves the thing had never entered into their hearts; nor had they taken any step towards it, but with their whole souls abhorred it; yet, as knowing the treachery and deceitfulness, of their hearts, which they could not trust to; and fearing lest should they be left thereunto, they might commit such a dreadful iniquity; and as desirous of being cleared by Christ from any such imputation, and even from all suspicion of anything of this kind.

**Matthew 26:23**

Ver. 23. **And he answered and said,**

In order to make them easy, and point out the betrayer to them,

**he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.**

This seems to refer to the dipping of the unleavened bread, or bitter herbs, both, into the sauce called "Charoseth", which the Jews<sup>593</sup> say,

"was made of figs, nuts, almonds, and other fruits; to which they added apples; all which they bruised in a mortar, and mixed with vinegar; and put spices into it, calamus and cinnamon, in the form of small long threads, in remembrance of the straw; and it was necessary it should be:

<sup>593</sup> Bartenora in Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 3. Vid. Maimon. & Yom Tob, in ib. & Piske Tos. Pesach. art. 322.

thick, in memory of the clay."

The account Maimonides<sup>594</sup> gives of it is,

"the "Charoseth" is a precept from the words of the Scribes, in remembrance of the clay in which they served in Egypt; and how did they make it? They took dates, or berries, or raisins, and the like, and stamped them, and put vinegar into them, and seasoned them with spices, as clay in straw, and brought it upon the table, in the night of the passover."

And in this he says, the master of the family dipped both the herbs, and the unleavened bread<sup>595</sup>, and that both separately and conjunctly; for he says<sup>596</sup>, that

"he rolled up the unleavened bread and bitter herbs together, **וַיִּטְבֵּל** and dipped them in the Charoseth."

And this was twice done in eating the passover; for so it is observed<sup>597</sup> among the many things, which distinguished this night from others: "in all other nights we dip but once, but in this night twice". By this action, Christ gave his disciples a signal, whereby they might know the betrayer: for this is not the general description of one, that sat at the table, and ate of his bread with him, and so fulfilled the prediction, in Ps 41:9, though this is too true; but then, this was saying no more than he had before done, when he said, "one of you shall betray me"; though the phrase is so<sup>598</sup> used; for instance,

"if a man goes and sits at table with them, **בִּלְקָהֵן** וַיִּטְבֵּל, and "dips with them", though he does not eat the quantity of an olive, they bless for him.

"But this refers to a particular action then performed by Judas, just at the time Christ spoke these words; and who might sit near him, and dip into the same dish he did; for since there were thirteen of them, there might be more dishes than one; and two or three might have a dish to themselves, and Judas dip in the same dish with Christ.

**Matthew 26:24**

Ver. 24. **The son of man goeth,**

Meaning himself, not to the Mount of Olives, or Gethsemane, or the garden, whither he went a little after

<sup>594</sup> Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 11.

<sup>595</sup> Ib. c. 8. sect. 2. 8.

<sup>596</sup> Ib. sect. 6. & T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 115. 1.

<sup>597</sup> Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 4, Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c 8. sect. 2. Haggadah Shel Pesach, p. 5.

<sup>598</sup> Bereshit Rabba, sect. 91. fol. 78. 4.

this, but out of the world, to his Father: the phrase is expressive of his death, as in Jos 23:14, and denotes the voluntariness of it, and which is no ways inconsistent with the divine determinations about it: nor the violence that was offered to him by his enemies.

**As it is written;**

in the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees; for Luke says, "as it was determined" Luke 22:22: or as it was recorded in the books of the Old Testament; in Ps 22:1, Isa 53:1 and Da 9:1 for Christ died for the sins of his people, in perfect agreement with these Scriptures, which were written of him:

**but woe unto that man by whom the son of man is betrayed;**

for God's decrees concerning this matter, and the predictions in the Bible founded on them, did not in the least excuse, or extenuate the blackness of his crime; who did what he did, of his own free will, and wicked heart, voluntarily, and to satisfy his own lusts:

**it had been good for that man if he had not been born.**

This is a Rabbinical phrase, frequently, used in one form or another; sometimes thus; as it is said<sup>599</sup> of such that speak false and lying words, and regard not the glory of their Creator, אמלל ליהוה יתרונו, it would have been better for them they had never come into the world; and so of any other, notorious sinner, it is at other times said<sup>600</sup>, טוב ליה דלא אברי, or טוב לו שלא נברא,<sup>601</sup> "it would have been better for him if he had not been created"; signifying, that it is better to have no being at all, than to be punished with everlasting destruction; and which was the dreadful case of Judas, who fell by his transgression, and went to his own place.

**Matthew 26:25**

Ver. 25. **Then Judas, which betrayed him,....** Or that was about to betray him, as the Ethiopic version reads it: he had taken a step towards it, was seeking an opportunity to do it, and at length effected it: the Persic version reads, Judas Iscariot; who after all the rest had put the question,

**answered and said, Master, is it I?**

Who though he knew what he had been doing, and what he further resolved to do, and was conscious

<sup>599</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 41. 1. Vid. Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 1. T. Bab Chagiga, fol. 16. 1.

<sup>600</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 46. 4. & in Exod. fol. 1. 4. & 36. 3. & 62. 3. & 66. 3. & 105. 4. & 106. 1.

<sup>601</sup> T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3. 2. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. & Erubin, fol. 13. 2. Midrash Kobelet, fol. 79. 1.

to himself he was the man; nay, though he had been pointed out as the person, and the most dreadful woe denounced on him, that should be the betrayer, in his hearing; yet all this did not at all affect his marble heart; but in the most audacious manner, and without any concern of mind, or show of guilt, asks if he was the person; suggesting, that surely he could, not mean him. It is observed by some, that the word Rabbi, used by Judas, is a more honourable name than that of Lord, used by the disciples; thereby reigning to give Christ more honour, and exceed in his respect to him, than the rest of the disciples; in order, if he could, to cover his wicked designs:

**he said unto him, thou hast said:**

that is, it is as thou hast said; thou hast said right, thou art the man; a way of speaking used, when what is asked is assented to as truth: thus it being

"said to a certain person, is Rabbi dead? He replied to them, אהונו אמריתונו, "ye have said"; and they rent their clothes<sup>602</sup>."

Taking it for granted, by that answer, that so it was.

**Matthew 26:26**

Ver. 26. **And as they were eating,**

The paschal lamb, and just concluding the whole solemnity, which was done by eating some of the<sup>603</sup> lamb: for

"last of all he (that kept the passover) eats of the flesh of the passover, though it be but the quantity of an olive, and he does not taste anything after it; and at the same time he eats the quantity of an olive of unleavened bread, and does not taste anything after it; so that his meal endeth, and the savour of the flesh of the passover, or of the unleavened bread, is in his mouth; for the eating of them is the precept."

So that the paschal supper was now concluded, when Christ entered upon the institution of his own supper:

**Jesus took bread;**

which lay by him, either on the table, or in a dish. Though this supper is distinct from the "passover", and different from any ordinary meal, yet there are allusions to both in it, and to the customs of the Jews used in either; as in this first circumstance, of "taking" the bread: for he that asked a blessing upon bread, used

<sup>602</sup> T. Hieros Kilaim, fol. 32. 2.

<sup>603</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Charnetz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 9. Vid. Bartenora in Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 8.

to take it into his hands; and it is a rule <sup>604</sup>, that

”a man does not bless, כִּי שִׁתְּפוּ אֶלְהֵם בְּיָדוֹ, “until he takes the bread into his hand”, that all may see that he blesses over it.”

Thus Christ took the bread and held it up, that his disciples might observe it:

**and blessed [it];**

or asked a blessing over it, and upon it, or rather blessed and gave thanks to his Father or it, and for what was signified by it; and prayed that his disciples, whilst eating it, might be led to him, the bread of life, and feed upon him in a spiritual sense; whose body was going to be broken for them, as the bread was to be, in order to obtain eternal redemption for them: so it was common with the Jews, to ask a blessing on their bread: the form in which they did it was this <sup>605</sup>:

”Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, the king of the world, that produceth bread out of the earth.”

What form our Lord used, is not certain; no doubt it was one of his composing, and every way suitable to the design of this ordinance. It was customary also when there were many at table, that lay down there, however, as Christ and his disciples now did, for one to ask a blessing for them all; for so runs the rule <sup>606</sup>,”if they sit to eat, everyone blesses for himself, but if they lie along, אחד מברך לכלם, “one blesses for them all”.

Moreover, they always blessed, before they brake:

”Says Rabba <sup>607</sup>, he blesses, and after that he breaks: ” this rule Christ likewise carefully observes, for it follows,

**and brake it.**

The rules concerning breaking of bread, are these <sup>608</sup>;

”The master of the house recites and finishes the blessing, and after that he breaks:--no man that breaks, is allowed to break, till they have brought the salt, and what is to be eaten with the bread, before everyone--and he does not break neither a small piece, lest he should seem to be sparing; nor a large piece, bigger than an egg, lest he should be thought to be famished;--and on the

sabbath day he breaks a large piece, and he does not break, but in the place where it is well baked: it is a principal command to break a whole loaf.

”Christ broke the bread, as the symbol of his body, which was to be broken by blows, and scourges, thorns, nails, and spear, and to be separated from his soul, and die as a sacrifice for the sins of his people: and having so done,

**he gave it to the disciples;**

which being a distinct act from breaking the bread, shows that the latter does not design the distribution of the bread, but an act preceding it, and a very significant one: and which ought not to be laid aside: according to the Jewish <sup>609</sup> usages,

”He that broke the bread, put a piece before everyone, and the other takes it in his hand; and he that breaks, does not give it into the hand of the eater, unless he is a mourner; and he that breaks, stretches out his hand first and eats, and they that sit, or lie at the table, are not allowed to taste, until he that blesses, has tasted; and he that breaks, is not allowed to taste, until the Amen is finished out of the mouth of the majority of those that sit at table.”

**And said, take, eat, this is my body;**

in Luke it is added, “which is given for you”, Luke 22:19; that is, unto death, as a sacrifice for sin; and by the Apostle Paul, 1Co 11:24, “which is broken for you”; as that bread then was, and so expressive of his wounds, bruises, sufferings, and death, for them. Now when he says, “this is my body”, he cannot mean, that that bread was his real body; or that it was changed and converted into the very substance of his body; but that it was an emblem and representation of his body, which was just ready to be offered up, once for all: in like manner, as the Jews in the eating of their passover used to say <sup>610</sup> of the unleavened bread,”

הָאֵל לַחֲמַת דִּינָא, this is “the bread of affliction”, which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt.”

Not that they thought that was the selfsame bread, but that it resembled it, and was a representation of the affliction and distress their fathers were in at that time: to which some think our Lord here alludes: though rather, the reference is to the passover lamb, which is frequently, in Jewish writings, called “the body” of the lamb: thus

<sup>609</sup> Ib. sect. 5.

<sup>610</sup> Haggadah Shel Pesach, p. 4. Ed. Rittangel. fol. 242. 2. Ed. Basil.

<sup>604</sup> Levush hattecheleth Num. 167. sect. 3. & Shlchan Aruch in Buxtorf. Exercit. de Coena Dominic. Thes. 45.

<sup>605</sup> Haggadah Shel. Pesach. fol. 249. 2. Ed. Basil. Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 1.

<sup>606</sup> Ib. sect. 6. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 42. 2. & 43. 1.

<sup>607</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 39. 2.

<sup>608</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Beracot, c. 7. sect. 2, 3, 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 47. 1.

mention being made of the bringing of the herbs, the unleavened bread, and the sauce “Charoseth”, with other things to the master of the house, it is added <sup>611</sup>:

”and in the sanctuary (whilst that stood) they bring unto him, גופו של פח, “the body of the lamb”.

”Again, elsewhere <sup>612</sup> it is said,

”they bring a table furnished, and on it the bitter herbs and other greens, and the unleavened bread, and the sauce, וּגּוּפוֹ שֶׁל כֶּבֶשׂ הַפֶּחַח “and the body of the paschal lamb”.

”And a little further <sup>613</sup>,

”he recites the blessing, blessed art thou O Lord, &c. for the eating of the passover, and he eats, פח גּוּפוֹ שֶׁל “of the body of the passover”.

”And now it is, as if Christ had said, you have had “the body” of the lamb set before you, and have eaten of it, in commemoration of the deliverance out of Egypt, and as a type of me the true passover, quickly to be sacrificed; and this rite of eating the body of the paschal lamb is now to cease; and I do here by this bread, in an emblematical way, set before you “my body”, which is to be given to obtain spiritual deliverance, and eternal redemption for you; in remembrance of which, you, and all my followers in successive generations, are to take and eat of it, till I come. The words, “take, eat”, show that Christ did not put the bread into the mouths of the disciples, but they took it in their hands, and ate it; expressive of taking and receiving Christ by the hand of faith, and feeding on him in a spiritual manner.

#### Matthew 26:27

Ver. 27. **And he took the cup and gave thanks,**

For the Jews blessed, or gave thanks for their wine, as well as for their food, and generally did it in this form <sup>614</sup>:

”Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, the king of the world, who hast created the “fruit of the vine”.

”Hence the phrase, “the fruit of the vine”, in Mt 26:29, not that we are to suppose, that Christ used or confined himself to this form of words: and it is to be observed, that they not only gave thanks for their wine before food, and whilst they were eating <sup>615</sup>, but also after meat; and

as this relates to the blessing of the cup after eating, or as the Apostle Paul says, “when he had supped”, 1Co 11:25. I shall only transcribe what the Jews say <sup>616</sup> concerning that:

”When wine is brought to them after food, if there is but that cup there, the house of Sham-mai say, מְבָרַךְ הָיִינָהּ, “he blesses”, or gives thanks “for the wine”, and after that gives thanks for the food: the house of Hillel say, he gives thanks for the food, and after that gives thanks for the wine.”

And as this was usual at ordinary meals, to bless or give thanks for the wine, so at the passover; and which our Lord continued in his supper, and is to be practised by us. It should be further known, that the wine at the passover, and so what Christ used at his supper, was red.

”Says R. Jeremiah <sup>617</sup> it is commanded to perform this duty, בֵּיַיִן אֶדְוִימָה “with red wine”.

”And elsewhere it is said <sup>618</sup>,

”that it is necessary, that there should be in it (the wine) taste and look.”

”The gloss on it is, שִׁירָא אֶדְוִימָה, “that it should be red”: and which, as it most fitly represented the blood sprinkled on the door posts of the Israelites, when the Lord passed over their houses; so the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of the sins of his people. It is scarcely worth observing the measure of one of the cups, that was used at such a time: they say <sup>619</sup>, that the four cups which were drunk at this feast, held an, Italian quart of wine, so that one cup contained half a pint. More particularly, they ask how much is the measure of a cup? the answer is, two fingers square, and a finger and a half and the third part of a finger deep; or as it is elsewhere <sup>620</sup>, the fifth part of a finger:

**and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it;**

for this is not to be restrained from one sort of communicants, and only partook of by another; but all are to drink of the cup, as well as eat of the bread: whether here is not an allusion to the custom of the Jews at the passover, when they obliged all to drink four cups of wine, men, women, and children, and even the poorest man in Israel, who was maintained out of the

611 Misn. Pesach, c. 10. sect 3.

612 Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 1.

613 Ib. sect. 7.

614 Haggadah Shel Pesach. fol. 241. 1.

615 Vid. Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 1. 6.

1462 Ib. c. 8. sect. 8.

617 T. Hieros. Pesach. fol. 37. 3. & Sabbat, fol. 11. 1.

618 T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 108. 2. & R. Samuel ben Meir in ib.

619 T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 11. 1.

620 T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 109. 1.



alms dish <sup>621</sup>, may be considered.

**Matthew 26:28**

Ver. 28. **For this is my blood of the New Testament,....**

That is, the red wine in the cup, was an emblem and representation of his precious blood, whereby was exhibited a new dispensation, or administration of the covenant of grace; and by which it was ratified and confirmed; and whereby all the blessings of it, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, come to the people of God: the allusion is to the first covenant, and the book of it being sprinkled with the blood of bulls, and therefore called the blood of the covenant, Ex 24:8. But the second covenant, or the new administration of the covenant of grace, for which reason it is called the New Testament, is exhibited and established in the blood of Christ the testator. It was usual, even among the Heathens, to make and confirm their covenants by drinking human blood, and that sometimes mixed with wine <sup>622</sup>.

**Which is shed for many, for the remission of sins;**

that is, was very shortly to be shed, and since has been, for all the elect of God; for the many that were ordained to eternal life, and the many that were given to Christ, the many that are justified by him, and the many sons he will bring to glory: whereby the full forgiveness of all their sins was procured, in a way consistent with, and honourable to the justice of God; full satisfaction being made to the law of God, for all their transgressions.

**Matthew 26:29**

Ver. 29. **But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth,**

From whence it seems natural to conclude, that Christ had drank of the cup in the supper, as well as at the passover; and it is reasonable to believe, that he also ate of the bread; since it appears from what has been observed before, See Gill on "Mt 26:26", that none might eat, till he that blessed and brake the bread had tasted of it <sup>623</sup>: the reason why wine is here called the fruit of the vine, and not wine, See Gill on "Mt 26:27". The design of this expression is to show, that his stay would be very short: the cup he had just drank of, was the last he should drink with them: he should drink no more wine at the passover; he had kept the last, and which now of right

was to cease; nor in the Lord's supper, for though that was to continue to his second coming, he should be no more present at it corporeally, only spiritually; nor in common conversation, which is not contradicted by Ac 10:41. Since, though the apostles drank with him in his presence, it does not necessarily follow, that he drank with them; and if he did, it was not in a mortal state, nor in the ordinary manner and use of it, but to confirm his resurrection from the dead, nor can it be proved that he drank of the fruit of the vine: the design of the phrase, as

<sup>621</sup> Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 1. T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 108.

1. Mitzvot Torah, pr. affirm. 41.

<sup>622</sup> Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 3.

<sup>623</sup> Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 10. Piske Toseph. Pesach. art. 328.

before observed, is to signify his speedy departure from his disciples. The allusion is to an usage at the passover, when after the fourth cup, they tasted of nothing else all that night, except water; and so Christ declares, that he would drink no more, not only that night, but never after.

**Until the day I drink it new with you, in my Father's kingdom:**

Mark says, "in the kingdom of God", Mark 14:25; and Luke, "until the kingdom of God come", Luke 22:18; and both the Syriac and Persic versions read it here, "in the kingdom of God"; by which is meant, something distinct from the kingdom of the Son, or of the Messiah, which was already come; and appeared more manifestly after the resurrection of Christ, upon his ascension to heaven, and the effusion of the holy Spirit, and the success of the Gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles; and which will be more glorious in the latter day: and when all the elect of God are gathered in, and have been presented to Christ by himself, he will then deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all; and then the kingdom of the Father will take place here mentioned, and which is no other than the ultimate glory; so called, because it is of the Father's preparing and giving, and in which he will reign and dwell, and the saints with him, to all eternity; which must not be understood to the exclusion of Christ, for it is called his kingdom also, Luke 22:30, in this state, Christ will drink new wine, not literally, but spiritually understood; and which designs the joys and glories of heaven, the best wine which is reserved to the last: which is sometimes signified by a feast, of which wine is a principal part; by sitting down as at a table, in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Mt 8:11, and expressed by "wine", because of its refreshing and exhilarating nature, in God's presence is "fulness of joy"; and by "new wine", because these joys are the most excellent, because they are always new, and never change; they are "pleasures for evermore": to "drink" hereof, denotes the full enjoyment of them, which Christ, as man and mediator, and his people with him, shall be possessed of; and is different from the superficial "taste of the powers of the world to come", Heb 6:5, which hypocrites have, and those real prelibations of glory which saints have in this life; there being a difference between drinking and tasting, Mt 27:34, and this will be social; Christ and his true disciples shall be together; and drink this new wine together; or enjoy the same glory and felicity in the highest measure and degree, they are capable of; and which society therein will yield a mutual pleasure to each other, as the words here suggest. The

Jews often express the joys of the world to come, by such like figurative phrases: they make mention of, *דאחי יינ דלמא*, "the wine of the world to come"<sup>624</sup>; and of *רוחני שכר*, "a spiritual drink", in the last days, which is called the world to come<sup>625</sup>: and so they explain {i} after this manner, Isa 64:4. "Neither hath the eye seen, O God", &c., *זה יינ*, "this is the wine", which is kept in the grapes from the six days of the creation; of which they often speak in their writings<sup>626</sup>

### Matthew 26:30

Ver. 30. **And when they had sung an hymn,**

The "Hallel", which the Jews were obliged to sing on the night of the passover; for the passover, they say<sup>627</sup>, was *מנו הלל* "bound to an hymn". This "Hallel", or song of praise, consisted of six Psalms, the 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th<sup>628</sup>: now this they did not sing all at once, but in parts. Just before the drinking of the second cup and eating of the lamb, they sung the first part of it, which contained the 113th and 114th Psalms; and on mixing the fourth and last cup, they completed the "Hallel", by singing the rest of the Psalms, beginning with the 115th Psalm, and ending with the 118th; and said over it, what they call the "blessing of the song", which was Ps 145:10, &c., and they might, if they would, mix a fifth cup, but that they were not obliged to, and say over it the "great Hallel", or "hymn", which was the 136th Psalm<sup>629</sup>. Now the last part of the "Hallel", Christ deferred to the close of his supper; there being many things in it pertinent to him, and proper on this occasion, particularly Ps 115:1, and the Jews themselves say<sup>630</sup>, that *הבלו של משיח*, "the sorrows of the Messiah" are contained in this part: that this is the hymn which Christ and his disciples sung, may be rather thought, than that it was one of his own composing; since not only he, but all the disciples sung it, and therefore must be what they were acquainted with; and since Christ in most things conformed to the rites and usages of the Jewish nation; and he did not rise up from table and go away, until this concluding circumstance was over; though it was allowed to finish the "Hallel", or hymn, in any place they pleased, even though it was not the

624 Zohar in Lev. fol. 17. 2.

625 Tzeror Hammor, fol. 3. 4. En Israel, fol. 30. 1.

626 Targum in Cant. viii. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 81. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 30. 3.

627 Misn. Pesach. c. 9. 3. T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 95. 1, 2.

628 Seder Tephillot, fol. 101, &c. Ed. Amstelod.

629 Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 5. 10.

630 T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 1.

place where the feast was kept <sup>631</sup> however, as soon as it was over,

**they went out to the Mount of Olives;**

he and his disciples, excepting Judas: first he himself alone, and then the disciples followed him, according to Luke 22:39, and the Persic version here reads it, "he went out". This seems to be contrary to a Jewish canon; for the passover was טָנוּךְ לַיְלָה, "bound to lodging a night" <sup>632</sup>; that is, as the gloss explains it,

"the first night (i.e. of the passover) a man must lodge in Jerusalem; thenceforward it was lawful to dwell without the wall, within the border."

And a little after, the same phrase, being bound to lodge, is explained, one night in the midst of the city: but Christ had more important business to attend unto, than to comply with this rule, which was not obligatory by the word of God, though the Jews pretend to found it on De 16:7 <sup>633</sup>. The place where he went with his disciples, was the Mount of Olives, which was on the east side of Jerusalem; and was the place where the high priest stood, and burnt the red heifer, and sprinkled its blood <sup>634</sup>: now from the temple, or from the mountain of the house, there was a causeway, or bridge on arches, made to the Mount of Olives, in which the high priest and the heifer, hydeom lkw, "and all his assistants", (the priests that helped him in this service,) went to this mount <sup>635</sup>: in this same way it is very probable, went Christ the great high priest, who was typified by the red heifer, and his companions the disciples, to the same place, where he had his bloody sweat, and where his sorrows and sufferings began.

**Matthew 26:31**

Ver. 31. **Then saith Jesus unto them,**

Either before they went out of the house, where they had been eating the passover, and the supper; or as they were going along to the Mount of Olives; which latter rather seems to be the case:

**all ye shall be offended because of me this night.**

The words are spoken to the eleven disciples; for Judas was now gone to the high priests, to inform them where Jesus was going that night, and to receive of them a band

<sup>631</sup> Maimon. ut supra. (Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 5. 10.)

<sup>632</sup> T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 95. 2.

<sup>633</sup> Talmud ib. & Jarchi in Dent. xvi. 7.

<sup>634</sup> Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 4. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1.

<sup>635</sup> Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 6. & Middot, c 1. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

of men and officers to apprehend him; which is what would be the occasion of all the rest of the disciples being offended: for when they should see their master betrayed by one of themselves, and the officers seize him and bind him, and lead him away as a malefactor, our Lord here suggests, that they would be filled with such fear and dread, that everyone of them would forsake him and run away, and provide for their own safety; yea, would be so stumbled at this unexpected event, that they would begin to stagger and hesitate in their minds, whether he was the Messiah, or not, as the two disciples going to Emmaus, seem to intimate; they would be so shocked with this sad disappointment, and so offended, or stumble, as to be ready to fall from him: and their faith in him must have failed, had he not prayed for them, as he did for Peter; for they thought of nothing else but a temporal kingdom, which they expected would now quickly be set up, and they be advanced to great honour and dignity; but things taking a different turn, it must greatly shock and affect them; and it was to be the case not of one or two only, but of all of them: and that because of him, whom they dearly loved, and with whom they had been eating the passover, and his own supper, and had had such a comfortable opportunity together; and because of his low estate, his being seized and bound, and led away by his enemies; as the Jews were before offended at him, because of the meanness of his parentage and education: and this was to be that very night; and it was now very late, it may reasonably be supposed to be midnight: for since the last evening, or sun setting, they had ate the passover, the ceremonies of which took up much time, and after that the Lord's supper; then the Hallel, or hymn was sung, when Christ discoursed much with his disciples, and delivered those consolatory and instructive sermons, about the vine and other things, occasioned by the fruit of the vine, they had been just drinking of, recorded in the 15th and 16th chapters of John; and put up that prayer to his Father for them, which stands in the 17th chapter; and indeed within an hour or two after, see Mark 14:37, this prediction of Christ's had its accomplishment, and which he confirms by a prophetic testimony:

**for it is written,**

in Zec 13:7,

**I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.**

This text is miserably perverted by the Jewish writers; though they all agree, that by "the shepherd", is meant some great person, as a king; so the Targum renders it,

“kill the king, and the princes shall be scattered”: one <sup>636</sup> of them says, that a wicked king of Moab is designed; another <sup>637</sup>, a king of the Ishmaelites, or of the Turks; and a third <sup>638</sup>, that any, and every king of the Gentiles is meant; a fourth says <sup>639</sup>, it is a prophecy of the great wars that shall be in all the earth, in the days of Messiah ben Joseph; and a fifth <sup>640</sup>, after having taken notice of other senses, mentions this as the last: that

”the words “my shepherd, and the man my fellow”, in the former part of the verse, are to be understood of Messiah, the son of Joseph; and because he shall be slain in the wars of the nations, therefore the Lord will whet his glittering sword against the nations, to take vengeance on them; and on this account says, “awake, O sword! for my shepherd, and for the man my fellow”: as if the Lord called the sword and vengeance to awake against his enemies, because of Messiah ben Joseph, whom they shall slay; and who shall be the shepherd of the flock of God, and by reason of his righteousness and perfection, shall be the man his fellow; and when the nations shall slay that shepherd, the sword of the Lord shall come and smite the shepherd; that is, every shepherd of the Gentiles, and their kings; for because of the slaying of the shepherd of Israel, every shepherd of their enemies shall be slain, and their sheep shall be scattered; for through the death of the shepherds, the people that shall be under them, will have no standing.

”Now though this is a most wretched perversion of the passage, to make the word “shepherd” in the former part of it, to signify one person, and in the other part of it another; yet shows the conviction of their minds, that the Messiah is not be excluded from the prophecy, and of whom, without doubt, it is spoken, and rightly applied by him, who is concerned in it, the Lord Jesus Christ; who feeds his flock like a shepherd, is the great shepherd of the sheep, the chief shepherd, the good shepherd, that laid down his life for the sheep; which is intended by the smiting of him: in the text in Zec 13:7 it is read, “smite the shepherd”; being an order of Jehovah the Father’s, to Justice, to awake its sword, and sheath it

in his son, his equal by nature, his shepherd by office; and here, as his own act, and what he would do himself, “I will smite the shepherd”; for his ordering Justice to smite, is rightly interpreted doing it himself. The Jews cannot object to this, when their own interpreters in general explain it thus, הַשֵּׁם יַכְרִיחַ “God shall cut off the shepherd” <sup>641</sup>. The sufferings of Christ, which are meant by the smiting him, were according, not only to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the will of his good pleasure, but according to his will of command; which justice executed, and Christ was obedient to, and in which Jehovah had a very great hand himself: he bruised him, he put him to grief, he made his soul an offering for sin; he spared him not, but delivered him up into the hands of men, justice, and death, for us all: the latter clause, “and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered”, respects the disciples, and their forsaking Christ, and fleeing from him, when he was apprehended; for then, as was foretold in this prophecy, and predicted by Christ, they all forsook him and fled, and were scattered every man to his own, and left him alone. In Zechariah it is only said, “the sheep shall be scattered”, Zec 13:7: here, the sheep of the flock; though the Evangelist Mark reads it, as in the prophet, Mark 14:27, and so the Arabic here, and the sense is the same; for the sheep are the sheep of the flock, Christ’s little flock, the flock of slaughter, committed to his care; unless it may be thought proper to distinguish between the sheep and the flock; and by “the flock” understand, all the elect of God, and by “the sheep”, the principal of the flock; “the rams of his sheep”, or “flock”, as the Syriac version renders it; the apostles of Christ, who are chiefly, if not solely intended; though others of Christ’s followers might be stumbled, offended, and staggered, as well as they; as Cleophas was, one of the two that went to Emmaus.

#### Matthew 26:32

Ver. 32. **But after I am risen again,**

This he says for their comfort, that though he, their shepherd, should be apprehended, condemned, and crucified, should be smitten with death, and be laid in the grave, yet he should rise again; and though they should be scattered abroad, yet should be gathered together again by him, their good shepherd; who would after his resurrection, appear to them, be at the head of them, and go before them, as a shepherd goes before his sheep: for it follows, I will go before you into Galilee; the

636 R. Sol. Jarchi, in Zech. xiii. 7.

637 Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 37. p. 310.

638 R. David Kirachi, in Zech. xiii. 7.

639 R. Aben Ezra in ib.

640 Abarbitnel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 74. 4.

641 R. Aben. Ezra, R. David Kimchi, & Miclol Yophi in loc.

native place of most, if not all of them. This the women that came to the sepulchre after Christ's resurrection, were bid, both by the angel, and Christ himself, to remind the disciples of, and ordered them to go into Galilee, where they might expect to see him: accordingly they did go thither, and saw and worshipped him; see Mt 28:7.

#### Matthew 26:33

Ver. 33. **Peter answered and said unto him,**

Who was always a forward man, free to speak his mind, and was often the mouth of the rest; observing what Christ had affirmed concerning all of them, that that very night, in a very short space of time, they would be offended because of him; and knowing the strong love he had for Christ, and being persuaded it could never be his case, thus addresses him;

**though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended:**

his sense is, that though all the men in the world, friends, and foes, though even all the rest of the disciples, who were his most intimate friends, most closely attached to him, and who dearly loved him, and sincerely believed in him, should be so stumbled at what should befall him, as to flee from him, and be tempted to relinquish his cause, and interest; yet nothing should ever cause him, in the least, to stumble and fall, to desert him, or hesitate about him, or cause him to take the least umbrage and offence at what might come upon him; and this he was positive of would be the case, not only that night, but ever after. No doubt he said this in the sincerity of his heart, and out of his great fervour of affection for Christ; but what he failed in, was trusting to his own strength, being self-confident; and in entertaining greater opinion of himself, and his steady attachment to Christ, than of the rest of the disciples; and in contradicting what Christ had so strongly affirmed of them all, without any exception, and so of himself, and had confirmed by so glaring a prophecy concerning this matter.

#### Matthew 26:34

Ver. 34. **Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee,**

Christ, the more strongly to asseverate what he was about to say, uses the word verily, or prefixes his "Amen" to it, as being a certain truth, and what Peter might assure himself of would certainly come to pass:

**that this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice;**

which is, as if he should say, thou wilt not only be offended because of me, and flee from me, and be scattered with the rest, as will be the case of all of you; but

thou wilt deny that thou knowest me, that thou belongest to me, or hast any concern with me; and this thou wilt do not only once, but again and again, even three times, one after another, and that this very night, before the cock has done crowing. In Mark it is said,

**"that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice,**

thou shalt deny me thrice", Mark 14:30; which may be reconciled with the words of Matthew, and the other evangelists, by observing, that the word "twice" is not in Beza's ancient copy, which he gave to the university of Cambridge, nor is it in the Ethiopic version; which if allowed to be the true reading, the difficulty is removed at once; but whereas it is in other copies, no stress must be laid on this, nor is there any need of it: for whereas the cock crows twice in the night, once at midnight, and again near break of day; and which latter crowing being louder, and more welcome, and most taken notice of, is, by way of eminence, called the cock crowing; and is what Matthew here has respect to, and so designs the same as Mark does; and the sense of both is, that before the cock crow a second time, which is most properly the cock crowing, Peter should three times deny his master, as he did; see Mark 13:35, where cock crowing is distinguished from midnight, the first time the cock crows, and means the second time of crowing; and where Mark is to be understood in the same sense as Matthew, and both entirely agree. So cock crowing and midnight are distinguished by the Jews, who say <sup>642</sup>,

"that on all other days they remove the ashes from the altar, בקריאת הגבר, "at cock crowing", or near unto it, whether before or after; but on the day of atonement, twuhm, "at midnight":

"and who also speak of the cocks crowing a first and second, and even a third time <sup>643</sup>.

"Says R. Shila, he that begins his journey before cock crowing, his blood be upon his head. R. Josiah says, he may not proceed שישוב דך "until he repeats"; that is, until he crows twice: and there are, who say, until he trebles it, or crows a third time: of what do they speak? of a middling one, i.e. which neither crows too soon, nor too late."

#### Matthew 26:35

Ver. 35. **Peter saith unto him,**

Mark says, "he spake the more vehemently", Mark

<sup>642</sup> Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 8.

<sup>643</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 1.

14:31; his spirits were raised to a greater pitch of resentment, and he expressed himself in stronger terms, and in more peremptory and self-confident language;

**though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee:**

he seems to have understood Christ, that he should suffer death, and that he would be in great danger himself, and therefore rather than lose his life would deny his master; wherefore he most confidently affirms, that should this be the case, should he be called to suffer death for his sake, or along with him, he would most cheerfully embrace it, rather than be guilty of so dreadful a crime, which he could not look upon but with the utmost detestation and abhorrence, as to deny his dear Lord and Saviour:

**likewise also said all the disciples;**

that they would never be offended because of him, and would die with him rather than deny him. This they said, being also self-confident and ignorant of their own weakness, and drawn into these expressions through Peter's example; and that partly to show their equal abhorrence of so horrible an iniquity, as denying Jesus; and partly to remove all suspicion from them, lest they should be thought to have less love and zeal for Christ than Peter had.

**Matthew 26:36**

Ver. 36. **Then cometh Jesus with them,**

The eleven disciples,

**unto a place called Gethsemane;**

the Syriac version calls it Ghedsiman; the Persic, Ghesmani, so the Arabic; the Vulgate Latin, and the Ethiopic, Gethsemani: in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, it is called a "village"; and in the Ethiopic version, "a village of wine"; and in the Syriac and Persic versions, a place. Here, according to an Ethiopic writer, the Virgin Mary was buried by the apostles<sup>644</sup>. Its etymology is very differently given: some read, and explain it, as if it was גֵּי שְׁמִינִי, "a valley of fatness", or "of olives", as it is called in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; see Isa 28:1; others as if it was גֵּי דִּמְנִי, "a valley of signs", or a very famous valley; so Mount Sinai is called<sup>645</sup> אֶמְסֵרָא הַר יְמִנָא, "the mountain of signs: but, to take notice of no more; the true reading and signification of it is, גֵּת שְׁמִנִי, "an olive press", or a press for olives: so we read<sup>646</sup> of a chamber in the temple which is called "the chamber", בֵּית שְׁמִנִי "Beth Semania", or "Bethsemani",

<sup>644</sup> Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 554.

<sup>645</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 89. 1.

<sup>646</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1.

where they put their wine and oil for temple service. It is very probable that at, or near this place, was a very public olive press, where they used to squeeze the olives, for the oil of them, which they gathered in great plenty from off the Mount of Olives; at the foot of which this place was; and a very significant place it was for our Lord to go to at this time, when he was about to tread the wine press of his Father's wrath, alone, and of the people there were none with him: for it follows,

**and saith unto the disciples, sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder:**

perceiving a time of distress was coming upon him, he betakes himself to prayer, an example worthy of our imitation; in the performance of which duty he chose to be retired and solitary, and therefore left eight of his disciples at a certain place, whilst he went to another at some distance, convenient for his purpose; who perhaps might be the weakest of the disciples, and not able to bear the agonies and distress of their Lord and Master.

**Matthew 26:37**

Ver. 37. **And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee,**

James and John, who perhaps were the strongest, and best able to bear the shocking sight, and were his favourite disciples; who were admitted to be with him at other times, when the rest were not; as at the raising of Jairus's daughter, Mark 5:37, and moreover, these were at his transfiguration on the mount, Mt 17:1, which was a representation and presage of his glory; and so were very proper persons to be witnesses of his sorrows and agonies, which were the way to it; and three of them were taken by him for this purpose, being a sufficient number to bear testimony, since by the mouth of two or three witnesses everything is established:

**and began to be sorrowful;**

his soul was troubled on the same account six days before, Joh 12:27, but was now sorrowful. He was a man of sorrows all his days, and acquainted with griefs, being reproached and persecuted by men: but now a new scene of sorrows opened; before he was afflicted by men, but now he is bruised, and put to grief by his Father: his sorrows now began, for they did not end here, but on the cross; not that this was but a bare beginning of his sorrows, or that these were but light in comparison of future ones; for they were very heavy, and indeed seem to be the heaviest of all, as appears from his own account of them; his vehement cry to his

Father; his bloody sweat and agony; and the assistance he stood in need of from an angel; and the comfort and strength he received from him in his human nature: all which, put together, the like is not to be observed in any part of his sufferings:

**and to be very heavy;**

with the weight of the sins of his people, and the sense of divine wrath, with which he was so pressed and overwhelmed, that his spirits were almost quite gone; he was just ready to swoon away, sink and die; his heart failed him, and became like wax melted in the midst of his bowels, before the wrath of God, which was as a consuming fire: all which shows the truth, though weakness of his human nature, and the greatness of his sufferings in it. The human nature was still in union with the divine person of the Son of God, and was sustained by him, but left to its natural weakness, without sin, that it might suffer to the utmost, and as much as possible for the sins of God's elect.

**Matthew 26:38**

Ver. 38. **Then saith he unto them**

The three disciples, Peter, James, and John, who, by his looks and gestures, might know somewhat of the inward distress of his mind; yet he chose to express it to them in words, saying,

**my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.**

That Christ had an human soul, as well as an human body, is clear from hence; and which was possessed of the same passions as ours are, but without sin, such as joy, love, grief, sorrow and at this time its sorrows were exceeding great: his soul was beset all around with the sins of his people; these took hold on him, and encompassed him, which must, in the most sensible manner, affect his pure and spotless mind; the sorrows of death and hell surrounded him on every side, insomuch that the least degree of comfort was not let in to him; nor was there any way open for it, so that his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow; his heart was ready to break; he was brought even, as it were, to the dust of death; nor would his sorrows leave him, he was persuaded, until soul and body were separated from each other; see a like phrase in ( Judges 16:16 ),

**tarry ye here.**

The Ethiopic adds, "till I shall return", for he was going a little further from them, to vent his grief, and pour out his soul unto God. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, "expect me", or "wait for me here", signifying, that he should return to them shortly;

**and watch with me.**

It was night, and they might be heavy and inclined to sleep: he knew it would be an hour of temptation both to him and them, and therefore advises them to watch against it; and to observe how it would go with him, and what should befall him, that they might be witnesses of it, and be able to testify what agonies he endured, what grace he exercised, and how submissive he was to his Father's will.

**Matthew 26:39**

Ver. 39. **And he went a little further**

Luke says, ( Luke 22:41 ), "about a stone's cast", about fifty or sixty feet from the place where they were,

**and fell on his face, and prayed;**

partly to show his great reverence of God, the sword of whose justice was awaked against him, the terrors of whose law were set in array before him, and whose wrath was pouring down upon him; and partly to signify how much his soul was depressed, how low he was brought, and in what distress and anguish of spirit he was, that he was not able to lift up his head, and look up. This was a prayer gesture used when a person was in the utmost perplexity. The account the Jews give of it, is this <sup>647</sup>,

כשנפלין ל פניהם) , "when they fall upon their faces", they do not stretch out their hands and their feet, but incline on their sides."

This was not to be done by any person, or at any time; the rules are these <sup>648</sup>:

לֹא יִפּוֹל אִישׁ לְפָנָיו (ליפול ל פניו) , "to fall upon his face", but he that knows in himself that he is righteous, as Joshua; but he inclines his face a little, and does not bow it down to the floor; and it is lawful for a man to pray in one place, and to "fall upon his face" in another: it is a custom that reaches throughout all Israel, that there is no falling upon the face on a sabbath day, nor on feast days, nor on the beginning of the year, nor on the beginning of the month, nor on the feast of dedication, nor on the days of "purim", nor at the time of the meat offering of the eves of the sabbath days, and good days, nor at the evening prayer for every day; and there are private persons that fall upon their faces at the evening prayer, and on the day of atonement only: they fall upon their faces because it is a time of supplication, request, and fasting."

<sup>647</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2.

<sup>648</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 5. sect. 14, 15.

**Saying, O my father;**

or, as in Mark, “Abba, Father”, ( Mark 14:36 ) ; “Abba” being the Syriac word he used, and signifies, “my father”; and the other word is added for explanation’s sake, and to denote the vehemency of his mind, and fervour of spirit in prayer. Christ prayed in the same manner he taught his disciples to pray, saying, “our Father”; and as all his children pray under the influence of the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry “Abba, Father”. God is the Father of Christ, not as man, for as such he was without father, being the seed of the woman, and made of a woman, without man; nor by creation, as he is the Father of spirits, of angels, and the souls of men, of Adam, and all mankind; nor by adoption, as he is the Father of all the chosen, redeemed, and regenerated ones; but by nature, he being the only begotten of the Father, in a manner inconceivable and inexpressible by us. Christ now addresses him in prayer in his human nature, as standing in this relation to him as the Son of God, both to express his reverence of him, and what freedom and boldness he might use with him; what confidence he might put in him; and what expectation he might have of being heard and regarded by him; and what submission and resignation of will was due from himself unto him.

**If it be possible, let this cup pass from me;**

meaning not only the hour, as it is called in Mark, the present season and time of distress, and horror; but all his future sufferings and death, which were at hand; together with the bearing the sins of his people, the enduring the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, all which were ingredients in, and made up this dreadful bitter cup, this cup of fury, cursing, and trembling; called a cup, either in allusion to the nauseous potions given by physicians to their patients; or rather to the cup of poison given to malefactors the sooner to dispatch them; or to that of wine mingled with myrrh and frankincense to intoxicate them, that they might not feel their pain, (See Gill on Mark 15:23), or to the cup appointed by the master of the family to everyone in the house; these sorrows, sufferings, and death of Christ being what were allotted and appointed by his heavenly Father: and when he prays that this cup might pass from him, his meaning is, that he might be freed from the present horrors of his mind, be excused the sufferings of death, and be delivered from the curse of the law, and wrath of God; which request was made without sin, though it betrayed the weakness of the human nature under its insupportable load, and its reluctance to sufferings and death, which is natural; and yet does not represent him

herein as inferior to martyrs, who have desired death, and triumphed in the midst of exquisite torments: for their case and his were widely different; they had the presence of God with them, Christ was under the hidings of his Father’s face; they had the love of God shed abroad in them, he had the wrath of God poured out upon him; and his prayer bespeaks him to be in a condition which neither they, nor any mortal creature were ever in. Moreover, the human nature of Christ was now, as it were, swallowed up in sorrow, and intent upon nothing but sufferings and death; had nothing in view but the wrath of God, and the curse of the law; so that everything else was, for the present, out of sight; as the purposes of God, his counsel and covenant, his own engagements and office, and the salvation of his people; hence it is no wonder to hear such a request made; and yet it is with this condition, “if it be possible”. In Mark it is said, “all things are possible unto thee”, ( Mark 14:36 ) ; intimating, that the taking away, or causing the cup to pass from him, was: all things are possible to God, which are consistent with the perfections of his nature, and the counsel of his will: and all such things, though possible in themselves, yet are not under such and such circumstances so; the removal of the cup from Christ was possible in itself, but not as things were circumstanced, and as matters then stood; and therefore it is hypothetically put, “if it be possible”, as it was not; and that by reason of the decrees and purposes of God, which had fixed it, and are immutable; and on account of the covenant of grace, of which this was a considerable branch and article, and in which Christ had agreed unto it, and is unalterable; and also on the score of the prophecies of the Old Testament, in which it had been often spoken of; and therefore without it, how should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? they would not have been the Scriptures of truth. Besides, Christ had foretold it himself once and again, and therefore consistent with the truth of his own predictions, it could not be dispensed with: add to all this, that the salvation of his people required his drinking it; that could not be brought about no other way in agreement with the veracity, faithfulness, justice, and holiness of God. This condition qualifies and restrains the above petition; nor is it to be considered but in connection with what follows:

**nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt;**

which shows that the request was far from being sinful, or contrary to piety to God, or love to men, or to true fortitude of mind; the pure natural will of



Christ, or the will of Christ's human nature, being left to act in a mere natural way, shows a reluctance to sorrows, sufferings, and death; this same will acting on rational principles, and in a rational way, puts it upon the possibility the thing, and the agreement of the divine will to it. That there are two wills in Christ, human and divine, is certain; his human will, though in some instances, as in this, may have been different from the divine will, yet not contrary to it; and his divine will is always the same with his Father's. This, as mediator, he engaged to do, and came down from heaven for that purpose, took delight in doing it, and has completely finished it.

Matthew 26:40

Ver.40. **And he cometh unto the disciples**

The three he took with him, Peter, James, and John, after he had finished his prayer;

**and findeth them asleep:**

many things might contribute to, and bring this drowsiness upon them; as the great fatigue they had had in preparing the passover in the day, the plentiful meal they had eaten at night, though without excess, and the lateness of the night, it being now probably midnight; but the chief reason of their sleepiness was their sorrow, as is expressed in ( Luke 22:45 ), what Christ had said to them of his soul troubles, and what they saw in him, had filled their hearts with sorrow, which brought on them an amazement and stupidity of mind; and this issued in sleep. We have other instances of persons in excessive grief and trouble falling asleep, as Elijah in ( 1 Kings 19:4 1 Kings 19:5 ), and Jonah in ( Jonah 1:5 ), so that this did not arise from a secure, lazy, indolent frame of spirit; or from any disregard to Christ, and neglect of him, and unconcernedness for him; but from their great sorrow of heart; for, the trouble and distress that he was in, added to the causes above mentioned. Though some have thought, that Satan might be, concerned in it, who induced this sleepiness, or increased it, that he might the more easily surprise them with his temptations, he was preparing for them, which I will not deny. Now, though this sleep was natural bodily sleep, which the disciples fell into, yet was an emblem of, and carried in it a resemblance to, the spiritual sleep and drowsiness of the people of God; for as this was after a delightful entertainment and conversation with Christ at the passover and Lord's supper, so it sometimes is, that the children of God fall into a sleepy frame of soul, after much communion with Christ, as the church did in ( Song of Solomon 5:1 Song of Solomon 5:2 ), and as this sleep befell them, when Christ was withdrawn a little space from them; so it was

with the church, when her beloved was absent from her, ( Song of Solomon 3:1 ) ( 5:2 ), and with the wise virgins when the bridegroom tarried, ( Matthew 25:6 ), and as this was not an entire thorough sleep; they knew all the while what Christ was doing, and could relate, as they have done, the circumstances of it; so the children of God, when asleep, they are not like unregenerate persons, in a dead sleep of sin, that hear, and see, and feel, and know nothing; but though they are asleep, their hearts are awake, as was the church's, ( Song of Solomon 5:2 ), yet as the disciples were so much asleep, that the bare words of Christ did not arouse them from it for a while; so such is the sleep of the saints sometimes, that they are not to be aroused by the bare ministry of the word, though the most powerful arguments, and the most moving and melting language are made use of, as were with the church, ( Song of Solomon 5:2-4 ),

**and saith unto Peter, what! could ye not watch with me one hour?**

This was said particularly to Peter, because he had so lately, in such a confident manner, declared, that he would not be offended with Christ, but abide with him, stand by him, and even die with him, was there an occasion for it; and yet, in so short a space of time, was fallen asleep, as were the rest who said the same things also: and it is as if Christ should say, how will you be able to stand by me throughout this night, when ye cannot watch with me so much as one hour, though I so earnestly desired you to tarry here, and watch with me, and you saw in what distress I was in? how will you be able to withstand the temptations that will beset you quickly, and perform your promises of love, fidelity, constancy, and close attachment to me, in the greatest dangers, when you cannot keep yourselves awake one hour for my sake?

Matthew 26:41

Ver.41. **Watch and pray**

These two are very justly put together. There is, and ought to be, a watching before prayer, and "unto" it; a watching all opportunities, the most suitable and convenient to perform it; and there is a watching in it, both over our hearts, thoughts, words, and gestures, and after it, for a return of it, and answer to it: the reason of this exhortation follows,

**that ye enter not into temptation;**

not that they might not be tempted at all; for none of the saints have been, or are without temptations; and they are needful for them; and it is the will of God they should be attended with them; and he has made gracious

provisions for their help and relief under them; but that they might not enter into them, throw themselves in the way of temptation, be surprised by them at an unawares, fall into them headlong, be immersed in them, fall by them, and be overcome with them, so as to forsake Christ, or to deny him:

**the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak:**

meaning either that the evil spirit Satan was very desirous of having them in his hands; very forward and ready to make the onset upon them; was cheerful, alert, and confident of victory; and was strong, robust, and powerful; and they were but flesh and blood, very weak and infirm, and unequal to the enemy; which is a sense not to be despised, seeing it carries in it a very strong reason why they ought to watch and pray, lest they fall into the temptations of such a powerful adversary; see ( Ephesians 6:12 ) ( 1 Peter 5:8 ), or else by “spirit” may be meant the soul, as renewed and regenerated by the spirit of God; particularly the principle of grace in it, which is born of the Spirit, and is called by the same name, and which lusts against the flesh, or corrupt nature: this was willing to watch and pray, and guard against falling into temptations; was willing to abide by Christ, and express its love to him every way; but “the flesh”, or “body”, so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, is “weak” and infirm, prone to sleep, indulges ease, and unfit to bear trouble, but ready to sink under it, and is for fleeing from it: and so the words contain our Lord’s excuse of his disciples in their present circumstances. Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads the words thus, and “indeed the spirit is שׁוֹקֵרָה , watchful, but the flesh is weak”. The Ethiopic version after this manner, “the spirit desires, and the body is fatigued”. The Persic version, contrary both to the letter and sense of the words, renders them, “my spirit is firm, but my body is infirm”.

**Matthew 26:42**

**Ver. 42. He went away again the second time**

To the same place as before, or at some little distance; after he had reproved his disciples for their sleeping, and had exhorted them to watchfulness and prayer, suggesting the danger they were liable to, and the condition they were in:

**and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done.**

The sense of this prayer to his God and Father is, that if his sufferings and death could not be dispensed with; if it was not consistent with the decrees of God,

and the covenant of grace, that he should be excused from them; or if the glory of God, and the salvation of his people required it, that he must drink up that bitter cup, he was content to do it; desiring in all things to submit unto, and to fulfil his Father’s will, though it was so irksome and disagreeable to nature.

**Matthew 26:43**

**Ver.43. And he came and found them asleep again**

For they were aroused and awaked, in some measure, by what he had said to them; but no sooner was he gone but they fell asleep again, and thus he found them a second time; or, “he came again and found them asleep”; so read the Vulgate Latin, the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel:

**for their eyes were heavy;**

with sleep through fatigue, sorrow Mark adds, “neither wist they what to answer him”, ( Mark 14:40 ) ; they were so very sleepy, they knew not how to speak; or they were so confounded, that he should take them asleep a second time, after they had had such a reproof, and exhortation from him, that they knew not what answer to make him; who probably rebuked them again, or gave them a fresh exhortation.

**Matthew 26:44**

**Ver.44. And he left them, and went away again**

At some little distance from them; they being so overpowered with sleep, that he could have no conversation with them:

**and prayed the third time;**

as the Apostle Paul did, when under temptation, he prayed thrice that it might depart from him, ( 2 Corinthians 12:8 ) ,

**saying the same words:**

the Arabic version renders it, “in the words which he before expressed”; and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads, “he said the same prayer”; not in the selfsame words, or in the express form he had before delivered it; for it is certain, that his second prayer is not expressed in the same form of words as the first: but the sense is, that he prayed to the same purpose; the matter and substance of his prayer was the same, namely, that he might be exempted from suffering; but if that could not be admitted of, he was desirous to be resigned to the will of his heavenly Father, and was determined to submit unto it.

**Matthew 26:45**

**Ver.45. Then cometh he to his disciples..**

The three that were nearest to him, “the third time”,

as Mark says, ( Mark 14:41 ) , and as it was;

**and saith unto them, sleep on now, and take your rest.**

The Evangelist Mark adds, “it is enough”, ( Mark 14:41 ) ; which has induced some interpreters to think, that these words were spoken seriously by Christ: though the sense cannot be that they had watched sufficiently, and now might sleep, and take their rest, for they had not watched at all; but rather, that he had now no need of them, or their watching with him; the conflict was over for the present; or, as the Syriac version renders it, “the end is come”; and so the Arabic; and to the same purpose the Persic, “the matter is come to an end”, or to an extremity; the sense being the same with what is expressed in the following clause, “the hour is at hand”; and shows, that the words are to be understood in an ironical sense, sleep on and take your rest, if you can: I have been exhorting you to watchfulness, but to no purpose, you will be alarmed from another quarter; a band of soldiers is just at hand to seize and carry me away, and now sleep if you can: that this is the sense appears from the reason given, and from the exhortation in the following verse, and the reason annexed to that:

**behold the hour is at hand, and the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners:**

by the son of man Christ means himself, and under this diminutive title expresses his Messiahship, this being a character of the Messiah in the Old Testament; and the truth of his human nature, and the weakness and infirmities of it: by the “betraying”, or delivery of him, is intended either the betraying of him by Judas into the hands of the high priest, Scribes, and Pharisees; or the delivery of him, by them, into the hands of Pilate, and by him to the Roman soldiers; all which were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. The high priest, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees, notwithstanding all their pretensions to religion, righteousness, and holiness, were very wicked persons; though the Gentiles, the band of Roman soldiers, Judas brought with him to take Christ, are here rather meant, it being usual to call the Gentiles sinners. This betraying and delivery of Christ into the hands of these, was determined by God; the time, the very hour was fixed, and was now approaching; the last sand in the glass was dropping; for as soon as Christ had said these words, Judas, with his band of soldiers, appeared.

**Matthew 26:46**

Ver. 46. **Rise, let us be going**

Not to run away from the enemy, but to meet him: this was said, partly to arouse his sleepy disciples; and partly to show his love to his Father, and his submission to his will; as also to express the fortitude of his mind as man; he was now rid of his fears, and free from those agonies and dreadful apprehensions of things, he was but a little while ago possessed of; and likewise, to signify his willingness to be apprehended, and to suffer, and die, in the room of his people:

**he is at hand that doth betray me.**

This shows his omniscience: he not only knew, as he did from the beginning, who should betray him; but he knew when he would do it; and he knew where the betrayer now was, that he was just now coming upon him, in order to deliver him the hands of sinful men. And this he spake with trepidity of soul, with greatness of mind, being no more concerned at it, than when he gave him the sop, and bid him do what he did quickly: he does not mention his name; nor did he ever, when he spoke of him as the betrayer; either because the disciples, as yet, did not fully and certainly know who should betray him, and he would not now surprise them with it; or because they did, and therefore it was needless to mention his name; or rather, because he was unworthy to be mentioned by name: a “behold” is prefixed to this, partly to awaken the attention of his disciples; and partly to express what an horrid, insolent, and unparalleled action that was, Judas was now about to be guilty of.

**Matthew 26:47**

And while he yet spake

While he was thus speaking to his disciples, before the last words, he is at hand that doth betray me, were well out of his mouth; such an exact knowledge had Christ of every motion of Judas, of what he was about, and where he was:

**lo! Judas, one of the twelve, came.**

The Persic version adds, “in sight”; of Christ, and the disciples; they saw him, and knew him, though some little distance: he came to Gethsemane, and into the garden, where they were, with a design to betray his master. He is described by his name Judas; as in ( Matthew 26:14 ) , for there was another Judas among the apostles; the Syriac and Persic read, Judas the betrayer, to distinguish him from the other: and also by his office, “one of the twelve”; i.e. apostles, whom Christ called from the rest of his disciples and followers, and bestowed extraordinary gifts upon, and sent forth to preach the Gospel, cast out devils, and heal all manner of diseases; and “lo!”, one of

these betrays him! an apostle, and yet a devil! one of the twelve, one of his select company, and bosom friends, and yet a traitor!

**and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders the people.**

Judas was at the head of them, went before them to show them where Christ was, and to deliver him into their hands: he had not been asleep, he had been with the chief priests, and acquainted them with the opportunity he had of making good his agreement with him: he had got the band of soldiers, and other persons together, in order to make sure work of it. Thus we see how diligent wicked men are in the accomplishment of their evil designs, whilst good men are asleep and indifferent to godly and spiritual exercises. Judas is here described by his company; he who but a few hours ago was at table with his Lord, and the rest of the apostles, is now at the head of band of Roman soldiers, and other miscreants, and blood thirsty wretches, intent upon the death of his master. They may well be called a “multitude”, because made up of various sorts of persons, and these, many of them; of Roman soldiers, of the officers and servants of the chief priests; yea of the chief priests themselves, captains of the temple, and elders of the people, who were so eager upon this enterprise, that they could not forbear going in company with them, to see what would be the issue of it. And “a great one”; for the “band” of soldiers, if it was complete, consisted of a thousand men itself; and besides this, there were many others, and all to take a single person, and who had no more about him than eleven disciples; though the <sup>649</sup> Jews pretend he had two thousand men with him: and who came also “with swords and staves, or clubs”; the Roman soldiers with their swords, and the servants of the chief priests with their clubs: the reason of this posse, and of their being thus armed, might be either for fear of the people, who, should they be alarmed, and have any notice of their design, might rise and make an uproar, and attempt to rescue him; or that by having a Roman band with them, and the chief priests and their officers, it might appear, that what they did they did by authority; and that they seized him as a malefactor, as one guilty either of sedition, or heresy, or both. And this account is confirmed by the Jews themselves, who say <sup>650</sup>, that the citizens, of Jerusalem were (Mynywzm) , “armed”, and equipped, and so took Jesus: and this multitude also came “from the chief priests and elders of the people”. Mark joins the

Scribes with them, ( Mark 14:43 ) : these composed the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, who had been consulting the death of Christ; had agreed to give Judas thirty pieces of silver to betray him into their hands; had obtained a band of soldiers of the Roman governor to apprehend him, and sent their officers and servants to assist herein; these all acted under their direction, influence, and authority. The Vulgate Latin, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel read, “sent”, from them.

#### **Matthew 26:48**

Ver. 48. **Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign**

By which it might be known who he was; for it being night, though they had lanterns and torches, as John says, ( John 18:3 ) , yet Judas himself might not be able to discern, him, so as to point him out, until he came very near him: moreover, Christ and his apostles might be clothed alike, so that a mistake might be easily made, and one of them be took for him: and so the Jews say <sup>651</sup>, that the two thousand men, they pretend were with him, were clothed with the same apparel; which story may take its rise from hence: add to this, that James, the son of Alphaeus, called the brother of our Lord, is reported to be very like unto him. Besides, it is very likely that the Roman soldiers, who were to be the principal persons in apprehending, binding, and carrying him away, might never have seen him, and so could not know him without some sign was given them; and which Judas gave them before he came out with them: and is as follows:

**saying, whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he, hold him fast.**

Judas might the rather pitch upon this to be the sign, partly because it might be what had been usual with the disciples, when they had been at any time absent from Christ, and which he admitted of; and partly because he might think this would best cover his treacherous designs, who, with all his wickedness, had not effrontery enough to come sword in hand and seize him in a violent manner, and besides, might not judge such a method advisable, had he impudence enough to prosecute it, lest this should put Jesus upon taking some measures to make his escape. The reason of his advice, “hold him fast”, was, because he knew that once and again, when attempts were made to seize him, he easily disengaged himself, passed through the midst, and went his way; see ( Luke 4:30 ) ( John 8:59 ) ( John

<sup>649</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 16

<sup>650</sup> Ib.

<sup>651</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 16.

10:39 ) ; and therefore gave them this caution, and strict charge, lest, should he slip from them, he should lose his money he had agreed with the chief priests for; or to let them know, that when he was in their hands, he had made good his agreement, and should expect his money: and that it lay upon them then to take care of him, and bring him before the sanhedrim. The account the Jews themselves give of the directions of Judas, is not very much unlike this; who represent him advising in this manner, only as on the day before:

“gird yourselves ready about this time tomorrow, and the man whom shall worship and bow to, the same is he; behave yourselves like men of war, fight against his company, and lay hold on him <sup>652</sup>”

#### **Matthew 26:49**

Ver. 49. **And forthwith he came to Jesus**

As soon as ever he appeared, before the rest could come up; for, he went before them, as Luke says, and that not only as, their guide to direct them to the person they wanted, but he separated himself from them, that it might not be thought that he came with them, or belonged to them:

**and said, hail, master; and kissed him.**

Just as Joab asked Amasa of his health, and took him by the beard to kiss him, and smote him under the fifth rib, ( 2 Samuel 20:9 ) . The salutation he gave him was wishing him all health, prosperity, and happiness. The Syriac version renders it, “peace, Rabbi”; and the Persic, “peace be upon thee, Rabbi”; which was the very form of salutation the disciples of the wise men gave to their Rabbins.

”Says <sup>653</sup> Aba bar Hona, in the name of R. Jochanan, in what form is the salutation of a disciple to his master? (שלום לִיב רַבִּי) , “peace be upon thee, Rabbi”

In ( Mark 14:45 ) , the word “Rabbi” is repeated, this being usual in the salutation of the Jewish doctors; and the rather used by Judas under a pretence of doing him the greater honour, and of showing the highest respect, and strongest affection for him. So this deceitful wretch still addresses him as his master, though he was now serving his most implacable enemies; and wishes him all peace and joy, when he was going to deliver him into the hands of those that sought his life; and to cover all, kissed him, as a token of his friendship and the sincerity of it. It is rightly observed by Dr. Lightfoot, that it was

usual for masters to kiss their disciples, particularly their heads; but then not for disciples to kiss their masters: of the former there are many instances in the Jewish writings, but not of the latter: yet, I can hardly think that this was done out of open contempt and derision; but under a pretence of respect and love; and even as being concerned for his present case, and as condoling him under the circumstances he was now likely to be in, through an armed hand, which was just upon him; and which he, by this artifice, would have suggested he had no concern with.

#### **Matthew 26:50**

Ver.50. **And Jesus said unto him, friend**

Not in an ironical and sarcastic way, but because he pretended to be his friend, by saluting and kissing him, in the manner he had done; or rather, because Christ had always used him as his friend, his familiar friend, who had been of his councils, and had ate at his table; and therefore this carried in it something very cutting, had Judas had any conscience, or sense of gratitude:

**wherefore art thou come?**

The Ethiopic version reads, “my friend, art thou not come?” that is, art thou come as my friend? is thy coming as a friend, or as an enemy? if as a friend, what means this company with swords and staves? if as an enemy, why this salutation and kiss? or what is thine end in coming at this time of night? what is thy business here? thou hast left my company, and my disciples, what dost thou do here? The Syriac version reads it, “to that”; and the Arabic, “to this art thou come?” to kiss me, and by a kiss to deliver me into the hands of my enemies? to which agrees what is said in Luke, “Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?” ( Luke 22:48 ) . This he said, to let him know he knew him, and therefore he calls him by name; and that he knew his design in kissing him, and that what he was doing was against light and knowledge; he, at the same time, knowing that he was the son of man, the true Messiah.

**Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him;**

that is, the multitude, the Roman band, the captains and officers of the Jews, when Judas had given the sign; though not till Christ had given them a specimen of his power, in striking them to the ground; to let them know, that Judas could never have put him into their hands, nor could they have laid hold on him, had he not thought fit to surrender himself to them. The seizing and apprehending him is related by Luke and John as after

<sup>652</sup> Ib.

<sup>653</sup> T. Hieros. Shebuot. fol. 34. 1.

the following circumstance; though the Ethiopic version here reads, "they lift up their hands, and did not lay hold on the Lord Jesus".

**Matthew 26:51**

Ver. 51. **And behold one of them which were with Jesus**

Either one of the three that Jesus took with him whilst he was in his agony, leaving the other eight at some distance; or of the eleven, who might now be all with him: however, it is certain, Peter is the person meant; for though he is not named here, nor by Mark, nor Luke, he is by John, ( John 18:10 ) ; whose Gospel being wrote last, and many years after the rest, there was no danger like to accrue, by telling who it was that did the following action: he being now thoroughly awaked with the rest, by what Christ had said to him; and more so by the surprise of the multitude of armed men about him; and remembering his solemn protestations of abiding by his master; and seeing him just now ready to be seized, and carried away; without knowing his master's mind, or waiting his answer to the question the other disciples put,

**stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.**

It seems he had a sword by his side, upon what account is not certain; this he drew, and struck at a servant of the high priest's, who might show great malignity against Christ, and was foremost, and most busy in apprehending him. The blow was levelled at his head, and with an intention, no doubt, to have, cleaved him down, but sloping on one side took off his ear. The servant's name was Malchus, as John says; and it was his right ear that was cut off, as both he and Luke relate, ( John 18:10 ) ( Luke 22:50 ) .

**Matthew 26:52**

Ver.52. **Then said Jesus unto him**

That is, unto Peter,

**put up again thy sword into its place,**

or sheath. This Christ said not only to rebuke Peter for his rashness, but to soften the minds of the multitude, who must be enraged at such an action; and which was still more effectually done by his healing the man's ear: and indeed, had it not been for these words, and this action of Christ's; and more especially had it not been owing to the powerful influence Christ had over the spirits of these men, in all probability Peter, and the rest of the apostles, had been all destroyed at once.

**For all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.**

This is not to be understood of magistrates who bear not the sword in vain, are ministers of God for good, and revengers of evil works; but of private persons that use the sword, and that not in self-defence, but for private revenge; or engage in a quarrel, to which they are not called; and such generally perish, as Peter must have done, had it not been for the interposition of almighty power. Though this seems to be spoken not so much of Peter, and of the danger he exposed himself to, by taking and using the sword, and so to deter him from it, but rather of these his enemies: and as an argument to make and keep Peter easy and quiet, and exercise patience, since, in a little time, God would avenge himself of them; and that the Jews, who now made use of the sword of the Roman soldiers, would perish by the sword of the Romans, as in a few years after the whole nation did.

**Matthew 26:53**

Ver. 53. **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father**

Meaning, if he thought proper, or that there was any necessity for it, or that he was desirous of being rescued out of such hands he was falling into. This must be understood of him as man: for, as God, the angels were his creatures and ministering servants, whom he had the command of himself, and so had no need, as such, to pray to his Father to detach a number of them to his assistance, and which, as man, he could only want.

**And he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels.**

A Roman legion consisted of about six thousand soldiers, or upwards; some add six hundred sixty six; and others make the number far greater. Twelve are mentioned, either with respect to the twelve apostles; or in allusion, as others think, to the Roman militia; a proper and full army with them consisting of such a number of legions: and that there is an innumerable company of angels, thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, is certain; and the Persic version here reads; "twelve myriads" of legions; and that these are at the command of God, and he can dispatch them at once, on any emergent occasion, is very evident; and what is it that such a company of angels is not capable of, when a single angel slew in one night an hundred, fourscore, and five thousand men, ( 2 Kings 19:35 ) , wherefore had Christ had any inclination to

have been rescued from the present danger, he stood in no need of Peter's sword.

**Matthew 26:54**

**Ver. 54. But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled**

That is, should Christ make such a request to his Father, and he should grant it, and an host of angels should be sent to rescue him, and he should be rescued by them; how then should the Scriptures, which speak of Christ's being taken, and led as a lamb to the slaughter, and of his various sufferings, and the circumstances of them, have their accomplishment? "declaring", as the Arabic version supplies, or as the Ethiopic version, "which say",

**that thus it must be;**

that the Messiah must be apprehended, and suffer, and die. The several parts of the sufferings of the Messiah are foretold in the writings of the Old Testament; the spirit of Christ, in the prophets, testified before hand of them; as that he should be reproached and despised of men, ( Psalms 22:6-8 ) ( Isaiah 53:3 ), be spit upon, smote, and buffeted, ( Isaiah 1:5 Isaiah 1:6 ) ( Micah 5:1 ), be put to death, ( Psalms 22:15 ) ( Isaiah 53:12 ), and that the death of the cross, ( Psalms 22:15 Psalms 22:16 ) ( Zechariah 12:10 ), and be buried, ( Isaiah 53:9 ), and also the several circumstances of his sufferings, which led on to them, or attended them; as the selling him for thirty pieces of silver, ( Zechariah 11:12 Zechariah 11:13 ), the betraying him by one of his familiar friends, ( Psalms 41:9 ), the seizing and apprehending him, and which is particularly referred to here, ( Isaiah 53:7 Isaiah 53:8 ), his disciples forsaking him, ( Zechariah 13:7 ), and even his God and Father, ( Psalms 22:1 ), his suffering between two thieves, ( Isaiah 53:12 ), the parting of his garments, and casting lots on his vesture, ( Psalms 22:18 ), the giving him gall and vinegar when on the cross, ( Psalms 69:21 ), and not breaking any of his bones, ( Psalms 34:20 ), yea, the Scriptures not only declared, that these things should be; but the necessity of them also, that they must be; because of the purposes and decrees of God, which are eternal, immutable, and unfrustrable; for as God had determined on his salvation of his people by Christ, and that through his sufferings and death, these were determined by him also, even the time, nature, manner, and circumstances of them; and which the Scriptures declare, and therefore must be likewise; and because of the covenant of grace, which is sure, unalterable, and unchangeable; in which Christ agreed to assume human nature, to obey, suffer, and die in it, and so do his Father's will, which was to

bear the penalty of the law, and undergo the sufferings of death, and which therefore must be, or Christ's faithfulness fail. Moreover, on account of the law and justice of God, which required his bearing the curse, as well as fulfilling the precept of the law: and especially on account of the salvation of his people, which could not be effected without them, they must be. Christ, in these words, discovers a very great concern for the fulfilling of Scripture; and that because it is the word of God, which must not be broken; and because throughout it he is spoken of, in the volume of it, it is written of him, to do the will of God; even in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms: and besides, he was the minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and even agreeably to them, and upon the foundation of them, he had himself predicted his own sufferings: and as those were to be the rule of the faith and practice of his people in all ages, he was concerned for their accomplishment in every point; and which may teach us to value the Scriptures, and to be confident of the fulfilment of them in things yet future.

**Matthew 26:55**

**Ver. 55. In that same hour said Jesus to the multitude**

That is, to the heads and chief of them, the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders, as Luke says, ( Luke 22:52 ), for though it was in the dead of the night, and the company such, as they would not have chose to have been seen in at another time; yet so intent were they upon this affair, that they could not satisfy themselves without being in it, and seeing the issue of it; and this the Jews themselves confirm in their account; for they say <sup>654</sup>, that the elders of Jerusalem took Jesus, and brought him to the city. Now in that same hour, immediately, that very moment, that Christ had made an end of rebuking Peter for his rash action, and reasoning with him upon it, he turned and addressed himself to these men, saying;

**are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, for to take me?**

as an highwayman, or notorious robber, that had done great mischief to the country; and being armed, and having associates, was not easy to be taken: the Syriac renders it, as a cut-throat: and the Persic, as a robber, and a cut-throat; a desperate villain, that would by no means yield, unless overpowered by numbers, by force of arms, by the dint of the sword, by knocks and blows: but how different from this, was the character of Jesus! who never did any injury to any man's person or property, but saved

both; was meek, lowly, and humble in his deportment, throughout the whole of his life; never strove with men, or cried, and caused his voice, in any riotous manner, to be heard in the streets; and even when reviled, reviled not again, but took every insult patiently; and was now unarmed, and ready to submit at once; nay, before they could well come up to him, he asked them who they sought; and on mentioning his name, declared he was the person; and signified he was ready to surrender himself, only desired his disciples might have leave to go away: he adds,

**I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.**

The business he was employed was not thieving and stealing, but teaching; and that wholesome doctrine, which he, as man, had received from his Father, and as the great prophet in Israel taught; and with such power and authority, as the Scribes and Pharisees did not: the place where he taught, was the temple; not a corner, or a private place, but a place of public worship, and of public resort: the time when he taught there, was the daytime, and day by day; for some days past, it had been his custom in the daytime to teach in the temple, and at night to go out, and abide in the Mount of Olives; and his continuance day by day in the temple, or his constant teaching there, is signified by sitting daily there, and teaching; unless it should be thought rather to have regard to the posture in which he taught; see ( Matthew 5:1 ) . And yet, though this had been his common practice for some days past, and at other times before, yet no man laid hands on him then; which was not wanting to a good will in them, who were very desirous of it, and sought every opportunity to do it, but were prevented; either through fear of the people, or through Christ's making his escape from them; and particularly, by the singular providence and power of God, which restrained them, because his time was not yet come. However, Christ suggests by this, that they had no need to take such extraordinary methods to apprehend him, as to make use of one of his disciples to betray him; to come in the middle of the night to take him, and that in such great numbers, and with swords and staves, when he was every day with them in the temple.

**Matthew 26:56**

**Ver. 56. But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled**

Some have thought these to be the words of the evangelist, making this remark upon what was said and

done; but by what both Mark and Luke record, ( Mark 14:49 ) ( Luke 22:53 ) , they appear to be the words of Christ himself; who observes this, partly to make himself, as man, easy under the treatment he met with; and partly, to fortify the minds of his disciples against offence at it; and also to throw conviction, or confusion, into the minds of his enemies. The Scriptures of the prophets he refers to, as having, or about to have, by this conduct, their accomplishment, were such, as regarded the betraying him by Judas, the taking him in this secret, private, insidious, yet violent manner; in all which he showed great meekness, calmness, and submission, as ( Psalms 41:9 ) ( Lamentations 4:20 ) ( Isaiah 53:7 Isaiah 53:8 ) . As also what respected the scattering, and hasty flight of his disciples from him, ( Zechariah 13:7 ) , which in the next clause is shown to be accomplished.

**Then all the disciples forsook him and fled;**

not only went away from him, and left him alone, as he foretold they would, ( John 16:32 ) , but they ran away from him in a precipitant manner, like timorous sheep, the shepherd being about to be smitten; and they fearing, lest Peter's rash action should be imputed to them all, and they suffer for it; or lest they should be laid hold on next, and bound, as their master was, or about to be. Every thing in this account is an aggravation of their pusillanimity, and ingratitude; as that they were the "disciples" of Christ that forsook him, whom he had called, and sent forth as his apostles to preach his Gospel; and to whom he had given extraordinary gifts and powers; who had forsaken all and followed him, and had been with him from the beginning; had heard all his excellent discourses, and had seen all his miracles, and yet these at last forsake him, and even "all" of them: John the beloved disciple, that leaned on his bosom, and Peter, that professed so much love to him, zeal for him, and faith in him; the three that had just seen him in his agony and bloody sweat, and everyone of them left him; not one stood by him, and this too, after they had had a fresh instance of his power, in striking the men to the ground, that came to take him; and when he was suing for them with their enemies, to let them go peaceably and safely: so that they had no need to have fled in such haste; and to leave him "then", in the midst of his enemies, in his great distress and trouble, was very unkind and ungrateful: and to this account of the evangelist, pretty much agrees what the Jews themselves say of it; for they report<sup>655</sup>, that



“when his disciples saw that he was taken, and that they could not fight against them, (ברגליהם וירון) , “they ran away on foot”, and lift up their voice and wept greatly.”

Though they also pretend, that the citizens of Jerusalem killed many of them, and that the rest “fled” to the mountain, which is false.

#### **Matthew 26:57**

Ver. 57. **And they that had laid hold on Jesus**

Who were the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, as ( John 18:12 ) , or as the Jews themselves say <sup>656</sup>, the elders of Jerusalem; who not only laid fast hold on him, but bound him; and that both for greater security of him, some of them perhaps knowing how he had made his escape from them formerly; or at least taking the hint from Judas, to hold him fast, and lead him away safely; and by way of reproach and contempt, thereby showing that he was a malefactor, and had done some crime worthy of bonds; and having him thus in fast and safe custody, they

**led him away to Caiaphas, the high priest;**

who was high priest that year; for the priesthood was frequently changed in those times, and men were put into it by the Roman governor, through favour or bribery. The year before this, Simeon, or Simon ben Camhith, was high priest; and the year before that, Eleazar, the son of Ananus; and before him, Ishmael ben Phabi, who were all three, successively, made high priests by the Roman governor: as was also this Caiaphas, this year; and who by Josephus <sup>657</sup>, and in the Talmud <sup>658</sup> likewise, is called Joseph. From whence he had his name Caiaphas, is not certain: Jerom <sup>659</sup> says, it signifies “a searcher”, or “a sagacious person”; but may be better interpreted, he adds, “one that vomits at the mouth”; deriving the word, as I suppose, from (awq) , “to vomit”, and (yp) , “the mouth”; (See Gill on Matthew 26:3). It was to the house, or palace of this man, the high priest, that Jesus was led;

**where the Scribes and elders were assembled:**

a council was held about a week before this, in which Caiaphas assisted, and then gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient, that one man should die for the people, ( John 11:47 John 11:49 John 11:50 ) , whether that was held at his house, or elsewhere, is not certain, very probably it might; however, it is clear from ( Matthew 26:2 Matthew

26:3 ) , that two days ago, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, were assembled together in his palace, to consult about putting Jesus to death; and here they were again met together on the same account, waiting to have him brought before them.

#### **Matthew 26:58**

Ver.58. **But Peter followed him afar off**

The Ethiopic version adds, alone; and which seems to be the true case; for though there was another disciple who also followed Jesus, and is thought to be John, yet it looks as if they followed him separately, and not together; for the other disciple went into the palace with Jesus, but Peter not till afterwards, being espied by his fellow disciple standing without. These two it seems, having a little recovered themselves from the fright they had been put into, stopped and turned back, and followed after Jesus, to see what would be the issue of things. Peter’s following Christ, showed love to him; he was lothe to leave him, his bowels moved towards him, and he wanted to know how it would fare with him, and what would become of him; and yet keeping at a distance, following him afar off, betrayed fear, lest he should be observed, and taken up, and come into danger: however, he proceeded on his way in a slow pace, till he came

**unto the high priest’s palace, and went in and sat with the servants, to see the end;**

of the matter, or business, as the Ethiopic and Persic versions add; to see how it would go with him, whether he would exert his divine power, and deliver himself out of their hands, which he knew he was able to do, when he would again join him; or what punishment they would inflict upon him, whether they would scourge him, and then let him go; or whether they would sentence him to death; that so he might know how to provide for his own safety: all which was indulging curiosity, and the carnal reasonings of his mind; and it showed want of integrity at that time, and some degree of hypocrisy, in placing himself among the servants of the high priest, as if he was none of the followers of Jesus, but was of the same complexion and cast with them: he had got into bad company, and was in the way of temptation; and though he had no design in following Jesus, and in going into the high priest’s palace, and seating himself among the servants to deny his Lord, yet all this led on to it; for which reason these several circumstances are taken notice of, the account of which denial of his, is afterwards related.

#### **Matthew 26:59**

Ver. 59. **Now the chief priests and elders, and all the**

<sup>656</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 16, 17.

<sup>657</sup> Antiq. l. 18. c. 14.

<sup>658</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1.

<sup>659</sup> De Heb. nominibus, fol, 104. col. 4. Tom. 3.

**counsel**

Or sanhedrim, which consisted, as the Jewish writers say <sup>660</sup>, of priests, Levites, and Israelites, of both ecclesiastics and laics; the ecclesiastics were the priests and Levites, and the laics the Israelites, or elders of the people; for if priests and Levites could not be found, a sanhedrim might consist of those only; and so those words in ( Deuteronomy 21:2 ) , “thy elders”, are thus interpreted <sup>661</sup>, ( זה בית דינ הגדול ) , this is the great sanhedrim; and though a king of Israel might not sit in the sanhedrim, yet an high priest might, if he was a man of wisdom <sup>662</sup>, and it seems as if Caiaphas was now at the head of this council, by its being assembled at his palace; which though it was not the usual place where they met, yet might be chose at this time for greater secrecy. Now these thus assembled together,

**sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;**

they first take him up, and then seek out for witnesses against him; being determined, right or wrong, to put him to death, if possible; and false witnesses too, even those whose business it was, to examine and detect false witnesses, and to inflict the same punishment upon them, which they by their false testimony intended to have brought on another, ( Deuteronomy 19:18 Deuteronomy 19:19 ) . And besides, it was in the night, when it was forbid by their canons to begin the trial of capital causes, or to receive and admit of witnesses <sup>663</sup>. Indeed the Syriac and Persic versions read, only witnesses, or witness, and leave out the word “false”; perhaps imagining, that men could never be so wicked, to seek out for false witnesses: but this need not be wondered at, when these men were bent upon the death of Christ at any rate; and were aware that nothing true could be objected to him, that would legally take away his life; and besides, their manner of procedure in judgment against a false prophet, a deceiver, and one that enticed to idolatry, and such an one they would have Jesus to be, was quite different from what they took with other persons: their canon runs thus <sup>664</sup>:

“the judgment of a deceiver, is not as the rest of capital judgments; his witnesses are hid; and he has no need, or ought not to have any premonition, or warning, as the rest of those that are put

660 Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. Abarbinel in Tora, fol. 366. 2.

661 T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 23. 3.

662 Maimon. ib. sect. 4.

663 Maimon. ib. c. 3. sect. 3, 4.

664 lb. c. 11. sect. 5.

to death; and if he goes out of the sanhedrim acquitted, and one says I can prove the charge against him, they turn him back; but if he goes out condemned, and one says I can prove him innocent the do not return him.”

So in the Misna <sup>665</sup> it is said,

“of all that are condemned to death in the law, none have their witnesses hidden but this (the deceiver, or one that entices to idolatry)--and they hide his witnesses behind a wall, or hedge; and he (whom he endeavoured to seduce) says to him, say what thou hast said to me privately; and if he repeats it to him, he must say, how shall we leave our God that is in heaven, and go and serve stocks and stones! if he repents, it is well; but if he should say, so we are bound to do, and so it becomes us, they that stand behind the wall, or hedge, shall carry him to the sanhedrim and stone him.”

In the Gemara it is thus expressed <sup>666</sup>,

“they light up a lamp in the innermost house, and set the witnesses in the outermost house, so that they can see him and hear his voice, and he cannot see them.”

And then follows what is said before, to which is added, “so they did to Ben Stada”; by whom they mean Jesus of Nazareth. Moreover, this need not seem strange, that they took such a course with Christ, when in the case of Stephen, they suborned and set up false witnesses against him. The sanhedrim cannot be thought to do this in person, but they sent out their officers to seek for such men, as could or would produce anything against him, and no doubt promised them an handsome reward.

**Matthew 26:60**

Ver. 60. **But found none**

That were fit for their purpose;

**yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none;**

whose testimonies were sufficient to put him to death, which was what they were resolved upon, or whose witness were not alike and agreed; for according to their law, a man must not die by the mouth of one witness only, but by the mouth of two or three witnesses agreed in a point; and though they might be willing

665 Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 10.

666 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 67. 1.

enough to dispense with the law in this case, yet might have some regard to their own character and reputation; and especially as they meant to deliver him to the Roman governor, in order to be condemned by him; they knew they must have a charge, and this supported with a proper evidence, or they could not hope to succeed; for which reason, they could not put up, as they otherwise willingly would, with any sort of witnesses:

**at the last came two false witnesses;**

who were agreed in a point, and whose testimonies were alike; at least, had a greater appearance of truth and agreement than the rest; though Mark says, “neither so did their witnesses agree together”, ( Mark 14:59 ), as to prove the point, for which it was given.

**Matthew 26:61**

Ver.61. **And said, this fellow said**

Or saith, as De Dieu observes, the Syriac version of this place should be rendered; that is, he has not only said in times past, referring to ( John 2:19 ), but continues to say it, and glory in it:

**I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three**

days;

in which they did injury, both to his words and sense: he did not say, “I am able to destroy the temple”, but only said, “destroy this temple”; signifying neither his power, nor his will and inclination to it; but put it upon the Jews, and left it to them to do it: nor did he say one word about the temple of God, or as it is in ( Mark 14:58 ), “this temple that is made with hands”; the temple at Jerusalem, which was made by the hands of men, and devoted to the worship of God; but only “this temple”, referring to his body, or human nature; in which he, the Son of God, dwelt, as in a temple; nor did he say that he was able to “build” it in three days, but that he would “raise it up” in three days; intending the resurrection of his body by his own power, after it had been dead three days; and so they perverted his sense, as well as misquoted his words; applying that to the material temple at Jerusalem, what he spoke of the temple of his body, and of its resurrection from the dead, on the third day; designing hereby to fix a charge, both of sacrilege and sorcery upon him: of sacrilege, in having a design upon the temple of God to destroy it; and of sorcery, or familiarity with the devil, and having assistance from him, or knowledge of the magic art, that he could pretend in three days to rebuild a temple, which had been forty and six years in building; and was what could never be done, but by

help of Beelzebub, the prince of devils, by whom it was insinuated he did all his miracles.

**Matthew 26:62**

Ver. 62. **And the high priest arose and said unto him**

He rose up from his seat in great wrath and anger; partly being vexed, that they could get no other and better testimony; and partly because of Christ’s contemptuous silence, giving no answer to the witnesses, as judging they deserved none; and which highly provoked the high priest, and therefore in passion said,

**answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?**

Is it true or false, right or wrong? The Vulgate Latin renders it, “dost thou answer nothing to those things which these witness against thee?” To which agree the Arabic version, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel.

**Matthew 26:63**

Ver. 63. **But Jesus held his peace**

Knowing it would signify nothing, whatever he should say, they being set upon his death, the time of which was now come; and therefore he quietly submits, and says nothing in his own defence to prevent it. To be silent in a court of judicature, Apollonius Tyanaeus <sup>667</sup> says, is the fourth virtue; this Christ had, and all others:

**and the high priest answered and said unto him;**

though Christ had said nothing, a way of speaking very frequent among the Jews, and in the sacred writings:

**I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God;**

the Christ; the anointed, that David speaks of in the second Psalm, and who is there said to be the Son of God, ( Psalms 2:2 Psalms 2:7 ), to which the high priest seems to have respect; since there is no other passage, in which both these characters meet; and which was understood by the ancient Jews of the Messiah, as is owned by modern ones <sup>668</sup>. Jesus was given out to be the Messiah, and his disciples believed him to be the Son of God, and he had affirmed himself to be so; wherefore the high priest, exerting his priestly power and authority, puts him upon his oath; or at least with an oath made by the living God, charges him to tell the truth, and which when ever any heard the voice of swearing, he was obliged to do, ( Leviticus 5:1 ).

**Matthew 26:64**

Ver. 64. **Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said**

<sup>667</sup> Philostrat. Vita Apollouii, l. 8. c. 1.

<sup>668</sup> Jarchi & Aben Ezra in Psal. ii. 1. & Kimchi in ver. 12.

That is, thou hast said right; or as Mark expresses it, “I am”, ( Mark 14:62 ) , the Christ, the anointed of God, who was so from everlasting, and in time; being before the world was, installed into, and invested with the office of mediator; and in the fulness of time, anointed with the holy Spirit without measure: he might truly say he was the Messiah, since all the characters of him in the books of the prophets, met in him; and all the miracles he was to work in proof of his Messiahship were wrought by him: as also that he was the Son of God, not by creation, as angels and men; nor by adoption, as saints; nor as man, or in the human nature, in which he was the son of man, and not the Son of God; nor was he begotten as man, whereas he is called the only begotten Son, and the begotten of the Father; and was he the Son of God as man not the first, but the third person must be his Father; besides, he was the Son of God before his incarnation: nor as mediator neither; he was the Son of God, antecedent to his office as mediator; his sonship is distinct from it, is an illustration of it, and what puts virtue into it; but he is so as God, as a divine person, by natural and eternal filiation; being begotten of the Father in the divine essence, and of the same nature; and having the same perfections with him, and in all things equal to him; and is the sense in which he always affirmed God to be his Father, and himself to be his Son. For this phrase, “thou hast said”, as answering to an affirmation, “I am”, (See Gill on Matthew 26:25). Now, though Christ had so fully answered to the adjuration, and so strongly affirmed himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God, yet he knew they would not believe; and therefore refers them to an after proof thereof, which whether they would or not, would oblige them to acknowledge the whole:

**nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the son of man, sitting at the right hand of power:**

the Vulgate Latin, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, read “the power of God”, as in ( Luke 22:69 ) , though it is not absolutely necessary; for “power” designs God himself, who is all powerful; as appears by the creation of all things out of nothing, the upholding of all things in their being, the redemption of men, the conversion of sinners, and the preservation of his saints. In the Jewish writings <sup>669</sup>, God is frequently called, (הַגְּבוּרָה) , “the power”: such a thing, say they, we have heard, (הַגְּבוּרָה מִפִּי) , “from the mouth of power”, or might; that is, from God himself: and so he is by the Grecians called (Σουβανη)

, “power” <sup>670</sup>: by “the son of man”, is meant Christ in the human nature; who then appeared at their bar as a mere man, in a very despicable form and condition, but hereafter they should see him in a more glorious one, and at “the right hand of God”: a phrase expressive of his exaltation, above all creatures whatever: respect is had to the prophecy of him in ( Psalms 110:1 ) . “Sitting” there, denotes his having done his work; and his continuance in his exalted state, until all enemies are subdued under him: and when he says they should “see” him, his meaning is not, that they should see him at the right hand of God with their bodily eyes, as Stephen did; but that they should, or at least might, see and know by the effects, that he was set down at the right hand of God; as by the pouring forth of the holy Spirit upon his disciples, on the day of pentecost; by the wonderful spread of his Gospel, and the success of it, notwithstanding all the opposition made by them, and others; and particularly, by the vengeance he should take on their nation, city, and temple; and which may be more especially designed in the next clause;

**and coming in, the clouds of heaven.**

So Christ’s coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, as it is often called the coming of the son of man, is described in this manner, ( Matthew 24:27 Matthew 24:30 ) . Though this may also be understood of Christ’s second coming to judgment, at the last day; when as he went up to heaven in a cloud, he will return, and come also in the clouds of heaven; see ( Acts 1:9 Acts 1:11 ) ( Revelation 1:7 ) , when he will be seen by the eyes of all, good and bad; and when this sanhedrim, before whom he now was, will see him also, and confess that he is Lord and Christ, and the Son of God. Though the former clause seems to have regard to what would quickly come to pass, and what they should soon observe, and be convinced of; for (ap’ arti) , rendered “hereafter”, may be translated “henceforwards”; or as it is in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, “from this time”; meaning, that in a very little while, they should begin to see the effects of his being set down at the right hand of God, and which would be full proofs of it, and should see him come in the clouds of heaven, at the last day: reference seems to be had to ( Daniel 7:13 ) , where one like unto the son of man is said to come in the clouds of heaven, and which is understood of the Messiah by many, both of the ancient and modern Jews

<sup>669</sup> T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1. & Horayot, fol. 8. 1. Debarim Rabba, fol. 245. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Memarim, c. 5. sect. 15. & Melacim, c. 8. sect. 10. & alibi passim.

<sup>670</sup> Sententiae Secundi, p. 21. Ed. Gale.

<sup>671</sup>: with whom one of his names is “Anani” <sup>672</sup>, which signifies “clouds”.

### Matthew 26:65

#### Ver. 65. Then the high priest rent his clothes

Both his outer and inner garments. This he did, to show his zeal for the honour and glory of God, his grief and concern at the profanation of his holy name by a false oath, and his abhorrence of, and indignation at the blasphemy he supposed Christ to be guilty of, in asserting himself to be the Son of God. Some have thought, that Caiaphas in this action, transgressed the law, in ( Leviticus 21:10 ), where it is said, that “the high priest--shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes”: and it is one of the Jews’ negative precepts <sup>673</sup>, that

“an high priest is prohibited, (לִגְלוֹת) , “ever” to rend his garments:”

and that therefore being transported with passion at the greatness of the supposed crime, could not forbear expressing his detestation of it in this manner, though it was forbidden him: but it does not appear to have been unlawful: as for the law in Leviticus, it only regards the rending of garments at funerals, or in mourning for the dead, as the context shows; and so Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the text, “nor rent his clothes”: (בִּשְׂמֵי אֲנִיָּקִי) “in the time of mourning”; and so the Jewish <sup>674</sup> interpreters, in general, expound it; and besides, this prohibition, according to them, only regards the manner of rending: their rule is this <sup>675</sup>;

“an high priest rends below, and a common person above:” the sense of which, according to their commentators, is <sup>676</sup>,

“that if anyone dies for whom an high priest is obliged to rend his garments, he must rend below, at the extreme part of his garment, near his feet; and as for what is written, nor rend his clothes; the meaning is, he shall not rend as other men do, above, over against the breast, near the shoulder, as the rest of the people.”

<sup>671</sup> Zohar in Gert. fol. 85. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 209. 4. R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra, in Dan. vii. 13. & Jarchi & Saadiah Gaon in loc.

<sup>672</sup> F8 Targum in 1 Chron. iii. 24. & Beckius in ib. Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 10. c. 1.

<sup>673</sup> Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 302.

<sup>674</sup> Jarchi, Aben Ezra in loc.

<sup>675</sup> Misn. Horayot, c. 3. sect. 5.

<sup>676</sup> Bartenora & Maimon. in ib.

Moreover, a priest might not go into the sanctuary, nor perform any part of service with his clothes rent; the canon runs thus <sup>677</sup>,

“the judgment, or the law of them that rend their garment, and of those that uncover the head, is one and the same, as it is said, ( Leviticus 10:6 ), lo! if he is in service, and rends his garments, he is guilty of death by the hands of heaven, though his service is right, and not profaned.”

And indeed no man, whether a priest or an Israelite, might go into the temple with his clothes rent; and a priest might not rend his sacerdotal garments, on any account; yet such were not these that Caiaphas now had on; but in case of hearing blasphemy, everyone, be he what he would, was obliged to rend his garments <sup>678</sup>:

“Whosoever hears the cursing of the name (of God) is obliged to rend, even at the cursing of the surnames he is obliged to rend; and he that hears it from an Israelite, both he that hears, and he that hears from the mouth of him that hears, he is obliged to rend; but he that hears from the mouth of a Gentile, is not obliged to rend; and Eliakim and Shebna would not have rent, but because Rabshakeh was an apostate.”

So when witnesses expressed the blasphemy of such they testified against, the judges were obliged to rise up and rend their garments; concerning which, take the following rule <sup>679</sup>:

“a blasphemer is not guilty, unless he expresses the name (of God); says R. Joshua ben Korcha, all the day the witnesses are examined by the surnames; but when the cause is finished, they do not put to death because of the surnames, but they bring every man out, and ask the chief among them, and say to him, say expressly what thou hast heard, and he says it: then the judges stand upon their feet, (וְקִרְיָוּ) , “and rend their garments”, and do not sow them up again; and then the second and the third say, I have heard the same as he.”

From all which it appears, that Caiaphas did what was the custom of the nation to do in such a case. The observation, that some learned men have made, that the

<sup>677</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Biath Hamikdash, c. 1. sect. 14, 17.

<sup>678</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Obede Cochabim, c. 2. sect. 10. Vid. T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 1.

<sup>679</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 5.

high priest's rending his garments, was, though without his intention, an emblem and presage, of the rending of the priesthood from him, and his brethren, and the entire change of it; as the abolition of the whole ceremonial law, was signified by the rending of the vail of the temple in twain; and as the removing of the kingdom from Saul, was represented by Samuel's rending his mantle; and the revolt of the ten tribes to Jeroboam, by Abijah's rending his garment into twelve pieces, and giving ten to him; would have had a much better foundation to be built on, were these clothes that Caiaphas rent, his priestly ones: but such they were not; for both the high priest, and the other priests, only wore their sacerdotal garments in the temple; nor was it lawful for them to go out in them elsewhere; for so the Jews say <sup>680</sup>;

“it is forbidden to go out into the province; city, or country, in the garments of the priesthood; but in the sanctuary, whether in the time of service, or not in the time of service, it was lawful.”

In the temple, there were chests on purpose for the garments of the priests <sup>681</sup>; from whence they took them, and where they laid them up when they had performed their service: of these there were ninety six in number; for as there were twenty four courses, there were four chests for every course; in which the garments were put by themselves, the breeches by themselves, the girdles by themselves, the bonnets by themselves, and the coats by themselves; sealed up with an inscription on them, showing what was in them: and when the men that belonged to such a course, came to perform their service in turn, they opened these chests, and clothed themselves: and when they went out of their service, they put them up in them again, and sealed them; and as for

“the high priest, he left his golden garments, (wlv hkvlb) , “in his chamber”, (an apartment in the temple, peculiar to him, and for this use,) in the night, and at whatsoever time he went out of the sanctuary <sup>682</sup>”

Nor might he go abroad with them, unless (lwdg Krwul) , “in great necessity” <sup>683</sup>; as Simeon the Just went out in priestly garments to meet Alexander the Great, to appease him, being warned of God so to do: hence the Apostle Paul knew not Ananias the high priest, ( Acts 23:5 ) , which he must have done, had he had on his

680 T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 69. 1. & Tamid, fol. 27. 2.

681 Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 3.

682 Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 8, 9, 10.

683 Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pt. affirm. 173.

priestly garments: for when the priests were not in the temple, and out of service, they wore no distinguishing habits, but were dressed as laics, and as the common people were <sup>684</sup>. The reason of Caiaphas's rending his clothes, is expressed in, the next clause,

**saying, he hath spoken blasphemy:**

not only because Jesus asserted that he was the Messiah, but also the Son of God; hereby making himself equal with God, which is the sense in which the Jews always understood this phrase; and he appearing to them to be but a mere man, they charged it as blasphemy against God, to assume such a character and relation to himself:

**what further need have we of witnesses?**

of seeking after others, as they had done: or of further examining and taking the depositions of those, who were before them: he was for putting a stop to the process, and bringing the cause at once to an issue: and therefore addresses the court in the following manner;

**behold now, ye have heard his blasphemy:**

out of his own mouth, as ( Luke 22:71 ) , expresses it; and with their own ears, and at that very time; so that they had no need of recourse to things past, or examine witnesses about what they had heard from him formerly: and therefore he proposes, that they would attend to, and take notice of his present words; and which, as he suggests, were shocking and astonishing: for the word, “behold!” may not only be a note of attention, but of astonishment.

**Matthew 26:66**

Ver.66. **What think ye?**

&c.] Of the words just now spoken by him; do not they in your opinion amount to a charge of blasphemy and what punishment do you think ought to be inflicted on him? is he guilty of death, or not? This question he put, as being president of the court:

**they answered and said, he is guilty of death;**

they were unanimous in their vote, for Mark says, “they all condemned him to be guilty of death”; only Joseph of Arimathea must be excepted, who consented not to their counsel and deed, ( Luke 23:51 ) , and so must Nicodemus, if he was present; who seeing what they were determined to do, withdrew themselves before the question came to be put, and so it passed “nemine contradicente”; and indeed, if he had been guilty of blasphemy, as they charged him, the sentence

684 Maimon. ib. c. 10. sect. 4. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 15.

would have been right. Now this was in the night, in which they begun, carried on, and finished this judicial procedure, quite contrary to one of their own canons<sup>685</sup> which runs thus:

“pecuniary causes they try in the day, and finish in the night; capital causes (such was this) they try in the day, and finish in the day; pecuniary causes they finish the same day, whether for absolution, or condemnation; capital causes they finish the same day for absolution, and the day following for condemnation; wherefore they do not try causes neither on the sabbath eve, nor on the eve of a feast day.”

But in this case, they begun the trial in the night, examined the witnesses, finished it, and passed the sentence of condemnation, and that in the eve of a grand festival, their Chagigah.

#### **Matthew 26:67**

Ver. 67. **Then did they spit in his face**

Not the judges, the members of the sanhedrim, but the servants of the high priest, and the officers that had Jesus in hold, and were the guard upon him; see ( Luke 22:63 ), who seeing him condemned as guilty of death, thought they might insult him at pleasure, and use him in the most indecent and barbarous manner; and therefore, in a way of contempt, spit in his face; than which nothing was more reproachful and disgraceful: the Jews<sup>686</sup> say, that he that spits before, or in the presence of his master, is guilty of death, so nauseous and filthy was it accounted; and how much more must it be so, to spit in the face of anyone? hereby a prophecy was fulfilled, ( Isaiah 50:6 ), “I hid not my face from shame and spitting”: and hereby, together with his sweat and blood, his visage was more marred than any man’s, and his form than the sons of men:

**and buffeted him;**

cuffed, or boxed him with their double fists:

**and others smote him, with the palms of their hands;**

gave him many a slap on the face with their open hands, or struck him on the face with rods, as the word will bear to be rendered: they rapped him with the wands they had in their hands, and struck him on the head with

<sup>685</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 1. Maimom. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1, 2. T. Hieros. Yom Tob, fol. 63. 1.

<sup>686</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 99. 1.F25 Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6.

the rods or staves they had with them; whereby was accomplished the prophecy, in ( Micah 5:1 ), “they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek”. This was very injurious treatment, the Jews themselves being witnesses; who have in their canons enjoined {y}, that

“if a man strikes his neighbour with his double fist, he must give him a shekel; R. Judah says, on account of R. Jose the Galilean, a pound: if he gives him a slap of the face, he must pay him two hundred zuzims, or pence; and if with the back of his hand (which was accounted<sup>687</sup> the more ignominious) four hundred zuzims: if he plucked him by his ear, or plucked off his hair, or spit, so as that the spittle came upon him, or took away his cloak--he must pay four hundred zuzims, and all according to his honour or dignity.”

All these indignities were done to Christ; see ( Isaiah 50:6 ).

#### **Matthew 26:68**

Ver. 68. **Saying, prophesy unto us, thou Christ**

Not that they owned him to be the Messiah; but because he asserted himself to be the Messiah, and his followers believed in him as such, they call him so; and in an ironical and sarcastic way, call upon him to divine, and tell them who the persons were, that used him in this manner; suggesting, that if he was the Christ, or Messiah, he would know all things, and what were done to him:

**who is he that smote thee?**

for they had covered his face, or blindfolded him, as the other Evangelists say, ( Mark 14:65 ) ( Luke 22:64 ), and then bid him tell them who smote him last. Christ did not think fit to give them an answer to this question, but he will let them know hereafter, who the particular person, or persons were, that smote him; and when it will appear to all the churches, and to all the world, that he is the Lord God omniscient. Some learned men have observed<sup>688</sup>, that there was a play formerly used, called by the ancients, ( שמוסבאללכ ), at which, one person having his face covered, the rest smote him; or one put his hands over his eyes, and another smote, and asked him who it was that smote? and such an exercise is yet in being among us, which is commonly called Blindman’s Buff; and such pastime as this the Jews had with Christ; in this ludicrous way did they use him, and made him their sport and diversion, as the Philistines did Samson; but it

<sup>687</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>688</sup> Braunii Select. Sacr. l. 5. Exerc. 2. sect. 38. p. 622, 623. & Capelt. in loc. e Polluce, l. 9. c. 7.

will cost them dear another day.

**Matthew 26:69**

Ver..69. **Now Peter sat without in the palace**

Peter's denial of his Lord, the account of which follows, is related among the sufferings of Christ; and indeed, the ill usage he met with from his enemies, their spitting in his face, buffeting him with their fists, smiting him on the cheeks with their hands, and rods, did not give him so much pain and grief, as to be denied by his own disciple: we are before told, ( Matthew 26:58 ) , that Peter followed Christ afar off, and went into the high priest's palace, and sat with the servants there, to see what would be the end and issue of these things: and here now he was in the apartment, where the council sat, and were examining and trying Jesus; though, as Mark says, "beneath in the palace", ( Mark 14:66 ) ; in the lower part of the room, in the great hall, in the midst of which the servants had made a fire: the Arabic version reads it, "in the area of the court": here Peter had placed himself, and here he sat making his observations:

**and a damsel came unto him;**

one of the maids of the high priest, as Mark says, ( Mark 14:66 ) ; and according to the Evangelist John, was she that kept the door, and had let him in, ( John 18:16 John 18:17 ) ,

**saying, thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.**

The Arabic and Persic versions read, Jesus the Nazarene, or of Nazareth, as below. So she called him, not so much to distinguish him from any other of that name, as by way of reproach; suggesting, that he could not be the Messiah, or that prophet; since Christ comes not out of Galilee, nor does any prophet arise from thence: and when she charges him with being "with" him, her meaning is not, that he was with him in the garden, when he was taken; where it cannot be thought she was to see him; nor with him in the temple, or in any part of Jerusalem, where she possibly might have seen him; but that he was a disciple of his, one that believed in him, embraced him as the Messiah, had imbibed his principles and doctrines, and was of his party; and was only come thither as a spy, to see what would be done to him.

**Matthew 26:70**

Ver. 70. **But he denied before them all**

Which was a very great aggravation of his sin; for, as it is to a man's commendation to profess a good profession of Christ before many witnesses, so it is to his disgrace, and is resented by Christ, to deny him before men: he did

not deny that Christ was God, or the Son of God, or that he was come in the flesh, or that Jesus was the Christ, or that he was the only Saviour of sinners; but that he was with him, or one of his disciples;

**saying, I know not what thou sayest:**

which was a very great falsehood; he knew the sense and import of her words; he denied that which was most true; he had been with him from the beginning, had heard all his discourses, and seen his miracles; he had been with him at particular times, and in particular places, when and where some others of the disciples were not admitted, as at the raising of Jairus's daughter, at the transfiguration in the mount, and in the garden, very lately; and yet, O base ingratitude! now denies that he had been with him; or that he knew what was meant by such an expression. He denied that he was a disciple of Christ, which was his greatest character, and highest glory; and this denial did not arise from any diffidence of his being one, or from a sense of his unworthiness to be one, but from the fear of man, which brought this snare upon him: and the more his weakness is discovered in it, that he should be intimidated by a servant maid into such a denial, who but a few hours before had confidently affirmed, that though he should die with Christ, he would not deny him; and who had so courageously drawn his sword in his master's cause, in the face of a band of soldiers, and a multitude of armed men with swords and staves. This was his first denial; a second follows.

**Matthew 26:71**

Ver. 71. **And when he was gone out into the porch**

The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "the gate": and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but more rightly it is rendered, "the porch": he did not attempt to go out at the door, and run away, though he could gladly have done it; but he feared to do this, lest, as this would discover him, they should pursue him, and overtake him, and bring him before the sanhedrim: he chose rather to keep his ground, but was very uneasy; and therefore moved into the porch, where he sat very pensive, considering what was proper for him to do; when

**another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, this[fellow] was also with Jesus of Nazareth:**

she speaks of Christ in the same contemptuous manner, as her fellow servant had done; for this appellation of Christ was commonly, if not always used



by way of contempt; and she means the same thing by his being with him, the other did, and is rather more spiteful, and bent on mischief; for, the other addressed him alone, and what she said, said to himself; but this directs her speech to the servants and officers that were near at hand, and uses him in a very scurrilous manner: this sorry fellow, that is sauntering and lurking about here, is certainly one of this man's disciples.

**Matthew 26:72**

Ver. 72. **And again he denied with an oath**

He denied a second time, that he had ever been with Jesus, or was a disciple of his; and to put it out of all doubt, and an end to all dispute about it, and further charge of this kind, as he hoped, he annexed an oath to it: he swore by the God of truth; made a solemn appeal to the omniscient God, the searcher of hearts, that he was so far from being ever with Jesus of Nazareth, or a disciple of his, that, says he,

**I do not know the man:**

meaning not only that he had no personal knowledge of him, or acquaintance with him; but that he had never seen the man in his life, nor did he know what manner of man he was. This, as it was a downright falsehood, it was what he had no need to have said; for there were multitudes that knew Christ in this sense, who never joined with him, or became his disciples. This was so much overdoing it, that it was much it had not given them a suspicion of him. Those that would excuse Peter's sin, by supposing that he meant, that he knew Christ to be God, and did not know him as a mere man, have no foundation for such a supposition; and indeed, such an ambiguous expression, and mental reservation, is no other than dealing fallaciously. Peter knew Christ in every sense; he knew him spiritually, whom to know is life eternal: and he valued the knowledge of him above all things else: he knew him to be God, and the Son of God; he knew him as mediator, and the Saviour of lost sinners; he knew him as man, and had had personal intimacy and conversation with him of a long time, and yet now denies he knew him; and that with an oath, adding perjury to lying; and so it is, that one sin leads on to another. This instance of Peter's shows the wickedness and deceitfulness of man's heart; and what the best of men are, or would be, when left to themselves, and of God: they become like other men, even like the men of the world, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

**Matthew 26:73**

Ver. 73. **And after a while**

Mark says, "a little after", ( Mark 14:70 ) , and Luke observes, that it was "about the space of one hour after", ( Luke 22:59 ) : so that here was time to reflect upon what he had been saying, and to guard against another temptation, should he be attacked; but, alas! as yet he was unmindful of his Lord's words, and persists in the denial of him, and that with greater aggravation, than at his first surprise: and indeed his temptation was now more violent: for there

**came unto him they that stood by;**

the officers and servants of the high priest, his attendants that waited upon him, and who stood by the fire, where Peter was warming himself: before he was attacked by single maidservants, now by a body of men, and one of them the kinsman of the man whose ear he had cut off, and who challenged him, as having seen him in the garden: and another confidently affirmed, and swore to it, that he was with Jesus, and was a Galilean; and all of them agreed in this,

**and said to Peter, surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee:**

not his spiritual speech, for he had not been speaking in the language of a disciple of Christ, like one that had been with Jesus; nor his swearing neither, for this rather showed him to be one of them; but his country language, the brogue of his speech, the Galilean dialect which he spoke: for in Mark it is said, "thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereunto", ( Mark 14:70 ) : for though the same language was spoken in Galilee as at Jerusalem, yet it was not so accurate and polite in Galilee, nor so well pronounced; words of different signification were confounded together. Hence the Talmudists say<sup>689</sup>, that

"the men of Judah, who were careful of their language, their law was confirmed in their hands; the men of Galilee, who were not careful of their language, their law was not confirmed in their hands--the men of Galilee, who do not attend to language, what is reported of them? a Galilean went and said to them, (Naml rma Naml rma) , they said to him foolish Galilean, (חמור) , "Chamor" is to ride upon, or "Chamar" is to drink, or "Hamar" is for clothing, or "Immar" is for hiding for slaughter."

By which instances it appears, that a Galilean pronounced "Chamor", an ass, and "Chamar", wine, and "Hamar", wool, and "Immar", a lamb, all one, and the

<sup>689</sup> T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 53. 1, 2. Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. in rad. (גליל)

same way, without any distinction; so that it was difficult to know which of these he meant. Many other instances of the like kind are given in the same place, which show the Galilean to be a more gross, barbarous, and impolite language, than what was spoken at Jerusalem; and Peter using this dialect, was known to be a Galilean: just as the Ephraimites were known by their pronouncing Shibboleth, Sibboleth.

**Matthew 26:74**

Ver. 74. **Then began he to curse, and to swear**

He swore before, and now he began "to curse"; not Christ, as Saul compelled some to blaspheme him, who professed him, and as the Jews formerly cursed Christ, and his followers, in their synagogues: for Peter's crime was bad enough, it need not be made worse than it was: he could never call Jesus accursed; in so doing he would have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; but he cursed himself; "he began to imprecate himself", as the Arabic version renders it; he made dreadful imprecations and wishes; wished that all the miseries and calamities he could think of might fall upon him, if he was one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, or knew anything of him: saying,

**I know not the man;**

if I do, God do so to me, or more also: let vengeance light upon me; may I be the most miserable creature in the world, if I know anything of him;

**and immediately the cock crew:**

as he was swearing and cursing in this manner; as soon as ever the words were out of his mouth, and he had in this sad and solemn manner three times denied that he knew Christ, or was ever with him, or a disciple of his. It is forbid, by a Jewish canon, to keep cocks at Jerusalem; it runs thus <sup>690</sup>:

"they do not bring up cocks in Jerusalem, because of the holy things, neither do the priests in all the land of Israel, because of the purifications."

Whether this canon was then in being, or how it was dispensed with, or whether there was any particular providence in the cock being here now, and so nigh the high priest's palace, is not certain; but one there was: nor can the Jews deny that there were cocks at Jerusalem; for they themselves speak of a cock, (שנקל בירושלים) <sup>691</sup>, "that was stoned at Jerusalem".

<sup>690</sup> Misn. Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 7. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. Abot R. Nathan, c. 35. Maimon. Hilch. Beth Habechirah, c. 7. sect. 14. Shalshet Hakabala, fol. 9. 2.

<sup>691</sup> T. Hieros Erubin, fol. 26. 1. Caphtor, fol. 42. 1.

**Matthew 26:75**

Ver. 75. **And Peter remembered the words of Jesus**

Forgetfulness of God, of his works, of his words, and of his law, of his revealed mind and will, is often the cause of sin; and a remembrance of things is necessary to the recovery of a fallen or backsliding professor; as, of what he is fallen from, of the love and kindness of God formerly shown to him, of his evil ways and works he is fallen into, and of the words and truths of Christ he has been very indifferent unto and lukewarm about:

**which said unto him, before the cock crew,**

or is done crowing,

**thou shalt deny me thrice;**

which he was put in mind of on hearing the cock crew. So by one means, or another, sometimes by some remarkable providence, and sometimes by the ministry of the word, God is pleased to alarm and awaken sleepy professors, backsliding believers, and remind them of their condition and duty, and restore them by repentance, as he did Peter:

**and he went out;**

of the high priest's palace, either through fear, lest he should be seen weeping, and be suspected; or rather through shame, not being able to continue where his Lord was, when he had so shamefully denied him; as also to leave the company he had got into, being sensible he was wrong in mingling himself with such, and thereby exposed himself to these temptations; as well as to vent his grief in tears privately:

**and wept bitterly;**

being thoroughly sensible what an evil and bitter thing the sin was, he had been guilty of: his repentance sprung from Christ's looking upon him, and from his looking to Jesus, and was truly evangelical: it was a sorrow after a godly sort, and was increased by the discoveries of Christ's love unto him; and was attended with faith in him, and views of pardon through him: the Persic version adds, "and his sin is forgiven"; which, though not in the text, yet is a truth; for Peter's repentance was not like Cain's, nor Esau's, nor Judas's; it was not the repentance of one in despair, but was a repentance unto life and salvation, which needed not to be repented of.

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

**CHAPTER XXVII**

*1 Christ is delivered bound to Pilote. 3 Judas hangeth himself. 19 Pilote, admonished*

*his wife. 24 washeth his hands. 26 and looseth Barabbus. 29 Christ is crowned with thorns. 34 crucified, 40 reviled. 50 dieth and is buried. 66 his sepulchre is sealed and watched.*

Matthew 27

- [1] When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:
- [2] And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.
- [3] Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,
- [4] Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.
- [5] And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.
- [6] And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.
- [7] And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.
- [8] Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.
- [9] Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;
- [10] And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.
- [11] And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.
- [12] And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.
- [13] Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?
- [14] And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.
- [15] Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.
- [16] And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.
- [17] Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?
- [18] For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

- [19] When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.
- [20] But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.
- [21] The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.
- [22] Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.
- [23] And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.
- [24] When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.
- [25] Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.
- [26] Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.
- [27] Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.
- [28] And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.
- [29] And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!
- [30] And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.
- [31] And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.
- [32] And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.
- [33] And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,
- [34] They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.
- [35] And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast

lots.

- [36] And sitting down they watched him there;
- [37] And set up over his head his accusation written,  
THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.
- [38] Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.
- [39] And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,
- [40] And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.
- [41] Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,
- [42] He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.
- [43] He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.
- [44] The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.
- [45] Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.
- [46] And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
- [47] Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.
- [48] And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.
- [49] The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.
- [50] Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.
- [51] And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;
- [52] And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,
- [53] And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.
- [54] Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.
- [55] And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:
- [56] Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary

the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

- [57] When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:
- [58] He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.
- [59] And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,
- [60] And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.
- [61] And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.
- [62] Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,
- [63] Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.
- [64] Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.
- [65] Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.
- [66] So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

### JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW CHAPTER XXVII

#### Matthew 27:1

Ver. 1. **When the morning was come,**

Or, as soon as it was day, as Luke says, Luke 22:66. The sanhedrim had been up all night, which, after eating the passover, they had spent in apprehending, trying, and examining Jesus, and the witnesses against him; and had come to an unanimous vote, that he was guilty of death; upon which they either put Jesus out of the room for a while, or went into another themselves, to consult what further steps should be taken: or if they went home to their own houses, they very quickly got together again, and met in the temple, where they seem to be, Mt 27:5, unless the story of Judas is, by anticipation, inserted here; and in their council chamber, where they led Jesus, and examined him again concerning his being the Son of God; see Luke 22:66, all

which shows how intent they were upon this business, and with what eagerness and diligence they pursued it; their feet ran to evil, and they made haste to shed blood. This was the time of their morning prayers, of their saying their phylacteries, and reciting the “shema”, “hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord”, according to their canon, which is this <sup>692</sup>:

“from what time do they read the “shema” in the morning? from such time that a man can distinguish between blue and white: says R. Eliezer, between blue and green; and he finishes it before the sun shines out. R. Joshua says, before three hours had elapsed:”

but religion, rites, ceremonies, and canons, must all give way to the accomplishment of what their hearts were so much set upon:

**all the chief priests and elders of the people.**

The Syriac and Persic versions leave out the word “all”, but it is retained in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, and that very rightly. The Scribes and elders met at Caiaphas’s house before, Mt 26:57, but it being in the night, they might not be all together; Annas particularly seems to have been absent, Joh 18:24, but now they all assemble together, as in a case of necessity they were obliged to do: their rule was this <sup>693</sup>:

“the sanhedrim, consisting of seventy and one (as this was), are obliged to sit all of them as one, (or all, and everyone of them,) in their place in the temple; but at what time there is a necessity of their being gathered together, מִתְקַבְּלֵי כֻלָּם, “they are all of them assembled”; but, at other times, he who has any business may go, and do his pleasure, and return: yet so it is, that there may not be less than twenty three sitting continually all the time of their sitting; (their usual time of sitting was from the morning daily sacrifice, to the evening daily sacrifice <sup>694</sup>;) one that is under a necessity of going out; this looks upon his companions that remain, and if twenty three remain, he may go out; but if not, he may not, until the other returns.”

This being now a case of necessity, and great importance, they are all summoned and gathered together, unless we except Joseph of Arimathea and

Nicodemus; who yet might be there, though they did not consent to their counsel and deed, as is certain of the former,

Luke 23:51, these

**took counsel against Jesus;**

God’s holy child Jesus, his anointed, the Messiah; and which was taking counsel against the Lord himself; and so the prophecy in Ps 2:2, had its accomplishment: what they consulted about was

**to put him to death;**

it was not what punishment to inflict upon him, whether scourging or death; that was before determined; they had already condemned him to death: but now they enter into close consultation what death to put him to, and in what manner; whether privately, he being now in their hands; or whether by the means of zealots, or by the Roman magistrate; or whether it should be by stoning, which must have been the case, if they put him to death according to their law; and by their authority; or whether by crucifixion, which they chose as the most ignominious and painful; and therefore determined to deliver him up to the Roman governor, and use their interest with him to put him to death, according to the Roman law.

**Matthew 27:2**

**Ver. 2. And when they had bound him,**

The captain, and officers, bound him when they first took him, and brought him to Annas, and Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, Joh 18:12. Perhaps he might be unloosed whilst he was examining before the high priest, under a show of freedom to speak for himself; or they might bind him faster now, partly greater security, as he passed through the streets, and partly for his greater reproach; as also, that he might be at once taken to be a malefactor by the Roman judge;

**they led him away:**

the chief priests and elders of the people led him, at least by their servants, and they themselves attending in person, that they might awe the people from attempting a rescue of him, as they passed along; and that they might influence the Roman governor speedily to put him to death; and lest he should be prevailed upon to release him, through his own commiseration, the innocence of Jesus, and the entreaty of his friends.

**And delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor;** and so fulfilled what Christ had predicted, Mt 20:19. This they did, either because the power of judging in cases of life and death was taken away from them; or if it was not, they chose that the infamy of his death should

<sup>692</sup> Misn. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 2.

<sup>693</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 2.

<sup>694</sup> lb. c. 3. sect. 1. Bernidbar Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 177. 3.

be removed from them, and be laid upon a Gentile magistrate; and chiefly because they were desirous he should die the death of the cross. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions leave out the first name Pontius, and only call him Pilate: the Ethiopic version calls him Pilate Pontinaeus; and Theophylact suggests, that he was so called because he was of Pontus. Philo the Jew <sup>695</sup> makes mention of him:

“Pilate, says he, was epitropov thv Ioudaiav, “procurator of Judea”; who not so much in honour of Tiberius, as to grieve the people, put the golden shields within the holy city in the palace of Herod.”

And so Tacitus <sup>696</sup> calls him the procurator of Tiberius, and Josephus also <sup>697</sup>. It is said <sup>698</sup> of him, that falling into many calamities, he slew himself with his own hand, in the times of Caligula, and whilst Publicola and Nerva were consuls; which was a righteous judgment of God upon him for condemning Christ, contrary to his own conscience.

### Matthew 27:3

Ver. 3. **Then Judas, which had betrayed him,**

Before, he is described as he that shall, or should, or doth betray him; but now having perpetrated the horrid sin, as he that had done it.

**When he saw that he was condemned;**

that is, that Jesus was condemned, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, either by the Jewish sanhedrim, or by Pilate, or both; for this narrative concerning Judas may be prophetically inserted here, though the thing itself did not come to pass till afterwards; and the sense be, that when he, either being present during the whole procedure against Christ; or returning in the morning after he had received his money, and had been with his friends; finding that his master was condemned to death by the sanhedrim, who were pushing hard to take away his life; that they had delivered him bound to the Roman governor; and that he, after an examination of him, had committed him to the soldiers to mock, and scourge, and crucify him; and seeing him leading to the place of execution,

**repented himself:**

not for the sin, as committed against God and Christ;

<sup>695</sup> De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1033, 1034.

<sup>696</sup> Hist. l. 15.

<sup>697</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 2. e. 9. sect. 2.

<sup>698</sup> M. Aurel-Cassiodor. Chronicon in Caligula, Joseph. Antiq. l. 18. c. 11. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 7.

but as it brought a load of present guilt and horror upon his mind, and exposed him to everlasting punishment: it was not such a repentance by which he became wiser and better; but an excruciating, tormenting pain in his mind, by which he became worse; therefore a different word is here used than what commonly is for true repentance: it was not a godly sorrow for sin, or a sorrow for sin, as committed against God, which works repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but a worldly sorrow, which issues in death, as it did in him. It did not spring from the love of God, as evangelical repentance does, nor proceed in the fear of God, and his goodness; but was no other than a foretaste of that worm that dieth not, and of that fire which cannot be quenched: it was destitute of faith in Christ; he never did believe in him as the rest of the disciples did; see Joh 6:64, and that mourning which does not arise from looking to Jesus, or is not attended with faith in him, is never genuine. Judas's repentance was without hope of forgiveness, and was nothing else but horror and black despair, like that of Cain's, like the trembling of devils, and the anguish of damned souls. It looks as if Judas was not aware that it would issue in the death of Christ: he was pushed on by Satan, and his avarice, to hope, that he should get this money, and yet his master escape; which he imagined he might do, either through such a defence of himself, as was not to be gainsaid; or that he would find out ways and means of getting out of the hands of the Jews, as he had formerly done, and with which Judas was acquainted: but now, there being no hope of either, guilt and horror seize his mind, and gnaw his conscience; and he wishes he had never done the accursed action, which had entailed so much distress and misery upon him:

**and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders:**

which was the sum he; had covenanted for, and they had agreed to give him, on condition of delivering Jesus into their hands, which he had done: and it appears from hence, that the money had been accordingly paid him, and he had received it. But he being filled with remorse of conscience for what he had done, feels no quietness in his mind; nor could he save of what he had desired, but is obliged to return it; not from an honest principle, as in the case of true repentance, but on account of a racking and torturing conscience.

### Matthew 27:4

Ver. 4. **Saying, I have sinned,**

Here was a confession, and yet no true repentance; for he confessed, but not to the right persons; not to God, nor Christ, but to the chief priests and elders; nor over the head of the antitypical scape goat, not seeking to Christ for pardon and cleansing, nor did he confess and forsake sin, but went on adding sin to sin, and so found no mercy. The same confession was made by a like hardened wretch, Pharaoh, Ex 9:27. He proceeds and points out the evil he had committed:

**in that I have betrayed innocent blood,**

or “righteous blood”; so the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel read, and some copies; that is, have betrayed an innocent and righteous person, and been the occasion of his blood being about to be shed, and of his dying wrongfully. So God, in his all-wise providence, ordered it, that a testimony should be bore to the innocence of Christ, from the mouth of this vile wretch that betrayed him; to cut off the argument from the Jews, that one of his own disciples knew him to be a wicked man, and as such delivered him into their hands: for though Judas might not believe in him as the Messiah, and the Son of God, at least had no true faith in him, as such; yet he knew, and believed in his own conscience, that he was a good man, and a righteous and innocent one: and what he here says is a testimony of Christ’s innocence, and what his conscience obliged him to; and shows the terrors that now encompassed him about; and might have been a warning to the Jews to have stopped all further proceedings against him; but instead of that,

**they said, what is that to us? see thou to that:**

signifying, that if he had sinned, he must answer for it himself; it was no concern of theirs; nor should they form their sentiments of Christ according to his: they knew that he was a blasphemer, and deserving of death; and whatever opinion he had of him, it had no weight with them, who should proceed against him as an evildoer, let him think or say what he would to the contrary; and suggest, that he knew otherwise than what he said: so the Syriac and Persic versions render it, “thou knowest”, and the Arabic, “thou knowest better”.

**Matthew 27:5**

Ver. 5. **And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple,**

Upon the ground, in that part of the temple where they were sitting; in their council chamber, tyzgh tkvl, “the paved chamber”, where the sanhedrim used to meet

<sup>699</sup>: for it seems they would not take the money of him; and he was determined not to carry it back with him, and therefore threw it down before them, left it,

**and departed;**

from the sanhedrim: and went; out of the temple; not to God, nor to the throne of his grace, nor to his master, to ask pardon of him, but to some secret solitary place, to cherish his grief and black despair,

**and hanged himself.**

The kind and manner of his death, as recorded by Luke in Ac 1:18 is, that “falling headlong, he burst asunder the midst, and all his bowels gushed out”; which account may be reconciled with this, by supposing the rope, with which he hanged himself, to break, when falling; it may be, from a very high place, upon a stone, or stump of a tree; when his belly burst, and his guts came out: or it may be rendered, as it is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, “he was strangled”; and that either by the devil, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks; who, having been in him for the space of two or three days, caught him up into the air, and threw him down headlong; and dashing him on the ground, he burst in the midst, and his bowels gushed out, and the devil made his exit that way: or by a disease called the squinancy, or quinsy, a suffocation brought upon him by excessive grief, deep melancholy, and utter despair; when being choked by it, he fell flat upon his face, and the rim of his belly burst, and his entrails came out. This disease the Jews call arkoa, “Iscara”; and if it was what he was subject to from his infancy, his parents might call him Iscariot from hence; and might be designed in providence to be what should bring him to his wretched end: and what is said of this suffocating disorder, seems to agree very well with the death of Judas. They say <sup>700</sup>, that

“it is a disease that begins in the bowels, and ends in the throat:”

they call death by it, her מיתה, “an evil death” <sup>701</sup>; and say <sup>702</sup>, that

“there are nine hundred and three kinds of deaths in the world, but that arkoa שבכלי קשה, “the hardest of them all is Iscara”; which the Gloss calls “strangulament”, and says, is in the midst of the body:”

they also reckon it, hnwvm htym, “a violent death”

699 T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 88. 2.

700 Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol 33. 1.

701 T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 62. 9.

702 Beracot, fol. 3. 1.

<sup>703</sup>; and say <sup>704</sup>, that the spies which brought a bad report of the good land, died of it. Moreover, they affirm <sup>705</sup>, that

“whoever tastes anything before he separates (i.e. lights up the lamp on the eve of the sabbath, to distinguish the night from the day), shall die by “Iscara”, or suffocation.”

Upon which the Gloss says, this is

“measure for measure: he that satisfies his throat, or appetite, shall be choked: as it is said <sup>706</sup> he that is condemned to be strangled, either he shall be drowned in a river, or he shall die of a quinsy, this is “Iscara”.

#### **Matthew 27:6**

Ver. 6. **And the chief priests took the silver pieces,**

Off of the ground, after Judas was gone, no other daring to meddle with them; for in any other it would have been deemed sacrilege; and they being the proper persons to take care and dispose of money brought into the temple: and if not, their covetous disposition would have moved them to take up the money:

**and said, one to another, it is not lawful to put them into the treasury,**

or “Corban”; as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave the word untranslated: and which is the place where the offerings for the repair and service of the temple were put, and is the same into which Christ beheld the people casting their money, Mark 12:41. Josephus <sup>707</sup> observes, that

“there was, with the Jews, an holy treasure, which is called “Corbonas”;

and this is the לשכת הקרבן, “the chamber of the Korban”, of which the Jews make mention <sup>708</sup>: the reason the high priests give why it was not lawful to put this money into the treasury, or into any of the chests in the “Corban” chamber, was,

**because it is the price of blood.**

Thus they strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel. It is highly probable, that they took this selfsame money out of the treasury to buy this blood with, and yet scruple to put it in, having bought it: and besides, they made no

<sup>703</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 19. 2.

<sup>704</sup> T. Bab. Sota, fol. 35. 1.

<sup>705</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 105. 1.

<sup>706</sup> T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 30. 2.

<sup>707</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 3.

<sup>708</sup> Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1.

hesitation about seeking for, and shedding this innocent blood, and yet boggle at putting this money into the “Corban”, because it was the price of it; proceeding upon the same reason as the law in

De 23:18 does, pretending much religion, and great veneration for holy pieces and things, when they made no conscience of committing the most flagitious crimes.

#### **Matthew 27:7**

Ver. 7. **And they took counsel,**

With one another, considered of the matter, and deliberated about it a while; and at last came to a resolution,

**and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in:**

a field of no great value, or it could not have been bought so near Jerusalem for so small a sum as thirty pieces of silver. Grotius’s conjecture seems to be a good one, that it was a field the potter had dug up for his use, and had made the most of it; so that it was good for nothing, but for the purpose for which these men bought it, “to bury strangers in”: either such as were not of their own nation, as the Roman soldiers, many of which were among them, and who they did not suffer to be buried among them; or proselytes, or such as came from distant parts, at their three festivals, many of whom may be supposed to die at such times: now by this act of humanity in providing for the interment of strangers, they designed, and hoped to have covered their wickedness in bargaining with Judas to betray innocent blood, for this sure of money; but it was so ordered by divine providence, that this became a public and lasting memorial of their sin and infamy: for it follows,

#### **Matthew 27:8**

Ver. 8. **Wherefore that field was called,....** Not by the priests and elders, but by the common people, who knew by what money it was purchased,

**the field of blood;**

or “Aceldama”, which so signifies, as in Ac 1:19, not called the field of the priests, the purchasers; nor the field of the strangers, for whom it was bought; but the field of blood, being purchased with that money, for which innocent blood was betrayed; and this name it bore

**unto this day;**

in which Matthew wrote his Gospel, about eight years after, as is thought. Jerom <sup>709</sup> says, that in his time

<sup>709</sup> De locis Hebraicis.



this field was shown on the south side of Mount Sion.

**Matthew 27:9**

**Ver. 9. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet,**

Through the purchasing of the potter's field with the thirty pieces of silver, the price that Christ was valued at, a prophecy in the writings of the Old Testament had its accomplishment: but about this there is some difficulty. The evangelist here says it was spoken by Jeremy the prophet; whereas in his prophecy there is no mention of any such thing. There is indeed an account of his buying his uncle Hanameel's son's field, in

Jer 32:7, but not a word of a potter, or a potter's field, or of the price of it, thirty pieces of silver; and that as a price at which he, or any other person was valued; but the passage which is manifestly referred to, stands in Zec 11:12, where are these words, "and I said unto them, if ye think good, give [me] my price, and if not, forbear; so they weighed for my price thirty [pieces] of silver: and the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty [pieces] of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord": the removing of this difficulty, it might be observed, that the Syriac and Persic versions make no mention of any prophet's name, only read, "which was spoken by the prophet"; and so may as well be ascribed to Zechariah, as to Jeremy, and better: but it must be owned, that Jeremy is in all the Greek copies, in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel. Various things are said for the reconciling of this matter: some have thought that Zechariah had two names, and that besides Zechariah, he was called Jeremy; but of this there is no proof. Jerom<sup>710</sup> affirms, that in an Hebrew volume, being an apocryphal work of Jeremy, which was shown him by one of the Nazarene sect, he read these words verbatim: so that though they do not stand in the writings of Jeremy, which are canonical Scripture, yet in an apocryphal book of his, and which may as well be referred to, as the book of Maccabees, the traditions of the Jews, the prophecies of Enoch, and the writings of the Heathen poets. Moreover, Mark. Mede<sup>711</sup> has laboured, by various arguments, to prove, that the four last chapters of Zechariah were written by Jeremy, in which this passage stands; and if so, the reason is clear, for the citation in his name. But what seems best to solve this difficulty, is, that the order of the books of the Old

Testament is not the same now, as it was formerly: the sacred writings were divided, by the Jews, into three parts: the first was called the law, which contains the five books of Moses; the second, the prophets, which contains the former and the latter prophets; the former prophets began at Joshua, and the latter at Jeremy; the third was called Cetubim, or the Hagiographa, the holy writings, which began with the book of Psalms: now, as this whole third and last part is called the Psalms, Luke 24:44, because it began with that book; so all that part which contained the latter prophets, for the same reason, beginning at Jeremy, might be called by his name; hence a passage, standing in the prophecy of Zechariah, who was one of the latter prophets, might be justly cited, under the name of Jeremy. That such was the order of the books of the Old Testament, is evident from the following passage<sup>712</sup>

"it is a tradition of our Rabbins, that the order of the prophets is, Joshua and Judges, Samuel and the Kings, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve."

Moreover, it is usual with them to say<sup>713</sup>, that the spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah; and it is very plain, that the latter prophets have many things from the former; and so might Zechariah have this originally from Jeremy, which now stands in his prophecy: all this would be satisfactory to a Jew: and it is to be observed, that the Jew<sup>714</sup>, who objects to everything he could in the evangelist, with any appearance on his side, and even objects to the application of this prophecy; yet finds no fault with him for putting Jeremy for Zechariah. That the prophecy in Zechariah belongs to the Messiah, and was fulfilled in Jesus, manifestly appears from the context, for as well as the text itself. The person spoken of is in Zec 11:4, called to "feed the flock of slaughter", which being in a very poor condition, Zec 11:5, the state of the Jews, at the time of Christ's coming, is hereby very aptly represented: he agrees to do it, Zec 11:7, and accordingly furnishes himself for it; but he is despised, abhorred, and rejected by the shepherds, the principal men in church and state; because he severely inveighed against their doctrines and practices, Zec 11:8, upon which he rejects them, and dissolves both their civil and church

<sup>712</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. Vid. Praefat. R. David Kimchici in Jer.

<sup>713</sup> Sepher Hagilgulim apud Surenhus. Biblos Katallages, p. 41.

<sup>714</sup> R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 25. p. 412.

<sup>710</sup> In loc.

<sup>711</sup> Mede's Works, p. 963, 1022, 1023.

state; which can suit with no other times than the times of Jesus, Zec 11:9, and lest it should be thought that he used them with too much severity, he gives one single instance of their ingratitude to him, which shows how little they esteemed him; and that is, their valuing him at no greater a price than “thirty pieces of silver”, Zec 11:12, which were afterwards “cast unto the potter”. The Jews <sup>715</sup> themselves own, that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, though they interpret it of him in another manner.

“Says R. Chanun, the Israelites will have no need of the doctrine of the king Messiah in the time to come; as it is said, Isa 11:10, “to him shall the Gentiles seek”, and not the Israelites: if so, for what does the king Messiah come? and what does he come to do? to gather the captives of Israel, and to give them the thirty precepts, as it is said, Zec 11:12, “and I said unto them, if ye think good”, &c. Rab says, these are the thirty mighty men; and Jochanan says, these are the thirty commands.”

Should it be objected, that supposing the Messiah is intended, the money is said to be given into his hands, and not into the hands of him that was to betray him; “if ye think good, give [me] my price”,

Zec 11:12: it may be replied, that the words yrkv wbh, should not be rendered, “give me my price”, but “give my price”; i.e. give what you think fit to value me at, into the hands of the betrayer; and accordingly they did: “so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver”, Zec 11:12; which is the very sum the chief priests agreed with Judas for, and which he received; see Mt 26:15, and if it should be objected to the citation of the evangelist, that it is considerably different from the word of the prophet, it being in the latter, “I took the thirty pieces of silver”; whereas in the former, the words are quoted thus,

**saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value:**

it may be observed, that the word which Matthew uses may be rendered, “I took”, as it is in the Syriac version; and that the thirty pieces of silver were the goodly price, at which the Messiah was valued by the children of Israel, is manifest enough; and is an instance of egregious ingratitude, that this should be the price of the “innocent one”, as the Arabic Version renders the phrase, “of him that was valued”; of the “honoured one”, as the Ethiopic;

of the “most precious one”, as the Syriac; he who in his person, and the perfections of his nature, is equal to his father, and his fellow; who has all the riches of grace and glory in him, as mediator; who is superior to angels, and fairer than the sons of men in human nature: is the chiefest among ten thousands, and more precious than rubies; and all the things that can be desired are not to be compared with him, and yet sold for a sum of money, the price of a slave, Ex 21:32, and that by the children of Israel, to whom the Messiah was promised; who expected him, and desired his coming; and who sprung from among them, and was sent unto them, and yet they received him not, but undervalued him in this exceeding mean way. Wicked men have no value for Christ; they sell him and themselves for nought; but gracious souls cannot value him enough, nor sufficiently express their esteem of him.

#### **Matthew 27:10**

Ver. 10. **And gave them for the potter’s field,**

In the prophet it is, “and I cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord”,

Zec 11:13; whereas here it is, “they gave them”; but the word Matthew uses may be rendered, “I gave”, as it is by the Syriac; and as the last words require it should, “as the Lord commanded me”; otherwise there will be no coherence between them: and whereas the thirty pieces of silver are, in the prophet, said to be cast, or given “to the potter”, and here, “for the potter’s field”, there is no contradiction: the plain sense is, that they were given to the potter, as a valuable consideration for his field: and whereas it is added, “in the house of the Lord”, which the evangelist does not cite the reason is, because this money was first cast down in the temple by Judas, and after being taken up by the priests, they covenanted with the potter for his field, and paid him for it with this money in the sanctuary. The evangelist, instead of this last clause, puts,

**as the Lord commanded me;**

which have made some think, that there should be a different reading; and that instead of בית, “the house”, it should be read כורה, “according to the commandment”: but there is no need to suppose this: the evangelist is justified in the use of this phrase, by what is said in the prophet in the beginning of Zec 11:13, “and the Lord said unto me”: and this is only a transposition and explanation, according to a rule the Jews have, whvrdw arqmh oro, “invert, or transpose the Scripture, and

715 Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3, 4.

explain it”<sup>716</sup>. Should it be said that the Messiah, and not the betrayer, nor the priests, is said to cast this money to the potter, or give it for the potter’s field; it may be replied, that Jesus may be said to do that which Judas, and the chief priests did; because, by his almighty power and providence, he overruled those things for good, which in themselves were evil. Judas thought to have converted the money to his own use, and the priests would have been glad to have taken it again to themselves; but Christ obliged Judas to carry back the money to the priests, and cast it into the temple, and worked upon the minds of the priests, not to put it into the treasury, but to buy the potter’s field with it, whereby the prophecy, in its literal sense, was fully accomplished.

### Matthew 27:11

Ver. 11. **And Jesus stood before the governor,**

Pilate who sat; for so was the custom for the judge to sit, and those that were judged, to stand, especially whilst witness was bore against them<sup>717</sup>.

”Says R. Bo, in the name of Rab Hona, the witnesses ought to stand whilst they bear witness. Says R. Jeremiah, in the name of R. Abhu, also וְהַנִּדְוֵנִי וְהַמֵּדֵד, הַנִּדְוֵנִי רִכְבָּנִי לַהֲיִיּוֹת וְהַמֵּדֵד, “those that are judged ought to stand”, whilst they receive their witness.”

And again<sup>718</sup>,

”how do they judge? the judges sit, וְהַנִּדְוֵנִי וְהַמֵּדֵד, and “they that are judged stand”.

’Think what a sight was here, the eternal Son of God in human nature, the Lord of life and glory, the Prince of the kings of the earth, standing before an Heathen governor! he before whom Pilate must stand, and even all men, small and great, another day; all must appear, and stand before the judgment seat of Christ; he himself stands at the bar of men! the reason of this was, because he stood in the legal place, and stead of his people: he became their substitute from everlasting, was made under the law in time, and was subject to its precept, and its penalty: and though he had no crimes of his own to answer for, he had the sins of his people on him; on account of which he stood before the governor, to receive the sentence of condemnation on himself; that so sin being condemned in his flesh, the whole righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them: he stood here, that

they might stand before God, and at the throne of his grace with boldness and intrepidity; a new, and living way to it being opened for them, through his blood and sacrifice; and that they might stand before him, the judge of all the earth, with confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming.

**And the governor asked him, saying, art thou the king of the Jews?**

for the Jews had suggested to Pilate, that Jesus had given out that he was Christ a king; and he being Caesar’s procurator, it became him strictly to inquire into this matter, lest there should be any encroachment made on his master’s dignity, authority, and dominions, and he himself should suffer blame; wherefore, he does not ask Jesus, whether he said he was the king of the Jews, or others said so of him, but whether he was their king: he knew he was not in fact; but his question was, whether he was so in right; or if he thought he was, what claim he made, and what he did to support it:

**and Jesus said unto him; thou sayest;**

which is all one as if he had said, “I am”; see Mt 26:25, compared with Mark 14:62, and that this was the sense of his answer is clear from Joh 18:36, though, at the same time, he let him know that his kingdom was not of this world; that he was not a temporal king, nor did he lay any claim to any earthly dominions; and therefore neither he, nor his master Caesar, had anything to fear from him: he was only a king in a spiritual sense, over the Israel of God; such as received him, as the Messiah, and believed in his name.

### Matthew 27:12

Ver. 12. **And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders,**

As that he was a perverter of the people, a stirrer of sedition, discord, and rebellion among them; that he taught them not to give tribute to Caesar, and set up himself for a king; all which he had done not in one place only, but throughout all the land of Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem; see Luke 23:2, he answered nothing; the things laid to his charge being notoriously false, and known to be so by all the people; and the evidence with which they were supported being so slender, the judge could never receive it; he therefore judged it unnecessary, and not worth a while to return an answer to them: besides, he knew they were bent upon his death, and that, should he set aside these charges, as he easily could, they would invent new ones, and so increase their sin, and their condemnation: but the chief reason of all, of his silence,

<sup>716</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 119. 2. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 27. fol. 167. 4.

<sup>717</sup> T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 43. 2, 3.

<sup>718</sup> Ib. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2.

was, he had the sins of his people to answer for, and the time of his dying for them was now come, and for which he was ready; and therefore would say nothing to remove these false charges, and retard his death. Matthew 27:13 Ver. 13. Then saith Pilate unto him,.... Observing he made no reply to the accusations of the chief priests and elders, and in order to draw something out of him, hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? art thou deaf? or dost thou not take in what is alleged against thee? dost thou not consider the nature of these charges? how many, and of what kind the depositions are now made by persons of such rank and figure? art thou under no concern to make answer to them?

#### Matthew 27:14

Ver. 14. **And he answered him to never a word,**

He made no reply to anyone thing which Pilate suggested to him, though it seems to have been in a kind and friendly way, and with a view to his good:

**insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly;**

that a man, who at other times had such fluency of speech, and readiness of expression, who both for matter and words, and also weight and authority, spake as never man did: and who had so often silenced the Scribes and Pharisees, men of the greatest learning among the Jews, of which Pilate, doubtless, had knowledge, should say nothing in his own defence; and especially when the charges brought against him were of a capital nature, and touched his life, and yet were so easy to be refuted, and proved to be false ones: and what might increase his wonder, was, that he should take no notice of them, nor return an answer to them, considering by whom they were brought; not by the common people, but by the sanhedrim of the nation, and that before him the Roman governor, who had power to crucify or release him: and above all, he marvelled at the patience of Jesus, that he could hear such notorious falsities, and which so affected his character, and his life, and say nothing to them; and at the fortitude of his mind, at his being so regardless of his life, and fearless of death.

#### Matthew 27:15

Ver. 15. **Now at [that] feast,**

The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “at every feast”: which looks as if the authors of these versions thought the sense was, that the following custom was used at each feast in the year, at the feasts of pentecost, and tabernacles, and passover; whereas it was only at the feast of the passover; and which is meant by the feast here, as is clear from Joh 18:39. It was but once

a year that this was done; at every returning passover; and so the Persic version renders it, “every year on the day of the feast”; that is, of the passover, and which was frequently called by way of emphasis, gx, “the feast”:

**the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.**

It was not a law, but a custom; it was not enjoined by the law of Moses; for they that sinned against that; died without mercy: nor is it agreeable to strict justice, that there should be such a release of criminals; nor was it a Jewish custom, as an emblem of their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage. I have not met with the least trace of any such custom of theirs at the time of the pass over in any of their writings; but it seems to be a Roman one: and from all the accounts of the evangelist, it appears to be peculiar to the Roman governor, who, either by the order of Caesar, or of himself, introduced such a custom to get the favour of the people; for it was to them the release was made, and the person, whom they pleased; and this being repeated annually for some time, was expected by them, and at last became necessary.

#### Matthew 27:16

Ver. 16. **And they had then a notable prisoner,**

The Vulgate Latin reads, “he had”; that is, Pilate, who had committed him to prison, and under whose power he was: for the Jews had lost all authority of this kind, at least in capital cases. This prisoner is called a “notable” one; that is, a famous, or rather an infamous one: he was a thief, and a robber, and had been guilty of sedition; had made, or joined with others in an insurrection, and had committed murder in it; and so, on more accounts than one, was deserving of death: nor could it be otherwise expected by himself, or others, but that he should die: his name was called Barabbas; that is, as the Syriac version reads it, aba rb, which signifies “the son of a father”: a father’s child that was spoiled and ruined, and a child of his father the devil. This was a name common among the Jews. Frequent mention is made of R. Abba <sup>719</sup>, and Bar Abba is the son of Abba: hence we read of Abba Bar Abba <sup>720</sup>, and of R. Samuel Bar Abba <sup>721</sup> and of R. Simeon Bar Abba <sup>722</sup>, and of R. Chijah Bar Abba <sup>723</sup>. In Munster’s Hebrew Gospel it

<sup>719</sup> Juchasin, fol. 70. 1, &c.

<sup>720</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2. & Hieros Pesachim, fol. 32. 1. & Juchasin, fol. 104. 1.

<sup>721</sup> T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 32. 1.

<sup>1568</sup> T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 53. 3. Juchasin, fol. 105. 1.

<sup>723</sup> T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 3. Juchasin, fol. 91. 2.

is read *hbrb*, “Bar Rabbah, the son of a master”; and so Jerom says, that in the Gospel according to the Hebrews it is interpreted, “the son of their master”; but the former is the right name, and the true sense of the word. The Ethiopic version adds, “the prince”, or “chief of robbers, and all knew him”; and the Arabic, instead of a “prisoner”, reads, a “thief”, as he was.

**Matthew 27:17**

Ver. 17. **Therefore when they were gathered together,**

Meaning not the chief priests and elders; for these were together before, but the common people; and so the Persic version renders the words, when the people increased into a multitude: for it was to them the release of a prisoner was to be made, and so the proposal of one; and it was at their option, who should be the person; for it was “whom they would”, as in Mt 27:15, and where the Ethiopic version adds, “and should choose”. Pilate said unto them, whom will ye that I should release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ? He puts it to them, whom they would choose to have released, Barabbas, the thief and robber, the seditious person and murderer, or Jesus, whom some called the Christ, the Messiah, the king of the Jews. Pilate on purpose proposed such an infamous person along with him, not doubting but they would have preferred him, whatever were their prejudices against him, before such a scandalous person as Barabbas; and whatever good will they might secretly have to put Jesus to death, and release Barabbas, yet he thought they could not, for shame, speak out their sense, and desire him, and not Jesus. His view was not to reproach Christ, by joining him with so wicked a man, but in order to save him.

**Matthew 27:18**

Ver. 18. **For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.**

He saw in their countenances, and by their charges against him, and by the whole of their conduct, that it was not out of any regard to Caesar, or to the peace and tranquillity of the civil government, or to strict justice; but from envy, at his popularity, at his fame and credit, the honour, glory, and applause he had among the people, on account of his doctrine, and miracles, that they had delivered him up into his hands; and therefore Pilate might the rather hope to succeed in this scheme of his to release him, by proposing him with so notorious a person to the populace, when the one, as he might reasonably judge, was abhorred by them, and the other

had got great credit and esteem among a large number of them. The Persic version here adds the people’s answer; “they answered, release Barabbas, but deliver Jesus to us”.

**Matthew 27:19**

Ver. 19. **When he was set down on the judgment seat,**

That is, when Pilate the governor, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, was set down upon the bench, and while he was sitting there, and trying of Jesus:

**his wife sent unto him:**

her name, according to the Ethiopians, was Abrokla<sup>724</sup>; who might be a Jewess, as the wife of Felix was, Ac 24:24, and a favourer of Jesus, or, at least, a religious person; and if, only a mere Heathen, yet had some notion of justice being to be done; and however, pressed by her dream, sent a messenger to her husband, as he was trying this cause:

**saying, have thou nothing to do with that just man;**

meaning Jesus, whom she either knew to be so, or concluded from her dream that he was one: and her sense is, that her husband would have no hand in his condemnation and death, but rather do all he could to release and save him. She might know that he had gone some lengths already against him; that he had the night before granted a band of soldiers to the chief priests to apprehend him; and knew he rose early that morning, at the request of the same, to try him; and he was now before him, and she might be apprehensive that he was forward to condemn him to death, and therefore sends this cautionary message; alleging this for a reason,

**for I have suffered many things this day, in a dream, because of him.**

The Arabic and Persic versions read, “this night”. Pilate might rise that morning before she was awake, and had an opportunity of telling her dream; or she might dream it after he was gone; in which she was sadly distressed about Jesus, and might have some hints given her of the miserable consequences of his death, not only to the Jewish nation, but to her husband and family; which gave her great uneasiness and disquietude. Some have thought, that this dream was from the devil, willing to hinder the death of Christ, and so man’s redemption and salvation by it; but had he had any such intention, the most effectual method would have been to have persuaded the chief priests and elders off of it, and in attempting it; whereas, on the contrary, they were

<sup>724</sup> Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 541.

instigated by him to it: and whatever natural causes there might be of this dream, as the chief priests coming over night to desire a band of soldiers to take Jesus, and the discourse they might have with Pilate about him; which things might run in her mind in her sleep; yet, doubtless, this was of God, and with a design that a testimony should be bore to the innocency of Christ every way; as by Judas that betrayed him, by Pilate his judge, and by his wife.

**Matthew 27:20**

Ver. 20. **But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude,**

Among whom the choice lay who should be released. This they did not by haranguing them, or making a public oration to them; but by sending their servants, or proper persons among them, telling them that Jesus had been examined before the sanhedrim that morning, and was found to be a blasphemer; and that the whole court had unanimously condemned him to death, and therefore it became them to act according to their decree: and besides, should this man be set free, they might suggest to them, since he has given out that he is the king Messiah, the Romans hearing of it, will be jealous of such a person, and come and take away both our place and nation, or deprive us of the privileges we have remaining: with such sort of arguments as these, it may be supposed they worked upon the common people. The Persic version reads, "commanded", instead of "persuaded",

**that they should ask Barabbas**

to be released to them,

**and destroy Jesus;**

for nothing short of that would satisfy them: they thirsted after his blood, and were bent upon his death: to release Barabbas, if Jesus was not destroyed, would not answer their end: they desired Barabbas's liberty for no other reason, but for the sake of the destruction of Jesus.

**Matthew 27:21**

Ver. 21. **The governor answered and said unto them,**

A second time, after some time had been allowed and taken up to consider of the matter, and which the chief priests and elders improved among the people against Jesus. Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? for as these two were proposed, one of them must be released; and it lay in the breast of the people to choose which they would: they said, Barabbas; so that Christ was not only numbered among, and reckoned with transgressors, but he was accounted worse than the worst of them; a seditious person, a robber, and a

murderer was preferred before him: see Ac 3:14.

**Matthew 27:22**

Ver. 22. **Pilate saith unto them,**

As one astonished at their choice: he could not have thought they would have asked the life of so vile a wretch, that had been guilty of such capital crimes, crimes to be abhorred by all men: what shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? Surely you would not have me put him to death, and that for no other reason but this, because he is called either by himself or others, Christ, or the Messiah, or the king of the Jews! they all say unto him, let him be crucified; which was a Roman punishment, inflicted on the meanest and worst of men; as wicked servants, thieves, robbers, and cut-throats <sup>725</sup>; and so was not only a torturing and painful death, but a very shameful and ignominious one; yea, an accursed one: in this they all agreed, being instigated to it by the chief priests and elders.

**Matthew 27:23**

Ver. 23. **And the governor said, why, what evil hath he done?**

What reason can be given, why he should be crucified? what sin has he committed, that deserves such a death? From whence it is clear, that of all the things they had accused him, they had not, in Pilate's account, given proof of one single action, that was criminal, nor had he done any: he came into the world without sin, he did none in it; he knew no sin, nor could any be found in him, by Satan, nor his accusers, nor his judge:

**but they cried out the more, saying, let him be crucified:**

the more they saw Pilate inclined to favour him, and pleaded for him, and attested his innocence; the more clamorous, outrageous, and urgent they were to have him crucified.

**Matthew 27:24**

Ver. 24. **When Pilate saw he could prevail nothing,**

That it was to no purpose to talk to them, and in favour of Jesus; he saw they were determined upon his crucifixion, and that nothing else would satisfy them:

**but that rather a tumult was made;**

there was an uproar among the people, and he might fear the consequences of it, should he not grant their request; otherwise, as Philo the <sup>726</sup> Jew says of him, he was, שתכלמא שראינא ת אחמ אכ שהפמאכא נסש נהת,

<sup>725</sup> Lipsius de Cruce, l. 1. c. 12, 13.

<sup>726</sup> De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1034.

“naturally inflexible, rigid, and self-willed”: but he knew the temper of these people, and had had experience of their resoluteness, when they were determined on any thing; as in the case of his introducing the golden shields into the holy city, of which the same author speaks: and was then obliged, though sore against his will, as now, to yield unto them:

He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude;

either in conformity to a custom among the Jews, whereby they testified their innocence as to the commission of murder; see De 21:6, or to a Gentile one, used when murder was committed, for the lustration or expiation of it <sup>727</sup>:

**saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person;**

though this did not clear him from all guilt in this matter: he ought to have acted the part of an upright judge, and not have yielded to the unrighteous requests of the people; he ought not to have scourged an innocent man, and much less have condemned and delivered him to be crucified, as he did; though in this he bore a testimony to the innocence of Christ, and which is somewhat remarkable in him; who was, as Philo says <sup>728</sup>, notoriously guilty of receiving bribes, of injuries, rapine, and frequent murders of persons uncondemned:

**see ye [to it];**

you must be answerable for this action, and all the consequences of it. The Syriac version renders it, “you have known”; and the Persic version, “you know”: and the Arabic version, “you know better”; See Gill on “Mt 27:4”.

#### **Matthew 27:25**

Ver. 25. **Then answered all the people,**

They were as unanimous in their imprecations upon themselves, as in desiring the crucifixion of Christ:

**and said, his blood be on us, and on our children;** not for the cleansing of them from sin, which virtue that blood has, but if there were any stain, blot, or pollution, through the shedding of it, they wished it might be on them and theirs: not for the forgiveness of sins, which that blood was shed for; but on the contrary, if there was any sin and guilt in it, they desired it might be imputed to them: nor for their justification before God, and security from wrath to come, both which are by his blood; but all the reverse of this, that if there were any

<sup>727</sup> Vid. Ovid. Fast. l. 2. Anticlidis Redit. l. 74. Triclinius in Ajac. Sophocl. 3. 1. {

<sup>728</sup> Ubi supra. (De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1034.)

punishment, and condemnation, and death, due for the shedding of it, they imprecated it all upon themselves, and their posterity: so this phrase is used in Jos 2:19, and in other places, and in the Talmud <sup>729</sup>: and it is a notion of the Jews, that the guilt of innocent blood, and the blood of that innocent man’s children, lie not only upon the persons immediately concerned, but upon their children to the end of the world: and so the judges used to address the witnesses upon a trial, after this manner <sup>730</sup>;

”know ye, that capital causes, are not as pecuniary ones: in pecuniary causes, a man gives his money, and it atones for him; but in capital causes, *wb רגל תלויני רגל ורגל רגל* “his blood, and the blood of his seed, hang upon him”, to the end of the whole world: for lo! of Cain it is said, “the voice of the blood of thy brother cryeth”, &c. his blood, and the blood of his seed.”

And this imprecation of theirs, has been notoriously verified in them; for though this blood was shed for many of them, and Christ prayed for the forgiveness of them, and they had the Gospel, and the doctrine of remission of sins first preached among them, which was made the power of God unto salvation to some of them, even of those who were concerned in the crucifixion of Christ; yet, on the generality of them, his blood was in the sense they wished it; and for the shedding of it, wrath came upon them to the uttermost, in the entire destruction of their nation, city, and temple, and very remarkable it is, that great numbers of them were put to death by crucifixion; and very likely some of those very persons, that were so clamorous for the crucifying of Christ; and if not, at least their children; five hundred of the Jews and more, were sometimes crucified in a day, whilst Titus was besieging the city; till at length there wanted “room for crosses”, *kai stauroi toiv swmasi* “and crosses for bodies”, as Josephus {u} says, who was an eyewitness of it: and to this day, this dreadful wish of the blood of Christ upon them, is to be seen in their miserable, abject, and captive state; and will be, until such time that they look to him whom they have pierced, and mourn.

#### **Matthew 27:26**

Ver. 26. **Then released he Barabbas unto them,**

The seditious person, robber, and murderer, for which crimes he was in prison. This man was an emblem of the

<sup>729</sup> T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 110. 1. Yoma, fol. 2l. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 12. 2.

<sup>730</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 12. sect. 3. {u} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 12.

persons for whom Christ suffered, both in his character and in his release: in his character; for they are such as have rebelled against God, robbed him of his glory, and destroyed themselves; many of them are notorious sinners, the chief of sinners, and all of them by nature, children of wrath, as others; and as the descendants of Adam, under the sentence of condemnation and death; and yet in Christ, they are children of Abba, Father; being of God predestinated by him, to the adoption of children: and in his release; for when Christ was apprehended, they were let go; when he was bound they were loosed; when he was condemned, they were released, and acquitted; and when the sword of justice was awaked against him, the hand of grace and mercy was turned upon them.

**And when he had scourged Jesus;**

which was done some time before his examination, trial, and condemnation were over, though mentioned here, as appears from Joh 19:1, and was done by Pilate, in order to move the pity and compassion of the Jews; hoping they would have been satisfied with it, and not have resisted upon his death: and he indeed moved it to them, that he might chastise him and let him go, Luke 23:22, but nothing would do but crucifixion. Whether the previous scourging sufficed, or whether he was not scourged again upon his condemnation, is not certain: if he was scourged twice, John may be thought to relate the one, and Matthew the other; for certain it is, that it was usual with the Romans to scourge either with rods or whips, just before crucifixion<sup>731</sup>: our Lord was scourged with whips, as the word here used shows. Persons of birth and blood, and freemen of Rome, were beaten with rods; but such as were servants, which form Christ had taken, were scourged with whips; to which, sometimes were fastened, the hip bones of beasts<sup>732</sup>; so that this kind of whipping, was very severe and cruel. The Jews themselves own this scourging of Jesus, only they ascribe it to the elders of Jerusalem, and relate it thus<sup>733</sup>:

”the elders of Jerusalem took Jesus, and brought him to the city, and bound him to a marble pillar in the city, ויכוהו בשוטים, “and smote him with whips”, or “whipped him”; and said unto him, where are all thy miracles which thou hast done?”

Hereby the prophecy in Isa 1:6, and our Lord’s prediction in Mt 20:19, had their accomplishment. This scourging of Christ, was an emblem of the scourges and

strokes of divine justice, which he endured in his soul, as the surety of his people; being smitten of God by the sword of justice, as he stood in their place and stead, and stricken for their transgressions; and may furnish out several instructions: as that it is no wonder, if any of the followers of Christ have, do, or shall, meet with such like treatment from men; and that it becomes them to bear patiently the scourges of their heavenly Father, since these are in love; and that they need not fear being trodden down, or carried away by the overflowing scourge of God’s wrath, since Christ has endured this in their room. This being done,

**he delivered him to be crucified;**

either into the hands of the Jews, to their will and at their request; or into the hands of his soldiers, to execute the sentence he passed upon him; which was done in a judicial way, and according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

**Matthew 27:27**

**Ver. 27. Then the soldiers of the governor,**

Those that were about him, his attendants and guards, took Jesus into the common hall; the “praetorium”, or judgment hall, as it is sometimes called; the governor’s palace, into which the Jews would not enter, lest they should defile themselves: Pilate therefore came out to them, and went into the pavement called Gabbatha, and sat upon a judgment seat there; see Joh 18:28, where he passed sentence on Christ; which being done, the soldiers took him into the hall of judgment; which being both magnificent and large, was fit for the scene they intended to act there. Munster’s Hebrew Gospel reads it, they took him “in the house of judgment”; and the Ethiopic version renders it, “out of the court of judicature”; both wrong. And gathered unto him whole band [of soldiers]; the same that Judas had with him to take him, consisting of five hundred, and some say more: these their fellow soldiers, to whom Jesus was committed, got together to him, or “against him”, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, make themselves sport and diversion with him. Think in what hands and company our dear Lord now was: now was he encompassed with dogs, and enclosed with the assembly of the wicked indeed; see Ps 22:16. The Persic version renders it, “multitudes of knaves being gathered together to him”.

**Matthew 27:28**

**Ver. 28. And they stripped him,**

Of his clothes; at least of his upper garment: for one

<sup>731</sup> Lipsius de Cruce l. 2. c. 2.

<sup>732</sup> Ib. c. 3.

<sup>733</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 17.



man to spit upon another, as these soldiers afterwards did on Christ, or to strip him of his garment, according to the Jewish canons, were punishable with a fine of four hundred pence <sup>734</sup>, which amounted to twelve pounds and ten shillings of our money; but the soldiers were in no danger of being prosecuted, for stripping Christ. This is one part of the low estate Christ submitted to: his clothes on his back seem to be all he had in this world, and of these he is stripped: and put on him a scarlet robe, or “a red coat”, as the Persic version renders it; very likely an old coat of one of their officers. The Evangelists Mark and John say it was “purple”, Mark 15:17, and so the Arabic version renders it here: whether there were two garments put upon him, the one a purple vest, and the other a scarlet robe over it; or whether scarlet was used instead of purple, is not certain; which was a colour wore by kings, and a sign of imperial dignity <sup>735</sup>; and therefore put upon Christ by way of mockery, upbraiding him with the character he bore, as king of the Jews. This was an emblem of his being clothed, as it were with our sins, which are as scarlet, and of his bloody sufferings in the human nature.

**Matthew 27:29**

Ver. 29. **And when they had platted a crown of thorns,**

What sort of thorn this crown was made of, whether of the bramble, or of the white thorn, is not very material <sup>736</sup>: the word used in the Syriac version, is rendered by interpreters, “white thorns”, and which were common in Judea: these, be they what they will, they made into the form of a crown,

**and they put it upon his head;**

both to reproach him as a king, and to torture him as a man: however, it had its significance, and was an emblem of men, comparable to thorns; either of wicked men, and of his being encompassed with them at this time; or of good men, chosen out from among them, redeemed by him, and accounted as a royal diadem with him <sup>737</sup>: or it might represent the sins of his people, which, like thorns, pierced him, and like a crown of them surrounded him every side; or else the many troubles he was exercised with, and through which he did, as his members do, enter the kingdom: and especially, his being made a curse for us, thorns and briars being the curse which was inflicted on the earth, for the sin of man: in this Christ

was the antitype of the ram, caught by his horns among the thickets, which “Abraham” sacrificed in the room of his son. This may teach us many useful lessons: we may see what a curse sin brought upon man, and upon the earth for man’s sake; and even upon the Messiah, in the stead of men: we may observe the difference between us and Christ: we are a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in his hand; we are crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies, and have a crown of righteousness, life, and glory, laid up for us, and he was crowned with thorns; as also the difference between Christ in his state of humiliation wearing such a crown, and his state of exaltation, in which he is crowned with glory and honour. The Jews acknowledge this circumstance of the sufferings of Jesus, though they ascribe it to the elders of Jerusalem; who, they say <sup>738</sup>,

”took thorns and made a crown of them, and put it upon his head.”

Which are the very words of the evangelist:

**and a reed in his right hand,**

or “cane”; and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel uses the word, קנה, “a cane”, such as men walk with; and this may be confirmed from the barbarous use they afterwards made of it, by smiting him on the head with it: a “reed” indeed may fitly express the weakness of his kingdom in the eye of the world: but any cane or common staff, or stick, put into his hands in the room of a sceptre, would also signify the meanness of his kingdom, which was not of this world, and came not with observation: they meant to reproach him with it, but they will find one time or another, that he, has another sceptre, even a sceptre of righteousness, a staff of strength, a rod of iron, with which he will rule and break in pieces, all the wicked of the earth. However, we may learn from hence, Christ does not disdain to hold a reed in his hand: nor will he break the bruised reed, or discourage, or crush the weakest believer.

**And they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews:**

being thus clad in a scarlet, or purple robe, or both; and having a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed instead of a sceptre in his hand, they carry on the mockery still further, and bend the knee to him, as to a prince just come to his throne, and salute as such; and in a mock way, wish him long life and prosperity: thus deriding him in his kingly office, as all such do, who call him Lord, Lord, but disregard his commands.

<sup>734</sup> Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6.

<sup>735</sup> Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 28.

<sup>1582</sup> Vid. Bartholin. de Spinea Corona, sect. 1. 2.

<sup>737</sup> Vid. Paschal. de Coronis, l. 10. c. 12. p. 701, 702.

<sup>738</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

**Matthew 27:30**

Ver. 30. **And they spit upon him,**

The Syriac and Persic versions add, "upon his face", which he did not hide from spitting; see Isa 1:6, and so what with sweat, by being hurried from place to place, and with blood trickling down from his temples, scratched with thorns, and with the spittle of these filthy soldiers, his visage was more marred than any man's, and his form than the sons of men, Isa 52:14.

**And took the reed,**

or "cane", which was put into his right hand, and smote him on the head; whereby they drove the sharp points of the thorns into it, which must give him inexpressible pain and torture.

**Matthew 27:31**

Ver. 31. **And after that they had mocked him,**

Gone through the whole farce, and glutted themselves with derision of him, and with sport and diversion with him,

**they took the robe off from him;**

it belonging to one of their company, and put his own raiment on him; partly that he might be known to be the selfsame person that was condemned and committed to them, which they now brought forth to crucify; and partly, that the four soldiers that were appointed to be the executioners, might have the perquisite of his clothes, which belonged unto them:

**and led him away to crucify him;**

for a condemned person was always executed the same day: their canon is <sup>739</sup>,

"after that his judgment, or sentence is finished, they do not tarry with him, but slay him, בְּיוֹמוֹ, "that very day".

And their custom was this;

"he whose sentence for death is finished, they bring him out from the house of judgment; and one stands at the door of it, and linen clothes in his hand, and a horse at some distance from him; and a crier goes out before him, "saying", such an one is going to be executed with such a death, because he has committed such a sin, in such a place, at such a time, such and such being witnesses; whoever knows him to be innocent, let him come, and speak in his favour: if one says, I have something to say in his favour: this waves with the linen clothes, and the other rides upon

<sup>739</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 12. sect. 4. Misn.

Sanhed. c. 6. sect. 1.

the horse, and runs and brings back him that is judged, to the sanhedrim; and if he is found innocent, they dismiss him: but if not, he returns, and goes to execution <sup>740</sup>."

The Jews pretend <sup>741</sup>, that a crier went out before Jesus of Nazareth, forty days before his execution, and made such a proclamation, but found none that had any thing to say in his favour, and therefore hanged him on the evening of the passover. But this is false; Christ had no such length of time, or his friends any liberty granted them to speak for him. They led him out of the common hall, through Jerusalem, and through one of the gates of it, without the city, in order to crucify him, to which he was condemned, when that prophecy was fulfilled in Isa 53:7. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth": as he made no opposition or struggle, but quietly went along with them, where they led him; so he took every thing patiently from them, uttered not one complaint, or any murmuring and repining word, or any thing by way of reviling; but became meekly subject to them, and submitted himself to him that judgeth righteously.

**Matthew 27:32**

Ver. 32. **And as they came out,**

Of the city; for no execution was made, neither in the court of judicature, nor in the city, but at some distance; as it was at stoning, so at crucifixion <sup>742</sup>:

"when judgment was finished, they brought him out to be stoned; the place of stoning was without the sanhedrim, as it is said, Le 24:14, "bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp".

Upon which the gloss and Gemara say <sup>743</sup>, without the three camps; which were these, the court which was the camp of the Shekinah; or the divine presence; and the mountain of the house, the camp of the Levites; and the city, the camp of Israel; so that he that was executed, was had without the city. Maimonides <sup>744</sup> says,

"the place in which the sanhedrim executed, was without it, and at a distance from it, as it is said, Le 24:14, and it appears to me, that it was about six miles distant; for so far it was between

<sup>740</sup> Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 1.

<sup>741</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

<sup>742</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 1.

<sup>743</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 42. 2.

<sup>744</sup> Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 12. sect. 3.

the sanhedrim of Moses our master, which was before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the camp of Israel.

”So Jesus went without the camp, and suffered without the gate, as the antitype of the red heifer; see Nu 19:3, compared with Heb 13:11, and the notes there.

**They found a man of Cyrene:**

a place in Libya, and one of the five cities called Pentapolis: which were these, Berenice, Arsinoe, Ptolemais, Apollonia, and Cyrene <sup>745</sup>; Kir in Am 1:5 is rendered by the Targum, ynryq, “Cyrene”, as it is also by the Vulgate Latin. There were many Jews dwelt here, as appears from Ac 2:10, as this man was a Jew, as his name shows; and besides, there was a synagogue of the Cyrenian Jews at Jerusalem, Ac 6:9, so that though he was a native of Cyrene, he might now dwell there, and some of these were converted to the faith of Christ; for of those that were scattered abroad at the death of Stephen, some were men of Cyrene, Ac 11:19. And it is very likely, that this man was a favourer of Christ, which might be one reason why they laid hold on him, and obliged him to bear the cross of Christ; since he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, who were men of note among the first Christians:

**Simon by name;**

of which name was one of the apostles, and a common name among the Jews, and signifies hearkening and obedient: and none are fit to bear, or will bear the cross of Christ, but such who hearken to his voice, and are obedient to him, being made willing in the day of his power:

**him they compelled to bear his cross;**

which they did, not out of good will to Christ, but fearing lest through his faintness and weakness, he should, die before he got to the place of execution, and they be disappointed of their end, the crucifixion of him; or because they were in haste to have him executed, and he was not able to go so fast as they desired; for when they, first came out, the cross was laid upon Christ, and he bore it, as John relates; but he being weak and ready to faint under it, and not able to go the pace they would have him, and meeting with this man, they press him to bear it after him: which he might be unwilling to do, partly because it was scandalous and ignominious; and partly, because if a favourer of Jesus, he did not choose to be any ways accessory to his death: but he was obliged to it; and it may be observed from hence, that taking up the

cross and following Christ, is disagreeable to flesh and blood: though the spirit may be willing, the flesh recoils; none care for it, or choose to bear it, unless constrained to it.

**Matthew 27:33**

Ver. 33. **And when they were come to a place called Golgotha,**

The true pronunciation is “Golgotha”, and so it is read in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel. It is a Syriac word, in which language letters are often left out: in the Syriac version of this place, the first “l” is left out, and the latter retained, and it is read “Gogoltha”: and so, in the Persic, “Gagulta”; and in the Arabic, “Gagalut”. The Ethiopic version reads it, “Golgotha”; and so, Dr. Lightfoot observes, it is read by the Samaritan interpreter of the first chapter of Numbers:

**that is to say, a place of a skull:**

some say Adam’s skull was found here, and from thence the place had its name; this is an ancient tradition, but without foundation <sup>746</sup>: it seems to be so called, because it was the place where malefactors were executed, and afterwards buried; whose bones and skulls in process of time might be dug up, and some of them might lie scattered about in this place: for, one that was executed as a malefactor <sup>747</sup>,

”they did not bury him in the sepulchres of his ancestors; but there were two places of burial appointed by the sanhedrim; one for those that were stoned, and for those that were burnt; and another for those that were killed with the sword, and for those that were strangled; and when their flesh was consumed, they gathered the bones, and buried them in their place;”

i.e. in the sepulchres of their ancestors. This place was as infamous as our Tyburn, and to be crucified at “Golgotha”, was as ignominious as to be hanged at Tyburn; which shows what shame and disgrace our Lord was brought, and what he condescended to bear on our account.

**Matthew 27:34**

Ver. 34. **They gave him vinegar to drink,**

It was a custom with the Jews <sup>748</sup> when

“a man went out to be executed, to give him to drink a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine,

<sup>746</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4. 5.

<sup>747</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sauhedrin, c. 13. sect. 2, 3.

<sup>748</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 12. 2.

<sup>745</sup> Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 5.

that his understanding might be disturbed, as it is said, Pr 31:6. "Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts"; and the tradition is, that the honourable women in Jerusalem gave this freely; but if they did not, it was provided at the charge of the congregation."

"The design of it was to cheer their spirits, and intoxicate their heads, that they might not be sensible of their pain and misery. But such a cup was not allowed Christ at the public expense, nor were the honourable women so compassionate to him; or if it was sent him, the soldiers did not give it him, but another potion in the room of it; indeed Mark says, they gave him "wine mingled with myrrh", Mark 15:23; which was either a cordial provided by his friends, and given him, and is different from what the soldiers gave him here; or the sense is, that they gave him the cup, that was so called, but not the thing; but instead of it,

**vinegar mingled with gall.**

The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, instead of "vinegar", read "wine"; and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and so it is read in Beza's most ancient copy, and in another exemplar, and in one of Stephens's; and which may be easily reconciled with the common reading, and that with Mark; for the wine they gave him was flat and sour, and no other or better than vinegar; and real vinegar may be so called, as this seems to be; and the rather, because vinegar was a part of the Roman soldiers' allowance, and so they had it ready at hand; See Gill on "Joh 19:29". As also, because it was thought that vinegar was useful to prolong the life of a man ready to die; and therefore they might choose to give it to Christ, that he might live the longer in misery: so the Jews <sup>749</sup> write, that

"if a man swallows a wasp or hornet alive, he cannot live; but they must give him to drink a quarter, רהלא שמגז, "of vinegar of Shamgaz", (which the gloss says is strong vinegar,) and it is possible he may live a little while, until he hath given orders to his house."

The Arabic version, instead of "gall", reads "myrrh"; nor are we to suppose that this drink was mixed with the gall of a beast itself, but with something that was as bitter as "gall"; as wormwood, or myrrh, or any other bitter, to make it distasteful. This potion of vinegar with gall, was an aggravating circumstance in our Lord's sufferings, being given to him when he had a violent thirst upon

<sup>749</sup> Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2.

him; and was an emblem of the bitter cup of God's wrath, he had already tasted of in the garden, and was about to drink up: the Jews had a notion of vinegar's being expressive of the chastisements of the Messiah; the words in Ru 2:14, they say <sup>750</sup>,

"speak of the king Messiah; "come thou hither", draw nigh to the kingdom; "and eat of the bread", this is the bread of the kingdom, "and dip thy morsel in the vinegar"; אלו הייורי, "these are the chastisements", as it is said in Isa 53:5, "he was wounded for our transgressions".

"By this offer was fulfilled the prophecy in Ps 69:21, and which he did not altogether refuse; for it follows,

**and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink:**

not because it was the vinegar of Gentiles, which was forbidden by the Jewish canons <sup>751</sup>, lest it should have been offered to idols; but because he would make use of no means either to prolong his life, or discompose his mind; and that it might appear he knew what he did, and that he was not afraid nor unwilling to die; though he thought fit to taste of it in a superficial way, to show he did not despise nor resent their offer; and that he was really athirst, and ready to drink a more disagreeable potion than that.

**Matthew 27:35**

Ver. 35. **And they crucified him,**

That is, the soldiers: they laid the cross upon the ground, and stretched Christ upon it; they extended his two arms as far as they could, to the transverse part of it, and nailed his hands unto it: his two feet they fixed by each other on a basis, in the body of the cross, through which they also drove nails; and then raising it up, fixed it in the earth, and left him hanging on it till he expired. This death was not only painful and cruel, but exceedingly shameful and ignominious: it was what was inflicted on the meanest of persons, as servants, whose form Christ had taken; and upon the worst of men, as murderers, cut-throats, thieves, and the vilest of men <sup>752</sup> among whom Christ was now numbered:

**and parted his garments, casting lots:**

for they stripped him of his clothes before they fixed him to the cross, and crucified him naked, as was the custom of the Romans <sup>753</sup>; as it was of the Jews to stone

<sup>750</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 29. 2.

<sup>751</sup> T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 29. 2.

<sup>752</sup> Lipsius de Cruce, l. 1. c. 12. & 13

<sup>753</sup> Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 7.

and hang persons naked: their canons run thus <sup>754</sup>;

”when he is four cubits off of the place of stoning, they strip off his garments; a man they cover before, a woman both behind and before; the words of Judah: but the wise men say, a man is stoned naked, and a woman is not stoned naked: a man, they hang him with his face to the people; a woman, with her face to the tree. R. Eliezer, and the wise men say, a man is hanged, but a woman is not hanged.

“On which the Gemara <sup>755</sup> says,

“what is the sense of the Rabbins? the Scripture says, “thou shalt hang him”; him, and not her: and, says R. Eliezer, him, בלא כותו, “without his clothes”.

So our Lord was crucified; his clothes were a perquisite of the soldiers; there were four of them, as we learn from Joh 19:23, and they parted them into four parts, and then cast lots whose each part should be; or rather, they divided his garments into four parts, and each took his part; but his vesture, or coat, being seamless, and woven from top to bottom, they did not choose to tear it into pieces, but cast lots for it, who should have it:

**that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,** by David, in Ps 22:18,

**they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.**

All this, Beza says, is not in any of the ancient copies; nor is it in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, but stands in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel; See Gill on “Joh 19:24”.

#### Matthew 27:36

Ver. 36. **And sitting down, they watched him there.**

That is, the soldiers, after they had crucified Jesus, and parted his garments, sat down on the ground at the foot of the cross, and there watched him, lest his disciples should take him down; though there was no need to fear that, since they were few, and weak, and wanted courage, and were in the utmost dread and consternation themselves; or lest the people, who were very changeable with respect to Christ, one day saying Hosanna to the son of David, and another day crucify him, crucify him, should once more change their sentiments of him, and through pity to him rise and take him down; or rather, lest Jesus himself should, by his miraculous power, unloose

himself, come down, and make his escape. It was usual with the Romans to set a soldier, or soldiers, to watch those that were crucified, not only before they expired, but after they were dead, lest they should be took down and buried; as appears from Petronius, Plutarch, and others <sup>756</sup>. This seems to be the watch Pilate refers to, Mt 27:65, and over which there was a centurion, Mt 27:54.

#### Matthew 27:37

Ver. 37. **And set up over his head his accusation written,**

The Evangelist John calls it a “title”, Joh 19:19, and Luke, a “superscription”, Luke 23:38, and Mark, the “superscription of his accusation”, Mark 15:26: it was what contained the sum and substance of what he was accused, and for which he was condemned, and suffered. The Syriac and Persic versions here render it, “the cause of his death”. It was written by Pilate in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, that all might read it; and by his orders it was put upon the cross, and over the head of Jesus by the soldiers. This title, or inscription, setting forth the person’s crime, used to be carried before him, or put upon him, as he was led to execution <sup>757</sup>: but here it was set upon the cross, and perhaps nailed unto it; to which the apostle seems to allude in Col 2:14, the substance of it was,

#### **this is Jesus the king of the Jews.**

This was what the chief priests accused him of to Pilate, and about which he questioned him, and for which they desired he might be crucified; urging, that should he let him go, he could not be Caesar’s friend. Hence Pilate wrote his accusation in this form, not so much in derision of Jesus; for by conversation with him he understood what sort of a king he was, as to the reproach of the Jews for crucifying him who was their king; being the person that was prophesied of in their books, as king of Zion, and whom they expected as such, though now they denied and rejected him.

#### Matthew 27:38

Ver. 38. **Then were there two thieves crucified with him,**

Which seems contrary to one of their canons, which runs thus; אין דיני שנימביומ אחד, “they do not judge two in one day” <sup>758</sup>, unless they were both in the same crime, and

<sup>756</sup> Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 2. c. 16. & Lydium. de re militari, l. 5. c. 4. p. 191. Kirchman. de funeribus Rom. append. c. 9. p. 726.

<sup>757</sup> Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 11.

<sup>758</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 35. 1. & 46. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 190. 1.

<sup>754</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 3, 4.

<sup>755</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 46. 1.

died the same death: but here were three persons, Jesus, and these two malefactors, condemned and executed in one, and the same day: these two thieves were led out with Jesus, to be put to death with him, according to Luke 23:32, and were crucified with him upon the same spot of ground; their death was the same, but not their crime:

**one the right hand, and another on the left;**

and Jesus in the midst, as John relates, Joh 19:18, and hereby was fulfilled, as Mark observes, Mark 15:28, a prophecy in Isa 53:12. If this was so ordered by Pilate, it might be done in order to cover the sin, and take off the reproach of putting an innocent person to death, suggesting hereby he was one of them; though this seems rather to be done by the Jews, the soldiers agreeing to it, for the greater reproach of Jesus; intimating, that he was the worst of these malefactors, and a ringleader of such sort of persons: and whereas they had observed, he took it ill at their hands that they should come to apprehend him with swords and staves, as if he was a thief and a robber; to vex and distress him the more, they crucify him between two such persons: but the grand reason why it was so ordered, was, that though Christ was no transgressor, he was accounted one, and stood in the room and stead of sinners, and was numbered with them, and as such was treated by divine justice, and accordingly died for them.

**Matthew 27:39**

**Ver. 39. And they that passed by,**

In the road to or from Jerusalem; for, it seems, the crosses were placed by the wayside; or they who passed by the cross, the populace that came from Jerusalem, on purpose to see the sight, reviled him, or “blasphemed him”: they spoke all manner of evil of him, they could think of, to which he answered not a word; and which may teach us patience under the revilings of men: this was foretold of him, Ps 89:51, “they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed”, or “Messiah”; and which Jarchi explains by ypw, “the ends of the king Messiah”; his last times, towards the close of his days; and cites that passage in the Misna <sup>759</sup>,

“in the heels, or, as Buxtorf renders it, in the end of the days of the Messiah impudence shall be multiplied,”

as it now was exceedingly: wagging their heads; in derision of him, and as exulting in his misery; see Isa

37:22. This also was prophesied of him in Ps 22:7.

**Matthew 27:40**

**Ver. 40. And saying, thou that destroyest the temple,**

The Vulgate Latin, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, read, “the temple of God”; and add “ah!” here, as in Mark 15:29, and so Beza says it is read in a certain copy. They refer to the charge of the false witnesses against him, who misrepresenting his words in Joh 2:19, declared that he gave out that he was able to destroy the temple of Jerusalem, and rebuild it in three days time; wherefore it is added,

**and buildest it in three days, save thyself.**

They reproach him with it, and suggest, that these were vain and empty boasts of his; for if he was able to do any thing of that kind, he need not hang upon the tree, but could easily save himself:

**if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.**

The Jews themselves say <sup>760</sup> that the following words were said to Jesus on the cross,

”if thou be the Son of God, why dost thou not deliver thyself out of our hands?”

”As Satan before them, they put an “if” upon the sonship of Christ: and seeing his followers believed in him as the Son of God, and he had owned himself to be so before the sanhedrim, they require a sign of it by his power, and to do that which they believed no mere man in his situation could do; which shows, that they had no other notion of the Son of God, but that he was a divine person: but his sonship was not to be declared by his coming down from the cross, which he could have easily effected, but by a much greater instance of power, even by his resurrection from the dead; and no other but that sign was to be given to that wicked and perverse generation.

**Matthew 27:41**

**Ver. 41. Likewise also the chief priests,**

Who as they attended at his apprehension, and in their own council condemned him to death unanimously, and were very busy at his arraignment, examination, and trial before Pilate, and persuaded the people to be urgent for his crucifixion; they follow him to the cross to exult over him, and insult him, and to see that the execution was strictly performed: and forgetting their character, office, and education; and

759 Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

760 Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

laying aside all humanity, decent, and good manners; instead of rebuking and restraining the populace from using him in an ill and unkind manner, they themselves stood

**mocking him, with the Scribes and elders;**

who composed the whole sanhedrim of the nation. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and several copies, read, "and the Pharisees": of which, no doubt, there were great numbers present, who had been indefatigable and implacable enemies of Christ every where, and to whom it must be a pleasing sight to see him hanging on the cross: these scoffed at him, gibed, and reproached him; and

**said,**

as follows;

**Matthew 27:42**

Ver. 42. **He saved others, himself he cannot save,**

This was not so much a concession of theirs, that he had done many saving works, as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, causing the blind to see, and the lame to walk, and raising the dead; but rather a suggestion, that these were only pretensions and illusions; that either they were not really done, or done by the help of the devil; since now he himself was in the utmost extremity, he could not save himself: but of this they might have been convinced by his striking many of them to the ground, that came to apprehend him in the garden, and of which these men were eyewitnesses; and he, as man, could easily have obtained of his Father more than twelve legions of angels that would have rescued him out of their hands: but so it must not be; he came not to save himself, but others, and to save them spiritually and eternally by dying himself.

**If he be the king of Israel;**

that is, the Messiah, who was promised and expected as a king, as Zion's king, or king of Israel; see Joh 1:49, hence in Mark 15:32 it is Christ the king of Israel.

**Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.**

The Persic version reads, "that the people may see, and believe in him"; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "that we may see, and believe in him", as in Mark 15:32. But, alas! they had seen greater things already than this, and yet had not believed. He could easily have caused the nails to have given way, and unloosed himself, and come down, who had done such mighty works among them; and if he had, there is no reason to conclude they would have believed him to be the Son of God, and the

true Messiah; for though after this, he did a much greater work, raised himself from the dead, of which they had the fullest evidence, yet they remained unbelieving.

**Matthew 27:43**

Ver. 43. **He trusted in God,**

That is, he pretended to claim an interest in him, to be high in his favour and esteem, and to have great faith and confidence in him:

**let him deliver him now;**

directly, from the cross, and the death of it: if he will have him; or if he is well pleased with him as his own Son, or delights in him as such, and will show him any favour and good will; see Ps 22:8, where are these very words, and which are predicted should be said by these men to Christ; and are a wonderful confirmation of the truth of that Psalm and prophecy belonging to him:

**for he said, I am the Son of God;**

not only in his ministry, but he had said so in their grand council, before them all.

**Matthew 27:44**

Ver. 44. **The thieves also,**

One or other of them, not both; an Hebrew way of speaking, as Drusius <sup>761</sup> observed: so it is said of Jonah, Jon 1:5, that he was "gone down into the sides of the ship"; not into both sides, but into one or other of them: so here the thieves, one or other of them, not naming which, railed at Jesus, for it was but one of them; see Luke 23:39, unless it can be thought, as it is by some, that they both at first reviled him; but one being quickly convinced of his evil, ceased, and rebuked his fellow sufferer, confessed his sin, bore a testimony to the innocence of Christ, and desired to be remembered by him in his kingdom. This was an aggravation of the sufferings of Christ, that he should be vilified by those,

**which were crucified with him;**

who ought to have been, considering the condemnation they were in, and the future state they were just entering into, lamenting and confessing the sins they had been guilty of, instead of adding sin to sin, and so aggravating their condemnation. These, at least one of them,

**cast the same into his teeth;**

as the populace, the chief priests, Scribes, elders, and Pharisees had done; twitted him with his pretensions of being the Son of God, the Messiah, and king of Israel; and urged, that if he was, why did not he save himself, and them also?

<sup>761</sup> Quaest. Heb. l. 1. qu. 5.

**Matthew 27:45**

Ver. 45. **Now from the sixth hour,**

Which was twelve o'clock at noon,

**there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour;**

till three o'clock in the afternoon, the time the Jews call "between the two evenings"; and which they say <sup>762</sup> is "from the sixth hour, and onwards". Luke says, the sun was darkened, Luke 23:45. This darkness was a preternatural eclipse of the sun; for it was at the time when the moon was in the full, as appears from its being at the time of the passover; which was on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, the Jews beginning their months from the new moon: and moreover, it was over all the land, or earth, as the word may be rendered; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "the whole world was dark"; at least it reached to the whole Roman empire, or the greatest part of it; though some think only the land of Judea, or Palestine, is intended: but it is evident, that it is taken notice of, and recorded by Heathen historians and chronologers, as by Phlegon, and others, referred to by Eusebius <sup>763</sup>. The Roman archives are appealed unto for the truth of it by Tertullian {e}; and it is asserted by Suidas, that Dionysius the Areopagite, then an Heathen, saw it in Egypt; and said,

"either the, divine being suffers, or suffers with him that suffers, or the frame of the world is dissolving."

Add to this the continuance of it, that it lasted three hours; whereas a natural eclipse of the sun is but of a short duration; see Am 8:9. The Jews <sup>764</sup> have a notion, that in the times of the Messiah

"the sun shall be darkened, amwy twglpb, "in the middle of the day", (as this was,) as that day was darkened when the sanctuary was destroyed."

Yea, they speak <sup>765</sup> of a darkness that shall continue a long time: their words are these:

"the king Messiah shall be made known in all the world, and all the kings shall be stirred up to join together to make war with him; and many of the profligate Jews shall be turned to them, and shall go with them, to make war against the king Messiah; so יְהוֹשֵׁב כָּל לְמֵאָה "all the world shall be

darkened" fifteen days, and many of the people of Israel shall die in that darkness."

This darkness that was over the earth at the time of Christ's sufferings, was, no doubt, an addition to them; the sun, as it were, hiding its face, and refusing to afford its comforting light and heat to him; and yet might be in detestation of the heinousness of the sin the Jews were committing, and as expressive of the divine anger and resentment; for God's purposes and decrees, and the end he had in view, did not excuse, nor extenuate their wickedness; as it shows also their wretched stupidity, not to be awakened and convinced by the amazing darkness, with other things attending it, which made no impression on them; though it did on the Roman centurion, who concluded Christ must be the Son of God. It was an emblem of the judicial blindness and darkness of the Jewish nation; and signified, that now was the hour and power of darkness, or the time for the prince of darkness, with his principalities and powers, to exert himself; and was a representation of that darkness that was now on the soul of Christ, expressed in the following verse; as well as of the eclipse of him, the sun of righteousness, of the glory of his person, both by his incarnation, and by his sufferings.

**Matthew 27:46**

Ver. 46. **And about the ninth hour,**

Or three o'clock in the afternoon, which was about the time of the slaying and offering of the daily sacrifice, which was an eminent type of Christ. The Jews say <sup>766</sup>, that

"every day the daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered up at nine and a half:

"about which time also the passover was killed, which was another type of Christ; and as they say <sup>767</sup>, "was offered first, and then the daily sacrifice." Though the account they elsewhere <sup>768</sup> give of these things, is this;

"the daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered up at nine and a half; (that is, on all the common days of the year;) on the evenings of the passover, it was slain at seven and a half, and offered at eight and a half, whether on a common day, or on a sabbath day: the pass-over eve, that happened to be on the sabbath

762 T. Hieros Pesachim, fol. 31. 3.

763 In Chronicis. {e} Apolog. c. 21.

764 Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 1.

765 Ib. fol. 3, 4.

766 T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 31. 3, 4.

767 lb.

768 Misn. Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 1.



eve, it was slain at six and a half, and offered at seven and a half, and the passover after it.”

At this time,

**Jesus cried with a loud voice:**

as in great distress, having been silent during the three hours darkness, and patiently bearing all his soul sufferings, under a sense of divine wrath, and the hidings of his Father’s countenance, and his conflicts with the powers of darkness; but now, in the anguish of his soul, he breaks out,

**saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani:**

which words are partly Hebrew, and partly Chaldee; the three first are Hebrew, and the last Chaldee, substituted in the room of “Azabthani”; as it was, and still is, in the Chaldee paraphrase of the text in Ps 22:1, from whence they are taken;

**that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**

He calls him his God, not as he was God, but as he was man; who, as such, was chosen by him to the grace of union to the Son of God; was made and formed by him; was anointed by him with the oil of gladness; was supported and upheld by him in the day of salvation; was raised by him from the dead, and highly exalted by him at his own right hand; and Christ, as man, prayed to him as his God, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him as such: and though now he hid his face from him, yet he expressed strong faith and confidence of his interest in him. When he is said to be “forsaken” of God; the meaning is not, that the hypostatical union was dissolved, which was not even by death itself; the fulness of the Godhead still dwelt bodily in him: nor was he separated from the love of God; he had the same interest in his Father’s heart and favour, both as his Son, and as mediator, as ever: nor was the principle and habit of joy and comfort lost in his soul, as man, but he was now without a sense of the gracious presence of God, and was filled, as the surety of his people, with a sense of divine wrath, which their iniquities he now bore, deserved, and which was necessary for him to endure, in order to make full satisfaction for them; for one part of the punishment of sin is loss of the divine presence. Wherefore he made not this expostulation out of ignorance: he knew the reason of it, and that it was not out of personal disrespect to him, or for any sin of his own; or because he was not a righteous, but a wicked man, as the Jew <sup>769</sup> blasphemously objects to him from hence; but because

he stood in the legal place, and stead of sinners: nor was it out of impatience, that he so expressed himself; for he was entirely resigned to the will of God, and content to drink the whole of the bitter cup: nor out of despair; for he at the same time strongly claims and asserts his interest in God, and repeats it; but to show, that he bore all the griefs of his people, and this among the rest, divine desertion; and to set forth the bitterness of his sorrows, that not only the sun in the firmament hid its face from him, and he was forsaken by his friends and disciples, but even left by his God; and also to express the strength of his faith at such a time. The whole of it evinces the truth of Christ’s human nature, that he was in all things made like unto his brethren; that he had an human soul, and endured sorrows and sufferings in it, of which this of desertion was not the least: the heinousness of sin may be learnt from hence, which not only drove the angels out of heaven, and Adam out of the garden, and separates, with respect to communion, between God and his children; but even caused him to hide his face from his own Son, whilst he was bearing, and suffering for, the sins of his people. The condescending grace of Christ is here to be seen, that he, who was the word, that was with God from everlasting, and his only begotten Son that lay in his bosom, that he should descend from heaven by the assumption of human nature, and be for a while forsaken by God, to bring us near unto him: nor should it be wondered at, that this is sometimes the case of the saints, who should, in imitation of Christ, trust in the Lord at such seasons, and stay themselves on their God, and which may be some support unto them, they may be assured of the sympathy of Christ, who having been in this same condition, cannot but have a fellow feeling with them. The Jews themselves own <sup>770</sup>, that these words were said by Jesus when he was in their hands. They indeed apply the passage to Esther; and say <sup>771</sup>, that

“she stood in the innermost court of the king’s house; and when she came to the house of the images, the Shekinah departed from her, and she said, “Eli, Eli, lama Azabthani?” my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Though others apply the “Psalm” to David, and others to the people of Israel in captivity <sup>772</sup>: but certain it is, that it belongs to the Messiah; and many things

1616 Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

771 Bab. Megilia, fol. 15. 2. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 29. 1.

772 Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in Psal. xxii. 1.

769 Vet. Nizzachon, p. 162.

in it were fulfilled with respect to Jesus, most clearly show him to be the Messiah, and the person pointed at: the first words of it were spoken by him, as the Jews themselves allow, and the very expressions which his enemies used concerning him while suffering, together with their gestures, are there recorded; and the parting his garments, and casting lots on his vesture, done by the Roman soldiers, are there prophesied of; and indeed there are so many things in it which agree with him, and cannot with any other, that leave it without all doubt that he is the subject of it <sup>773</sup>.

Matthew 27:47

Ver.47. **Some of them that stood there**

Near the cross, looking on, and mocking at him, when they heard that; the words, "Eli, Eli", spoken by Christ, **said, this man calleth for Elias.**

These could not be the Roman soldiers that said so, who had no notion of Elias; rather the Hellenistic Jews, who not so well understanding the Hebrew language, hearing the above words, and having some notion of the prophet Elias, fancied he was calling for him; though it seems most likely to be the Jews, who either through the nearness of the sound of the words, and mistake of them, and not near enough to hear and distinguish them, really thought he called for that prophet; or rather wilfully mistook him, with an intent to banter and ridicule him.

Matthew 27:48

Ver. 48. **And straightway one of them ran and took a sponge**

Which was not far from the cross, where a vessel full of vinegar was set, ( John 19:29 ) ,

**and filled it with vinegar;**

dipping it into it, it sucked it up. Some of these sponges had leathern handles to them. <sup>774</sup>

And put it on a reed; a stalk of hyssop; (See Gill on John 19:29),

**and gave him to drink;**

not to revive his spirits, or hasten his death, as some have thought, but in contempt of him, and to mock him, he having signified that he was athirst.

Matthew 27:49

Ver. 49. **The rest said, let be**

The others, to whom he belonged, that fetched the

<sup>773</sup> See my Book of the Prophecies of the Old Test. &c. p. 158.

<sup>774</sup> Misn. Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 3.

sponge, said to him, let him alone, keep at a distance from him, give him nothing to drink:

**let us see whether Elias will come to save him;**

whom the Jews looked upon to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and therefore suggest, that should he come to save him, they would believe he was the Messiah; and they had a mighty notion of Elias appearing to persons frequently <sup>775</sup>, and talking, and conversing with them; (See Gill on Matthew 17:3), though they did not believe he would come, and appear to Christ; for they were persons of great note for piety and learning, to whom he appeared, as they pretend, whereas they had no such opinion of him. The Ethiopic version here adds, and one took a spear and pierced his side with it, and blood and water flowed out: but this circumstance is only recorded by the Evangelist John, ( John 19:34 ) , though Beza says the same is read here in two ancient copies.

Matthew 27:50

Ver. 50. **Jesus, when he had cried again**

"A second time", as the Persic version; for he had cried once before, and expressed the words he did, as in ( Matthew 27:46 ) , what he now delivered were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit", ( Luke 23:46 ) , and "it is finished", ( John 19:30 ) , which he said

**with a loud voice;**

which showed the vehemency of his affection, his strong confidence in God, and his being fearless of death; as also he thus spoke, that he might be heard, and his words attended to, since they contained things of the greatest importance and consequence: moreover, being able to express himself in such a manner, this declared him to be more than a mere man; for after such agonies in the garden, and so much fatigue in being hurried from place to place, and such loss of blood by being buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the accursed tree, where, being stretched, he had hung for some hours; to speak with so loud a voice was more than human, and was a conviction to the centurion, that he was a divine person: for when he saw that he so cried out, and "gave up the ghost", he said, "truly this man was the Son of God", ( Mark 15:39 ) , and likewise it shows, that he died freely and voluntarily, and not through force and necessity: it was not all that men had done, or could do to him, that could have forced his life from him: he died willingly, and when nature was in its full strength; and which is signified in the next phrase,

<sup>775</sup> Vid. Juchasin, fol. 79. 1. & 86. 1. & 101. 1. & 118. 2. & 132. 1.

**yielded up the ghost,**

or “dismissed the Spirit”, as the Syriac version truly renders it; he sent it away. It was not taken from him, he laid down his life of himself, as the Lord of it, and gave himself freely to be an offering and sacrifice in the room of his people; which is a proof of his great love, and amazing grace unto them.

**Matthew 27:51**

Ver. 51. **And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain**

Just at the time that Christ spake with so loud a voice, and expired, and which was at the time of the offering up of the evening incense; and so must be seen by the priest that was then offering, and those that assisted him, for the incense altar was near the vail; and which must be a very astonishing sight unto them: the vail was of a very great thickness; it was made of fine twined linen, ( Exodus 26:31 ) , and it is a rule with the Jews <sup>776</sup>, that

“where ever mention is made in the law of fine linen, or fine twined linen, it means a thread six times doubled:”

and whereas this was made of blue, and purple, and scarlet, Jarchi’s note on the place is, that

“every kind was doubled with each thread of six threads.”

His sense is more clearly expressed in his note on ( Exodus 26:1 ) ,

lo! here are four sorts to every thread; one of linen, and three of wool, and every thread is six times doubled; behold four sorts when they are twisted together, make twenty four doubles to a thread.”

Yea, some of them make it to be forty eight doubles <sup>777</sup>. What a thick piece of tapestry must this be! and this makes the rending of it the more amazing; for no doubt but that the vail of the second temple was made after the manner of the first; and this was rent

**from top to bottom;**

and which was no less than forty cubits in length, which was the height of the holy of holies in the second temple; and which made the rent the more astonishing. The account the Jews give of the vail, is this <sup>778</sup>:

<sup>776</sup> Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 14. Kimchi in Shepher Shorash rad. ( שורש ) .

<sup>777</sup> T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 51.

<sup>778</sup> Misn. Shekalim, c. 8. sect. 5. Shernot Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 144. 2. Bernidbar Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 183. 2.

“R. Simeon ben Gamaliel said, on account of R. Simeon, the son of the Sagan, the thickness of the vail is an hand’s breadth, and it is woven of seventy two threads, and every thread has twenty four threads in it: it is forty cubits long, and twenty broad, and is made of eighty two myriads; (which is either the number of the threads in it, or the sum of the golden pence it cost. Some copies read, is made by eighty two virgins <sup>779</sup>;) two are made every year; and three hundred priests wash it.”

The Syriac version renders it, “the face of the gate of the temple”; by which may be meant, perhaps, the vail of the gate of Ulam, or of the porch <sup>780</sup>. The Jews have a tradition <sup>781</sup> that

“forty years before the destruction of the temple, the gates of it opened of themselves. R. Jochanan ben Zaccai reprov’d them, saying, O temple! temple! wherefore dost thou fright thyself? I know thy end is to be destroyed; for so prophesied of thee Zechariah, the son of, Iddo, “open thy gates, O Lebanon” ( Zechariah 11:1 ) .”

But whether this may be referred to in the above version, or has any reference to the evangelic history, I will not say. Other writers, as Josephus <sup>782</sup>, and Egesippus <sup>783</sup>, speak of the eastern gate of the city, which was of brass, and as much as twenty men could shut, opening of its own accord, before the destruction of the temple; which perhaps the Jewish tradition rather regards. This rending of the vail was done, as some think, in token of mourning for, and testifying abhorrence at the crucifixion of Christ; the temple rending its garments, the vail, at the death of its Lord, proprietor, and type, as the high priest did his at supposed blasphemy; or to show that the Lord, who had taken up his residence in the most holy place between the cherubim, over the mercy seat, in thick darkness, was now about to remove, and leave the house desolate; or it signified the rending of Christ’s flesh, the breaking of his body for us, which was typified by the vail; see ( Hebrews 10:20 ) , and may also denote both the fulfilment and abrogation of the ceremonial law, which had its end in the death of Christ; and likewise the more clear discoveries

<sup>779</sup> Vid. Bartenora & Yom. Tob. in ib.

<sup>780</sup> Vid. Bartenora in ib.

<sup>781</sup> T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 2. Jarchi & Kimchi in Zech. xi. i. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2.

<sup>782</sup> L. 8. c. 12.

<sup>783</sup> L. 5. c. 44.

of the mysteries of grace under the Gospel, in which they are laid to open view, and are beheld with open face: to which may be added, that this pointed out, that the way to the holiest of all, to heaven, of which this was a figure, was now made manifest; and was plain and accessible, as it was, first to Christ, who entered by his own blood, as the forerunner; and also to his people, who likewise have boldness to enter by the same.

**And the earth did quake:**

whether this earthquake reached only to the spot of ground where Christ was crucified, and on which the city and temple of Jerusalem stood; or whether it extended to other parts of the earth; since, in the reign of Tiberius Caesar, as Pliny <sup>784</sup> relates, there was an earthquake, in which twelve cities in Asia fell, is not certain. However, it was an indication of the divine anger and resentment, and in detestation of the sin of crucifying Christ; see ( Psalms 18:7 ) , and was an emblem of the shaking and removing of the Jewish church state and ordinances, ( Hebrews 12:26 Hebrews 12:27 ) .

**And the rocks rent;**

which were near Mount Calvary, and about Jerusalem; and, as we are told, the clefts are to be seen to this day, and which appear to be supernatural. This was also a token of divine wrath and fury, ( Nahum 1:5 Nahum 1:6 ) , and a rebuke of the stupidity and hardness of the Jews, who were unmoved when rocks were rent asunder, being harder than they; and an emblem of the future conversion of many through the powerful ministry of the word, and in consequence of Christ's death; when hearts, as hard as rocks, were broke in pieces, stony hearts taken away, and hearts of flesh given; of which the three thousand being pricked to the heart under Peter's sermon, were an instance.

**Matthew 27:52**

**Ver. 52. And the graves were opened**

Which were near the city of Jerusalem: this was a proof of Christ's power over death and the grave, by dying; when he through death, destroyed him that had the power of it, and abolished death itself; and became the plague of death and the destruction of the grave, taking into his hands the keys of hell and death:

**and many bodies of saints which slept, arose:**

not that they arose at the time of Christ's death: the graves were opened then, when the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent; but the bodies of the saints did not arise, till after Christ was risen, as appears from

the following verse; but because the other event now happened, they are both recorded here: these were saints, and such as slept in Jesus; and of whom he is the first fruits that now rose; and not all, but many of them, as pledges of the future resurrection, and for the confirmation of Christ's, and the accomplishment of a prophecy in ( Isaiah 26:19 ) . And they rose in the same bodies in which they before lived, otherwise they could not be called their bodies, or known by those to whom they appeared: but who they were is not to be known; some have thought them to be the ancient patriarchs, as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob In the Septuagint on ( Job 42:17 ) , Job is said to be one of them, and a tradition is there recorded, which runs thus:

“it is written, that he rose with whom the Lord rose.”

But it should seem rather, that they were some later saints, such as Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, John the Baptist himself, good old Simeon, Joseph the husband of Mary, and others, well known to persons now alive. Some think they were such, as had been martyrs in the cause of religion; and so the Persic version renders the words, “and the bodies of many saints who suffered martyrdom, rose out of the graves”.

**Matthew 27:53**

**Ver. 53. And came out of the graves after his resurrection**

The resurrection of Christ; for he rose as the first fruits, as the first begotten of the dead, and the firstborn from the dead; for he was the first that was raised to an immortal life; for though others were raised before him, by himself, and in the times of the prophets, yet to a mortal life; but these saints came forth to the resurrection of life, and therefore it was necessary that Christ the first fruits, should rise first. The Arabic version indeed reads, “after their own resurrection”; and the Ethiopic version, “after they were raised”; both wrong, and scarcely sense:

**and went into the holy city;**

the city of Jerusalem, which though now a very wicked city, was so called, because of the temple, and the worship of God, and his residence in it: the burying places of the Jews were without the city <sup>785</sup>, and therefore these risen saints, are said to go into it:

**and appeared unto many;**

of their friends and acquaintance, who had

<sup>784</sup> L. 2. c. 84.

<sup>785</sup> F1 Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 80. 2. & Maimon. Hilch. Shemitta veyobel, c. 13. sect. 3.

personally known them, and conversed with them in their lifetime. These saints, I apprehend, continued on earth until our Lord's ascension, and then joining the retinue of angels, went triumphantly with him to heaven, as trophies of his victory over sin, Satan, death, and the grave.

**Matthew 27:54**

Ver. 54. **Now, when the centurion**

That was over the band of soldiers, that mocked Christ in Pilate's hall, and who was particularly over the guard of soldiers, set about the cross of Christ:

**and they that were with him, watching Jesus:**

the soldiers that were with him, who were set to watch the cross of Christ, lest he should come down, or any should take him down from thence; (See Gill on Matthew 27:36).

**Saw the earthquake, and those things that were done;**

as besides that, the darkening of the sun, the rending of the rocks, and particularly heard with what a loud voice Christ spoke, and then at once expired:

**they feared greatly;**

not with a true godly fear, but with a fear of punishment; lest divine vengeance should light on them, for their concern in this matter:

**saying, truly this was the Son of God;**

which they concluded, not from any mediatorial performances, which they were utter strangers to, but from effects of divine power; and which to them showed him to be a divine person, what he said he was, and the Jews charged him with blasphemy, on account of, and condemned him for, as these soldiers might have seen and heard.

**Matthew 27:55**

Ver. 55. **And many women were there**

At the cross of Christ, at some little distance from it; but where was Peter, who had declared he would never be offended, though all men were; and would die with Christ, rather than deny him? and where were the rest of the disciples, who said the same things? None were present excepting John, as can be learnt from the evangelists; but many women, those of the weaker sex, were there, which was a rebuke of the former vanity and confidence of the disciples, and of their present pusillanimity and cowardice:

**beholding afar off;**

Christ upon the cross, in all his agonies, the chief priests and people mocking him, the darkness upon the

earth, the quaking of it, and the rending of the rocks: they were witnesses of all this, being at some little distance, by reason of the crowd of people and soldiers about the cross; and they beheld with an eye of faith, their bleeding, dying Lord, as crucified for them, and as bearing and taking away their sins: a sight which at once stirred up their affection and love to Christ, their concern for him, and sorrow for sin; and yet joy and peace, in believing in him:

**which followed Jesus from Galilee:**

where they had seen his miracles, heard his doctrines, and had been savingly converted by him; and therefore followed him wherever he went, though an hundred miles or more, and through many difficulties and discouragements: they attended him in his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and now at his cross; nor did they leave him when dead, and in his grave:

**ministering unto him:**

not now, for he stood in no need of their assistance, nor could they give him any; but this respects what they had done heretofore, in their journey with him from Galilee to Jerusalem; when they ministered to him of their worldly substance, as a token of their affection for him; and which expresses the low estate and mean condition he was in, and is an instruction to his followers, how to behave towards the faithful preachers of his Gospel; see ( Luke 8:3 ).

**Matthew 27:56**

Ver. 56. **Among which was Mary Magdalene**

Out of whom Christ had cast out seven devils; and who having received much from him, loved much, which she showed by her zealous and constant attachment to him. She was called Magdalene, either because she was an inhabitant of Magdala, ( Matthew 15:39 ), so we read <sup>786</sup> of R. Isaac, ( מגדלאה ), of "Magdala", or "Magdalene"; and the rather, because that Magdala was famous, or rather infamous, for whoredom; for which reason the Jews <sup>787</sup> say, it was destroyed: or else she was so called, because she was ( גדולת ), a "tonstrix", or plaiter of women's hair, as the word signifies <sup>788</sup>; and so we often read of Mary, ( מגדלא שיר נשייא ), "the plaiter of women's hair" <sup>789</sup>; by whom the Jews seem to design Mary, the mother of Jesus, whom they confound with this Mary Magdalene.

<sup>786</sup> Juchasin, fol. 96. 2.

<sup>787</sup> T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 69. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 4.

<sup>788</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect.

3.

<sup>789</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 2. Chagiga, fol. 4. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 67. 1.

Jerom says <sup>790</sup>, her name signifies “towered”, or “fortified”, because of her care and diligence, and the ardour of her faith; and “Migdal”, in Hebrew, does signify a tower:

**and Mary the mother of James and Joses:**

the same with the wife of Cleophas, and sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus: instead of Joses, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read Joseph: (ⲓⲛ) “Jose”, in Hebrew, is the same with “Joseph”, the last letter being cut off; the Arabic version reads Mary, the mother of James, and the mother of Joses, ( John 19:25 ).

**And the mother of Zebedee’s children:**

that is, of James and John; her name was Salome, ( Mark 15:40 ).

**Matthew 27:57**

Ver. 57. **When the even was come**

The second evening, when it was just at sunset; at which time the Jewish sabbath began, and when the bodies of those that were crucified, must be taken down; and if not dead, their bones must be broken, and they dispatched, in order to be interred in the common burying place of malefactors:

**there came a rich man Arimathea:**

not from thence now, for he lived at Jerusalem; but this was the place of his nativity, or former abode, and from whence he originally came; and is the same with Ramathaim Zophim, and Ramah, and was the birthplace of Samuel the prophet, ( 1 Samuel 1:1 1 Samuel 1:19 ), and is by the Septuagint called Armathaim, in ( 1 Samuel 1:1 1 Samuel 1:3 1 Samuel 1:19 ) ( 8:4 ) ( 15:34 ) ( 16:13 ) ( 28:3 ). His character, as a rich man, is particularly mentioned, not merely to show that such men may be, and sometimes are, instances of the grace of God; much less in a way of boasting, that such a man was attached to Jesus; but rather to point out the reason, how he came to have such easy access to Pilate, and to succeed in his business with him; as well as to observe the accomplishment of a prophecy, in ( Isaiah 53:9 ),

**named Joseph;**

the same name with one of the patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; between whom there was a resemblance, not only as good men, but in their observance of funeral rites and obsequies; the one in those of his father, the other in those of his dear Lord and Master. Some think <sup>791</sup> he is the same with Joseph ben Gorion, the brother of Nicodemus ben Gorion, often spoken of as a priest, and one of the richest of them in Jerusalem:

**who also himself was Jesus’ disciple;**

though he was only a secret one, as Nicodemus was: he had not as yet, or till now publicly professed him, for fear of the Jews, who had made a law, that whoever did, should be cast out of the synagogue; see ( John 19:38 ).

**Matthew 27:58**

Ver. 58. **He went to Pilate**

To his house where he lived, and went in, as Mark says, ( Mark 15:43 ), boldly; not being ashamed of Christ crucified, or afraid to own him, and show his respect to him as dead, though he knew he should incur the displeasure, reproach, and persecution of the Jews:

**and begged the body of Jesus;**

which could not be taken down and interred, without the leave of the Roman governor; and which was generally granted to the friends of the deceased, when asked; otherwise they were buried in places <sup>792</sup> appointed for such persons; (See Gill on Matthew 27:33). And this would have been the case of Christ, had not Joseph craved his body; and which he did, to prevent its being abused by the Jews, and interred in such an ignominious manner:

**then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered;**

to Joseph, after he had understood by the centurion that Jesus was dead, which he at first could not tell how to believe, and marvelled at it, ( Mark 15:44 Mark 15:45 ). Joseph might the more easily obtain his request, as he was a person of character and riches; and because Pilate himself had a good opinion of Jesus, and of his innocence, as well as his wife was much in his favour: so that Joseph had no difficulty to obtain the body of Christ; but as soon as he asked, he had the favour granted, and orders were given to the centurion and his soldiers, to deliver it to him.

**Matthew 27:59**

Ver. 59. **And when Joseph had taken the body**

Down from the cross, with the assistance of others, or from the hands of those who had orders to deliver it to him:

**he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth:**

that is, he wound up the body in it round and round, as was the custom of the Jews; see ( Acts 5:6 ) ( John 11:44 ). Nor was it usual to bury in any thing but linen: so it is said <sup>793</sup>,

<sup>792</sup> See Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 14. sect. 9.

<sup>793</sup> Juchasin, fol. 54. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 4. sect. 2.

<sup>790</sup> Ad Principiam, Tom. l. fol. 41.

<sup>791</sup> Alting. Shilo, p. 309.

“let the wrappings, or grave clothes, be (פשתו לבנימן) (ש), “of white linen”; and let not the price of them be dear, for it is forbidden to bury in wrappings of silk, or brodered garments, even to a prince of Israel: for this is pride and destruction, and the work of the Gentiles.”

This clean linen cloth, in which the dead body of Christ was wrapped, may be an emblem of his purity and innocence, who did no sin; nor did he die for any of his own, but for the sins of others; and also of his pure and spotless righteousness, which is compared to fine linen, clean and white, and which he now had wrought out, and brought in; see ( Revelation 19:8 ) .

#### Matthew 27:60

Ver. 60. **And laid it in his own new tomb**

Christ was laid not in his own, but in another's tomb; for as in his lifetime he had not where to lay his head; so when he was dead, he had no sepulchre of his own to put his body in: and moreover, this shows that as he was born for others, and suffered and died not for himself, but them; so he was buried for them, as well as rose again for their justification: and it was a “new” tomb in which he was laid, in which none had been laid before; and was so ordered by providence, for the confirmation of the truth of his resurrection; for had another body been laid there, it might have been said that it was that, and not his that was raised. The Jews distinguish between a new grave, and an old grave <sup>794</sup>:

“a new grave may be measured, and sold, and divided; an old one may not be measured, nor sold, nor divided: there is a new grave, which is as an old one; and an old one, which is as a new one; an old grave, in which are ten dead bodies, which is not in the power of the owners, lo! this is as a new grave.”

Which he had hewn out in the rock; it was usual with the Jews to make their sepulchres in rocks:

“in the midst (of the court of the sepulchre, they say <sup>795</sup>) two caves are opened, one on one side, and the other on the other; R. Simeon says, four on the four sides; Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says, all are (eloh ypl) , “according to the rock”.

i.e. according to the nature of the rock, out of which the sepulchre is hewn; see ( Isaiah 22:16 ) .

**And he rolled a great stone to the door of the**

**sepulchre;**

for the sepulchres were made with doors to go in and out at: hence we often read <sup>796</sup> of הפתח הקבר , “the door of the sepulchre”; and this was not only the custom of the Jews, but of other nations also <sup>797</sup>: the stone rolled to the door, was what the Jews call, (llwg) , from its being rolled to, and from the door of the sepulchre; and which, they say <sup>798</sup>, was a large and broad stone, with which the mouth of the sepulchre was stopped above: and it was at the shutting up of the sepulchre with this stone, that mourning began <sup>799</sup>; and after it was shut with this sepulchral stone, it was not lawful to open it <sup>800</sup>: now this was done by Joseph, to preserve the body from any injury, either from beasts, or from the Jews:

**and**

when he had so done,

**he departed**

to his own house; for the sabbath drew on, and there was no more time to do any thing more in this affair. The Syriac version reads these last clauses in the plural number; “they rolled a great stone, and they put it” and they went away; intimating, that Joseph did not do this himself; the stone was too great; but by others, or with their assistance. It may be observed, that all this was done on a feast day; on one of the days of the feast of the passover, when no servile work was to be done; and yet this was agreeably to the Jewish canons, which say <sup>801</sup>,

“they do all things needful for the dead on a feast day; they shave his head, and wash his clothes, and make him a coffin; and if they have no boards, they bring timber and saw boards of it, silently within doors; and if the person is a man of note, they do it even in the street; but they do not cut wood out of the forest, to saw planks of it for the coffin; nor do they hew stones, to build a tomb with them.”

In this case, there was no need for the latter, because the sepulchre in which the body of Christ was laid, had been hewn out of a rock before; but the body was wrapped in a clean linen cloth, and wound up in it with myrrh and aloes to preserve it, and was interred; and so the women on this day, prepared spices and ointments, to anoint it

<sup>796</sup> Misn. ib. & Bartenora in Misn. Ohalot, c. 15. sect. 8.

<sup>797</sup> Vid. Kirchman de Funer. Roman. l. 3. c. 15. p. 438.

<sup>798</sup> Bartenora & Yom. Tob. in Misn. Ohalot, c. 2. sect. 4.

<sup>799</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 47. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 1. sect. 2. & c. 2. sect. 8.

<sup>800</sup> Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. p. 437.

<sup>801</sup> Maimon. Hilchot Yom. Tob. c. 7. sect. 15.

<sup>794</sup> Massech. Semachto, c. 14. fol. 16. 2.

<sup>795</sup> Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 6. sect. 8.

with; though they rested on the sabbath day according to the commandment; but then as soon as that was over, though it was a feast day, they came to the sepulchre with their spices and ointments, ( Luke 23:56 ) ( 24:1 ) .

**Matthew 27:61**

Ver. 61. **And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary**

The wife of Cleophas, and the mother of James and of Josés:

**sitting over against the sepulchre;**

observing where the body of Christ was put, and how it was laid; for they intended to prepare spices and ointments to anoint it with; and were mourning for the death of Christ: for sitting was a mourning posture, which now they were allowed, the body being taken down from the cross, and interred by leave of the governor; for, for one that died as a malefactor, they might not use the outward signs of mourning: the canon is this <sup>802</sup>; for such

“they do not mourn, but they grieve; and there is no grieving but in the heart:”

hence these women before stood, ( John 19:25 ) , but now they sat.

**Matthew 27:62**

Ver.62. **Now the next day that followed the day of preparation**

Which was the sabbath day; for the day of preparation was the day before the sabbath, ( Mark 15:42 ) , in which they prepared every thing necessary for the sabbath, and therefore was so called: and as this introduces the account of the chief priests and Pharisees, making application to Pilate, to secure the sepulchre; and which by his leave they did, by sealing the stone, and setting a guard about the sepulchre; it shows what consciences these men had, who accused the disciples of Christ of a violation of the sabbath, for plucking a few ears of corn on that day; and sought to kill Jesus, because he healed a man on it, and bid him take up his bed and walk; and yet they themselves could leave their devotions, and first meet together and agree upon an address to Pilate, and then go in a body to his palace; and having obtained their request, march to Joseph's garden, and make the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch, which were servile works, and, according to their laws and traditions, not to be done on the sabbath day; and yet they scrupled them not, notwithstanding their characters and profession, which follow:

<sup>802</sup> Misn. Sarhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

**the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate;**

these were the inveterate and implacable enemies of Christ; they took counsel how to put him to death; they employed Judas to betray him, and sent a band of soldiers with him to take him; they suborned false witnesses against him; they moved the people to prefer Barabbas to him; they got him condemned to death, and followed him to the cross, where they mocked him; and still, like the troubled sea, they were restless and uneasy; for though he was dead, they feared his resurrection; and though they could not prevent the thing, they consult to hinder the credit of it.

**Matthew 27:63**

Ver.63. **Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said**

Meaning Jesus; for no better name could they give him alive or dead, and they chose to continue it; and the rather to use it before Pilate, who had a good opinion of his innocence; and to let him see, that they still retained the same sentiments of him: (tyom) , “a deceiver”, is with the Jews <sup>803</sup>,

“a private person, that deceives a private person; saying to him there is a God in such a place, so it eats, and so it drinks; so it does well, and so it does ill.”

But which can never agree with Jesus, who was not a private person, but a public preacher; and who taught men, not privately, but openly, in the temple and in the synagogues; nor did he teach idolatry, or any thing contrary to the God of Israel, or to the unity of the divine being; or which savoured of, and encouraged the polytheism of the Gentiles. The Ethiopic version renders these words thus; “Sir, remember” as if Christ had said this to Pilate in their hearing, and therefore put him in mind of it.

**While he was yet alive;**

so that they owned that he was dead; and therefore could not object this to the truth of his resurrection, that he was taken down from the cross alive, and did not die:

**after three days I will rise again:**

now, though he said to his to his disciples privately, ( Matthew 16:21 ) ( 17:23 ) , yet not clearly and expressly to the Scribes and Pharisees; wherefore they must either have it from Judas, and lied in saying they remembered it: or they gathered it either from what he

<sup>803</sup> Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 10.



said concerning the sign of the prophet Jonas, ( Matthew 12:40 ) , or rather from his words in ( John 2:19 ) , and if so, they acted a most wicked part, in admitting a charge against him, as having a design upon their temple, to destroy it, and then rebuild it in three days; when they knew those words were spoken by him concerning his death, and resurrection from the dead: they remembered this, when the disciples did not: bad men have sometimes good memories, and good men bad ones; so that memory is no sign of grace.

**Matthew 27:64**

Ver. 64. **Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure**

By this also they own, that he was buried; and they knew in what, and whose sepulchre he was laid, and where it was; and request of Pilate, that as he had given leave to Joseph to take the body and inter it, that he would also give orders that the sepulchre might be watched, that no body might come near it, and remove the body, and that

**until the third day:**

not from the time they made this request, but from the time of Christ's death; for no longer did they desire the sepulchre to be guarded; for if he did not rise, and no pretensions could be made to it in that time, they then very likely intended to expose his dead body, and triumph over him as an impostor; and after that time, they cared not what became of it, and were in no concern about watching the sepulchre; but till then they judged it necessary and desired it,

**lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away:**

but of this there was no danger; they were too fearful and timorous to do such an action, had they been ever so much inclined to it; they all forsook him and fled immediately upon his apprehension; nor durst any of them appear at the time of his crucifixion, but John; and were now shut up for fear of the Jews; and besides, they had forgot what Christ said to them about his resurrection, though these men remembered it, and even disbelieved it when it was told them: the phrase "by night", is not in two copies of Beza's, nor in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but is in other copies, and in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions:

**and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead;**

to the common people, that were illiterate, credulous, and easily imposed on: as for themselves, who were the learned, the wise and knowing, they were in no danger of being carried away with such a deception; but the

populace, for whom they pretend a great concern, were:

**so the last error shall be worse than the first;**

either their own error and mistake, should the sepulchre be neglected, and an opportunity given for such a report; this would be of more fatal consequence than their first mistake, in suffering him and his followers to go on so long; or rather, the error of the people, in believing that Jesus was the Messiah; which would be greatly strengthened and received by greater numbers, should it be given out, and there was any proof of it, that he was risen from the dead: nor were they mistaken in this, for the number of the disciples and followers of Christ greatly increased after his resurrection; to an hundred and twenty, which was their number upon Christ's resurrection, three thousand were added at one time; being converted under one sermon, and that the first preached after Christ was risen.

**Matthew 27:65**

Ver. 65. **Pilate said unto them, ye have a watch**

Meaning either the watch of the temple, said to be placed in the tower of Antonia, for the service of it: hence mention is made of the captain of the temple, ( Acts 4:1 ) , but it is not likely they would remove the temple guards, to watch a sepulchre night and day: or rather, therefore, the soldiers that had had the care of the crucifixion of Christ, and watched him on the cross, are designed: the words may be read imperatively, "have yea watch", or "take a watch", as the Ethiopic version renders it, and which seems best; for if they had a watch already, what occasion had they to have applied to Pilate for one? but having none, he gives them leave to take one, or such a number of soldiers as were sufficient:

as fast as you can, take the watch as soon as you please, make no stay, but satisfy yourselves in this point:

**make [it] as sure as you can;**

or, as you know how to do it, and what will be proper and necessary.

**Matthew 27:66**

Ver. 66. **So they went**

From Pilate's palace, to the garden of Joseph, and to the sepulchre there; which whether more than a sabbath day's journey, or two thousand cubits, may be inquired; and if so, then they broke one of their own traditions, which allowed a person to go no further on a sabbath day; (See Gill on Acts 1:12).

**And made the sepulchre sure;**

in the following manner,

**sealing the stone;**

that was rolled to the door of it, it may be with some public seal, with Pilate's, or with the sanhedrim's; as the stone at the mouth of the lions' den, in which Daniel was put, was sealed with the king's signet, and with the signet of his lords, ( Daniel 6:17 ), that there might be no change of the sentence upon him, and by which it appeared, that his deliverance was by no human assistance: so the stone at Christ's sepulchre was sealed, that it could not be removed without breaking it; which would show, whether any fraudulent methods were taken to remove the body:

**and setting a watch;**

a guard of soldiers, to observe and prevent any person coming near it; or "with the watch": they made sure the sepulchre with the watch; or sealed the stone, the watch being present; all which was overruled by the providence of God, for the greater confirmation of the truth of Christ's resurrection: by the methods taken, it clearly appears, there could be no fraud in the case; the body was laid in a tomb, where no corpse had ever been before; in a tomb hewed out of a rock, to which there was no access, but at the door; where a great stone was rolled; and this had a seal upon it, and a guard of soldiers about it; and hereby there were more witnesses of Christ's resurrection, than otherwise would have been; as the soldiers, though they were afterwards bribed to tell another story; and even the chief priests and Pharisees were convicted that he was risen, or they would never have taken such a method with the soldiers, as they did.

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

**CHAPTER XXVIII**

*1 Christ's resurrection is declared by an angel to the women. 9 He himself appeareth unto them. 11 The high priest gave the soldiers money to say that he was stolen out of his sepulchre. 16 Christ appeareth to the disciples. 19 and sendeth them to baptize and teach all nations.*

Matthew 28

- [1] In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.
- [2] And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.
- [3] His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

- [4] And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.
- [5] And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
- [6] He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.
- [7] And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.
- [8] And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.
- [9] And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.
- [10] Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.
- [11] Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.
- [12] And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,
- [13] Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.
- [14] And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.
- [15] So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.
- [16] Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.
- [17] And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.
- [18] And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
- [19] Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
- [20] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

**Matthew 28:1**

Ver. 1. **In the end of the sabbath,**

This clause is by some joined to the last verse of the preceding chapter, but stands better here, as appears from Mark 16:1, and intends not what the Jews call the sabbath eve, for that began the sabbath; but what they call שבת מואי, “the goings out of the sabbath”; and as Mark says, Mark 16:1, “when the sabbath was past”: that is, when the sun was set, and any stars appeared. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel render it, “the evening of the sabbath”; and the Persic version, “the night of the sabbath”; but must mean, not the evening and night, which preceded the sabbath, and was a part of it, but what followed it, and belonged to the first day.

**As it began to dawn;**

not the day, but the night; a way of speaking used by the Jews, who call the night, אור “light”: thus they say <sup>804</sup>, אור לארבה שר, “on the light, or night of the fourteenth” (of the month Nisan) “they search for leavened bread”, &c. And so the word is used, in Luke 23:54, of the eve of the sabbath, or the beginning of it, as here of the going out of it;

**towards the first day of the week,**

or “sabbaths”; so the Jews used to call the days of the week, the first day of the sabbath, the second day of the sabbath, &c. take an instance or two <sup>805</sup>

“The stationary men fast four days in the week, from the second day to the fifth day; and they do not fast on the sabbath eve (so they sometimes call the sixth day), because of the glory of the sabbath; nor באחר בשבת, “on the first day of the sabbath”, or week, that they may not go from rest and delight, to labour and fasting, and die.”

On which the Gemara has these words <sup>806</sup>;

“the stationary men go into the synagogue, and sit four fastings; בשני בשבת, “on the second of the sabbath”, or “week”: on the third, and on the fourth, and on the fifth.”

**Came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary,**

the wife of Cleophas, and mother of James and Joses, with whom also was Salome, the mother of Zebedee’s children, Mr 16:1. There seems to be some difference between the evangelists about the time of the women’s coming to the sepulchre. Matthew says, it was “at the end of the sabbath, when it began to dawn; towards the first

day of the week”. John says, that “Mary Magdalene” came “when it was yet dark”, Joh 20:1, and yet Mark says, that they came “at the rising of the sun”, Mark 16:2. Though they all agree it was early in the morning: all they say is no doubt true, and may be reconciled thus. As soon as the sabbath was ended, the women set out on their journey, and as they went, bought spices and ointment to anoint the body with: they passed through the gates of the city before they were shut, and might stay some time in the suburbs; when Mary Magdalene, eager to be at the sepulchre, set out first, whilst it was dark, and came back and reported to Peter what she had seen, and returned again by such time the other women came, which was at sunrising. From all the accounts it is clear, that he rose, as is expressly said, Mark 16:9, on the first day of the week, and which was the third from his death: on the sixth day, which was Friday, he was crucified, and buried that evening; he lay in the grave all sabbath day, or Saturday; and rose early on the first day of the week, before the women got to the sepulchre; who came thither, as it is here said,

**to see the sepulchre:**

not merely to see it, for they had seen it before, and where, and how the body of Christ was laid in it; but to see whether they could enter into it, and anoint the body with the spices and ointments, which they had prepared and brought with them for that purpose.

**Matthew 28:2**

Ver. 2. **And behold there was a great earthquake,** Or “there had been one”; which, how far it reached, and whether further than the spot of ground in which the sepulchre was, is not certain: it was an emblem of the shaking of the earth by the preaching of the Gospel, the sound of which was now to go after Christ’s resurrection to the ends of the world; and a prelude of the general resurrection, when the earth shall be shaken, and the graves opened, and the dead come forth; and was a symbol and token of the presence and majesty of Christ, at whose rising, as at his death, the earth shook and trembled. Think whether the watch could now be asleep, as they afterwards gave out, Mt 28:13. The Persic version renders it very wrongly; “and there was great consternation and fear”; which was the consequence of the earthquake, and the descent of the angel, and was so great that it was not possible for the keepers to sleep, if ever so much inclined:

**for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven;** perhaps Gabriel, who brought the news of the conception

<sup>804</sup> Misn. Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 1. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

<sup>805</sup> Misn. Taanilh, c. 4. sect. 3.

<sup>806</sup> T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 4. 2. & 11. 1. & 67. 2.

of Christ to the virgin, and of his incarnation to the shepherds, and might be the same angel that strengthened him in the garden: nor is this any contradiction to the other evangelists, which speak of two angels, Luke 24:4, for Matthew does not say there were no more than one, though he makes mention but of one.

**And came and rolled back the stone from the door;** of the sepulchre, which by Joseph, or his orders, was put there, and was sealed by the Jews. This might be done, that way might be made for the risen body of Christ to pass out of the sepulchre; for to suppose, as some do, that he penetrated through this stone with his risen body, is not to be credited: it is true, he could have caused the stone to have given way, or removed it himself, and put it in the place again; as he caused the doors of the house in which the disciples were, to open and shut so quick, that they could not discern it when he appeared in the midst of them, Joh 20:19; see Ac 12:10, but he might choose to do it by the ministry of an angel, which is no ways derogatory to his power and majesty, but rather agreeable. Moreover, this might be done, that the women might have access to the sepulchre, and enter into it, which was the thing they were concerned about by the way, who should roll away the stone for them. Besides, this the angel did, as a token that Christ was risen, and to let the guard know as much, who, if they thought fit, might come and see what was done; but chiefly the stone was rolled away by the angel, as an emblem of the acquittance and discharge of Christ, as the surety of his people. He had taken upon him their sins; he had bore them in his body on the tree; he had suffered and died for them, and was laid as a prisoner in the grave; and now full satisfaction being made, an angel is sent from heaven to roll away the stone; thereby signifying, that the debt was fully paid, and he was now legally discharged. It is added,

**and sat upon it;**

thereby showing who it was that rolled it away; that it was done by him, not by the earthquake, nor by any human power: he sat there defying the guard of soldiers to come nigh; and waiting for the coming of the women, to tell them the good news, that their Lord was risen; and as the keeper of the sepulchre, that no corpse might be brought and laid in the room of Christ, and it be said that he was not risen. This posture of the angel does not contradict what other evangelists say of this, and the other angel, that they stood by the women, and also were sitting in the sepulchre, Mark 16:5, for each was true: when the women first came, the angel sat upon the stone;

after that, with the other, stood by them; when having invited them to the grave, placed themselves, sitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Christ had lain.

**Matthew 28:3**

Ver. 3. **His countenance was like lightning,**

There was such a lustre and brightness in his face, that it glittered like lightning: such a description is in Da 10:6,

**and his raiment white as snow:**

the word “white” is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel: the angel appeared clad in white, as a token of the purity and innocence of his nature; and because of the victory and triumph of Christ over death and the grave; and that he might be known and taken by the women for a good angel, it being a commonly received notion of the Jews, that ministering angels were clothed in white <sup>807</sup>.

“Said R. Ame to R. Levi, show me the Persians; he said to him, they are like to the mighty men of the house of David: show me the Chaberin, (another nation near the Persians,) they are like to destroying angels: show me the Ishmaelites, they are like to devils of the house of Hacsar: show me the disciples of the wise men in Babylon, they are like to the ministering angels.”

**Upon which the gloss says,**

“to the devils”, because they are clothed in black, and are like to devils; to “the ministering angels”, לבנימ לבושי, “they are clothed in white”, and veiled like the ministering angels; as it is written in Eze 9:2, “and the man was clothed with linen”: and it is said <sup>808</sup> of R. Judah, that he was veiled, and sat in fine linen fringed, and was like to an angel of the Lord of hosts: and elsewhere <sup>809</sup> it is said, who are the ministering angels? the Rabbins: and why are they called ministering angels? because they are fringed, as the ministering angels, in beautiful garments.”

**Matthew 28:4**

Ver. 4. **And for fear of him the keepers did shake,**

Though they were soldiers, Roman soldiers and veterans, who had been used to terrible sights in the field of battle; were men of courage, and fearless of danger; and yet were seized with a panic, and every limb of them shook and trembled at the sight of the

807 T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 1.

808 T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 25. 2.

809 T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 20. 2.

angel, for fear he was come as an executioner of divine vengeance upon them; who had been concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, had watched him as he hung upon the cross, and now his body in the sepulchre: and even supposing no consciousness of guilt in them, or dread of punishment from him; yet such was the glory and majesty in which he appeared, of which they had never seen the like before, that it had this effect upon them:

**and became as dead men:**

they turned pale, as dead men, and had scarce any life, or spirit, left in them.

**Matthew 28:5**

Ver. 5. **And the angel answered and said unto the women,**

Who being come up, were also affrighted at the sight of the angel. The Arabic version leaves out the first part, "and the angel answered": which is a Jewish way of speaking, when nothing goes before, to which it is a reply; and renders the other part thus, "and said to the two women": but from the other evangelists it appears, that there were more women than two; see Mark 16:1,

**fear not ye;**

some put an emphasis upon the word "ye", as if used in opposition to the keepers, who had reason to be afraid, but not these good women. It was very common with gracious persons to be filled with fear at the sight of an angel, as Zacharias, and the shepherds; but without reason; they are their friends, their fellow servants, and ministering spirits to them. The Persic version adds, "but come near before, for ye are his familiars": the reason alleged, by the angel, why they had no reason to fear, is,

**for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified:**

the knowledge which angels have of saints is very considerable, and which arises from their frequent embassies to them, care and guardianship of them, the good offices they perform, and their several ministrations to them; and the knowledge which the angel had of these good women, might not be from immediate revelation, but from the observations he had made of them: they had followed Jesus from Galilee, they had attended him all the while he was on the cross, and were now come to his grave to anoint him; and from their words and gestures, the angel might know that they were the disciples of Christ, and now sought him; and therefore had no reason to fear, as those who were his adversaries: and indeed, such as seek a crucified Christ, and life and salvation by him, have no reason to be afraid of any thing; not of sin, and its damning power, since Christ saves, his blood

cleanses, and his righteousness justifies from all sin; nor of the law, its menaces, curses, and condemnation, for Christ has redeemed them from it; nor of Satan, and his principalities and powers, who are spoiled by Christ, and out of whose hands he has ransomed his people; nor of the world, since Christ has overcome it, and delivered his people from it; nor of death, whose sting is taken away, and that abolished as a penal evil; nor of hell, and wrath to come, from which he has saved them; and much less of good angels, who are kindly disposed to them: and such are they that seek a crucified Christ, whom Christ has first sought, and looked up, and found in redemption and the effectual calling; who are made sensible of their lost and dangerous state by nature, to whom Christ has been manifested; and who see both their need of him, and his worth and value: these seek to him in the first place, and with all their hearts, for cleansing, pardon, righteousness, rest, food, salvation, and eternal life: they seek for him where he is, and is revealed, in the Scriptures, in the Gospel, in the ordinances, and at the Father's right hand.

**Matthew 28:6**

Ver. 6. **He is not here,**

In the grave, where he was laid, and these women saw him laid: he was dead, but is now alive; he was laid in the grave, but God would not leave him there, nor suffer him to see corruption:

**for he is risen, as he said;**

not stolen away, as the chief priests hired the soldiers to say he was; nor removed to another place, as Mary Magdalene first thought, when she found him gone; but he was risen from the dead, by the power of his Father, and by his own power, as he had before said he should. In one of Beza's exemplars it is added, "to you"; for the words that Christ said in Galilee, that he should be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and rise again, the third day, were said in the presence and hearing of these women, and to them, as well as to the disciples; see Luke 24:6. This clause is left out in the Persic version: it follows,

**come see the place where the Lord lay;**

the Lord both of angels and men: the Syriac and Persic versions read, "our Lord". The Arabic and Ethiopic versions leave out the word "Lord", and only read "he". Christ, as the Son of God, lay in the bosom of his Father, and in the arms of his love, from all eternity; as mediator, he lay in the womb of God's purposes and decrees, being his elect, in whom his soul delighted; as man, he lay in

the womb of the virgin; and, as an example to his people, he lay, when baptized, in the waters of Jordan; and as the language of the ordinance of the Lord's supper is, "come see my hands, and my feet"; that of baptism is, "come see the place where the Lord lay": but here it regards the grave, in which the body of Christ had been laid; and the women are invited by the angel to go along with him, into the sepulchre, to see the place where he had lain; to assure them the more of the truth of his resurrection, that they might, with their own eyes, see that he was gone, who before had beheld where, and how he was laid; as also to affect them with the condescending grace of Christ, in making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; as well as to strengthen their faith in their discharge from sin and condemnation by Christ, who was risen for their justification; as also to let them see that the grave was perfumed and sanctified by him; and he was risen as the first fruits and pledge of them that slept.

**Matthew 28:7**

Ver. 7. **And go quickly and tell his disciples,**

Who were mourning and weeping for the death of Christ; despairing of his resurrection, of which, at least, they had but little hope, nor indeed much thought, though Christ had so often told them of it; and therefore a quick dispatch was necessary to remove their sorrow, revive their faith, and relieve their souls, to which the errand these women were sent upon, and the news they were to bring, had a tendency; namely,

**that he is risen from the dead:**

than which nothing could be more joyful news unto them, as it is to all believers; for on this depend the justification and salvation of God's elect; their security from condemnation, and their resurrection from the dead. This news was first brought to the apostles by women, who were greatly honoured hereby; that as the woman was first in the transgression, and the cause of death, so the first news of the resurrection of Christ to life, and of life and immortality being by him, who was first showed the path of life, were brought by women; and to a woman it was that Christ first appeared after his resurrection, Mark 16:9. The Vulgate Latin only reads, "that he is risen", as in the former verse.

**And behold he goeth before you into Galilee.**

These are still the words of the angel to the women, telling them what they should say to the apostles, that he should go before them into Galilee; and which might serve to confirm the resurrection to them, and to give

the greater credit to the report of the women, since this very thing Christ had promised them before; see Mt 26:32, though it was also true, that he should go before these women into Galilee, and who also should see him there: for the next words,

**there shall ye see him;**

though they may chiefly design the apostles, who should have a sight of Christ in Galilee, yet may include these women also:

**lo! I have told you;**

I "Gabriel", who am an angel of the Lord, sent by him to inform you of these things; and you may depend upon the truth of them, that Jesus is risen, and that he is about, in a very little time, to go before his disciples into Galilee, where they shall see him with their bodily eyes, and have a free and familiar conversation with him. The reasons why this place was pitched upon for Christ and his apostles to meet in, were, because here he first preached, and chiefly conversed, and had the largest number of disciples there, to whom he meant to show himself, as he did, 1Co 15:6, as well as to his apostles: moreover, the apostles were of Galilee, and so were these women; and to go into their own country, and there meet with Jesus, must be very agreeable; and besides, there they would be safer and freer from the molestations and persecutions of the Jews; and might follow their former calling, as they did, until the time they were to be further employed in preaching the Gospel.

**Matthew 28:8**

Ver. 8. **And they departed quickly from the sepulchre,**

Or "they went out from it", as it may be rendered, and as it is in Mr 16:8, which shows, that they went into the sepulchre upon the invitation of the angel, and saw the place where the Lord lay; and here it was the angel gave them their instructions, and errand to the disciples; which as soon as they received, they quitted the sepulchre in all haste, partly in obedience to the angel's orders, and partly through surprise and fear; for Mark says, "they fled from the sepulchre",

Mark 16:8, as persons terrified and affrighted: and it is added here,

**with fear and great joy:**

a mixture of both these; with fear and dread, because of the vision they had seen, and with joy at the news of Christ's resurrection; and yet in this their faith might not be so confirmed, as to have no doubt about

it: they might fear the body was taken away, and removed to some other place, and that this they had seen might be a deception and a delusion. However, between both joy and fear, they set out,

**and did run to bring his disciples word;**

as Mary Magdalene ran to Peter, Joh 20:2, nor is running unusual for women, or unbecoming them on certain occasions; see Ge 24:20. Their fright, as well as their joy, and their regard to the angel's order, might cause them to run, and make the quicker dispatch.

**Matthew 28:9**

**Ver. 9. And as they went to tell his disciples,**

This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and in Beza's most ancient copy; but it stands in the Ethiopic version, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel,

**behold, Jesus met them:**

that they might be confirmed in what the angel had told them, and their fear might be removed, and their joy increased; and also be capable of reporting to the disciples not only what they had heard from the angel, but what they had seen themselves; they being now eyewitnesses, as well as earwitnesses of his resurrection: so souls in the way of their duty, as these women were, oftentimes meet with Jesus, and he with them, as they may expect, and indeed not otherwise:

**saying, all hail;**

all health of soul and body, all happiness and prosperity, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, attend you. The Syriac and Persic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel render it, "peace be to you"; which, it is highly probable, was the phrase used by Christ, since it was the common form of salutation among the Jews, and what Christ made use of at other times; see Joh 20:19,

**and they came;**

near unto him, being encouraged by the above salutation, and knowing who he was by his voice, habit, and gesture:

**and held him by the feet;**

they threw themselves prostrate at his feet, in token of reverence and humility; and they laid hold on his feet, that they might know, and be assured that he was really risen, and that it was not a spirit, or a mere phantom and appearance; and they held him in affection to him, and as desirous of his continuance with them:

**and worshipped him:**

with divine adoration, expressing their love to him; their faith and hope in him, owning him to be their Lord

and God; he being, by his resurrection from the dead, declared to be the Son of God, with power; and so the proper object of religious worship.

**Matthew 28:10**

**Ver. 10. Then said Jesus unto them, be not afraid,**

Of me, or what you have seen; or lest there should be any deception in the case. In other respects the saints are subject to fears; as lest they should have no share in the love of God, nor interest in Christ, or the work of God is not begun in their hearts; and by reason of sin, lest that should get the ascendant over them, and they perish by it, and so fall short of eternal glory; when it is the will of Christ to have these fears removed, by shedding abroad his love in their hearts, by affording his gracious presence, views of interest in him, and promises of his grace, by sending his Spirit, word, and ministers to comfort them, by discovering and applying pardoning grace to them, and showing his power to keep them.

**Go tell my brethren;**

meaning not his kinsmen according to the flesh, but his disciples, who were in this relation to him, as all the elect of God are; not only through his incarnation, he being their "Goel", their near kinsman, and Redeemer, and of the same nature, flesh, and blood with them, and like unto them in all things, excepting sin; but on account of their divine adoption, to which they were predestinated, and which they received through his redemption, and under the witnessings of the Spirit: he that is his God being theirs; and he that is his Father being theirs also: and which was made manifest in their regeneration, by their faith in him; and obedience to him, and his Father; see Mt 12:49. A very considerable relation this is, that the disciples stood in to Christ, who is the eternal Son of God, and heir of all things; and wonderful grace and condescension it was in Christ to own the relation, when they had so lately forsaken him; and now he was raised from the dead, and had glory given him:

**that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me:**

he does not say they should not see him before: for they saw him, all but Thomas, that very evening, and all of them eight days after; and both times were before they went into Galilee: but this he said, to put them in mind of what he had promised them, Mt 26:32, and to confirm the words of the angel; and which might serve for a confirmation of the truth of these things, both to the women, and to the disciples, when they observed the exact agreement between the words of

Christ, and of the angel. Moreover, it may be remarked, that wherever Christ has appointed to meet his people, they may expect, and be sure to see him at one time or another; as in his house and ordinances, where they are sometimes indulged with a sight of him by faith, which is an appropriating, assimilating, soul rejoicing, and satisfying one; when with pleasure they behold the glory of his divine person, and of his offices, the transcendent excellencies and perfections of his nature, his love and his loveliness, the beauty and amiableness of him, the fulness of grace, life, and righteousness in him, and so the suitableness of him as their Saviour and Redeemer; and when they are favoured with communion with him, and the joys of his salvation.

**Matthew 28:11**

Ver. 11. **Now when they were going,**

Or were gone from the sepulchre: that is, the women, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, and their companions, when they were going, or gone, and before they could come to the disciples, to inform them of what they had seen and heard, and deliver the message both of the angel, and of Christ, unto them:

**behold, some of the watch came unto the city:**

that is, "of Jerusalem". The word "behold" is left out in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but ought to be retained as expressive of what is wonderful, and worthy of observation and attention; that the very persons who were placed to prevent every thing, that might be the foundation of a report, that Christ was risen, should be the first persons that should relate it to the chief priests and elders, that employed them: not all the watch, for some still stayed behind, till they had orders to come away; but some of them, the principal of them, or who were deputed by the rest, came. The Persic version, rather commenting than translating, has these words:

"moreover, the rulers and governors, who watched the sepulchre, coming to themselves, returned to the city with a pale and frightened countenance."

**And showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done;**

how that there had been a very great earthquake, and a very surprising appearance; one like a young man descended from the clouds, whose countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, which filled them with astonishment and dread; that he rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and then sat upon it; and that some women coming to the sepulchre, were shown

by him where the body had been laid, but was now gone; and how, that after they had recovered themselves from the fright, they had themselves examined the sepulchre, and the body was certainly gone; and sure they were that the women did not carry it away, nor any other: all which they thought proper to relate to the chief priests; partly on their own account, to clear themselves from the charge of bribery and corruption, and sloth and negligence; and partly that the chief priests might consider what was proper to be done at such a juncture.

**Matthew 28:12**

Ver. 12. **And when they were assembled with the elders,**

Upon this the grand sanhedrim was convened together, which consisted of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders;

**and had taken counsel**

among themselves what steps to take to stifle this matter, that it might not spread and be believed by the people; they agreed upon this, as the best expedient, to bribe the soldiers to give a false account of it, as they did:

**they gave large money unto the soldiers,**

or "sufficient money"; they gave large sums of money, as were enough to satisfy the soldiers; they gave them whatever they would have; for though these men were very covetous, yet upon this occasion gave liberally; and that perhaps which were for the sacrifices, or for the repair of the temple, or for the supply of the poor.

**Matthew 28:13**

Ver. 13. **Saying, say ye his disciples came by night,**

They charged them to tell every one that should ask them about this affair; and even publish it every where, that the disciples of Christ came in the dead of the night,

**and stole him away while we slept:**

which was a very unlikely thing, and a foolish scheme this, for such a body of men to form. There is no show of probability in it, that the disciples, who were intimidated by the taking and putting Christ to death, and were now shut up in a house, for fear of the Jews, that these should venture out in the night, to take away the body of Christ, which was decently and honourably interred in a garden of one of his disciples: and when they knew it was guarded by a company of Roman soldiers; and who besides had no notion of his resurrection from the dead, nor never thought of it till he was risen, and therefore would never attempt any thing



of this kind, in order to give out such a report. Moreover, had they took it away by stealth, it is not reasonable to think that they would afterwards have reported such a lie every where, that he was risen from the dead, when they were sure to obtain nothing by it, but reproach, afflictions, persecutions, and death: add to this, that this was never objected to them by their worst enemies, when they most strongly asserted his resurrection: nor was it a feasible account, or well put together, with respect to the watch. It can hardly be thought that they should be all of them asleep at once; and if they were, it is much they were not awaked by the coming up of the disciples, and the rolling away of the stone, and the bustle there must be in taking up the body, and carrying it away; and besides, if they were asleep, and continued so, what is their evidence good for? for how could they know that his disciples came and took him away? if they awaked, though too late, and saw them at a distance, why did not they pursue them, who might easily have been overtaken with such a burden? at least, why did not they search their houses for the body? and take up both the women and the disciples, and prosecute them for it? and yet nothing of this was done. Besides, how came the linen clothes to be left behind? why did they take the napkin from his head, and give themselves all that trouble to unwrap the body, and carry it away naked? It is clear the chief priests themselves were convinced in their own minds, that he was truly risen, or they would have punished the soldiers severely for their sleep and negligence, and would never have given them money to spread such a story.

**Matthew 28:14**

Ver. 14. **And if this come to the governor's ears,**

Not the governor of the watch, but Pontius Pilate the governor of Judea: if this should be told him, and should be heard by him; or this matter should come before him, and be under his examination, and there should be any danger of punishment; for to sleep on the watch was severely punished by the Romans:

**we will, persuade him;**

that this is the true state of the case, and intercede with him, and make use of all our interest, not to punish for it: or will persuade him, that though this is a false account, yet it will be much better that it should go in this way, for his own peace, and the peace of the nation, and the security of the Roman government; since, should it spread among the people, that this person was really raised from the dead, they would, one and all, believe he was the true Messiah, and would set him up as a king,

and seize upon the government in favour of him:

**and will secure you;**

indemnify you, bear you harmless, keep you from punishment; so that you need not be under any care, or concern on this account.

**Matthew 28:15**

Ver. 15. **So they took the money, and did as they were taught,**

Though they had been just now in the greatest fright and consternation imaginable, at the sight of the angel, and knew what was done; yet being men of no religion or conscience, were tempted with the money, and took it, and reported every where what had been put into their mouths by the chief priests and elders.

**And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews unto this day;**

to the time that Matthew wrote this Gospel; which according to the subscriptions to a most ancient copy of Beza's, and the Syriac and Arabic versions of De Dieu, was in the "eighth" year after our Lord's ascension; though others make it to be the "ninth"; and others the "fifteenth". The sense is, not that this narrative the evangelist gives, that the sanhedrim bribed the soldiers to give out such a lying story, was known to the Jews, and commonly reported by them; though some take this to be the sense; but that it was reported and believed among the Jews in common, to that time, that the disciples of Christ did really come in the night, and steal away the body of Christ, while the watch slept: to such judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, were they given up, as to believe a lie, and which had no appearance of truth in it. They have since contrived a more monstrous and ridiculous story than this. They say <sup>810</sup>, that Judas, seeing where the body was laid, and the disciples sitting upon the tomb, and mourning over it, in the middle of the night, took his opportunity to take away the body, and buried it in his own garden, under a current of water; having first turned the water another way, and then put it in the same course as before; and which he afterwards discovered to the Jews; and the body was taken up and exposed, and insulted in the most ignominious manner: but alas! Judas had hanged himself some days before; and had he been living, would not have been capable of doing what they ascribe unto him.

**Matthew 28:16**

Ver. 16. **Then the eleven disciples,**

For Judas was not only gone from them, but was

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<sup>810</sup> Toldos Jesu, p. 18, 19, 21.

dead; so that there were now but eleven of them:

**went away into Galilee:**

not directly, as soon as the women had delivered their message; for Christ appeared to them the same day at Jerusalem; and so he did at the same place that week; see Joh 20:19, but some time, after this they went together into Galilee, according to Christ's direction both before and after his resurrection, Mt 26:32,

**into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them;**

either before his death, or since he was risen; and very likely at one of the above interviews he had with them. This is generally thought to be Mount Tabor; but of this there is no proof, nor certainty: it might be the mountain near Capernaum, on which he taught, Mt 5:1, or that, if not the same with the other, near the sea of Galilee, where Christ fed four thousand with seven loaves, and a few fishes, Mt 15:29. A mountain was appointed for this meeting, both for solitariness and for sight; for here it was he was seen by above five hundred brethren at once, 1Co 15:6.

**Matthew 28:17**

Ver. 17. **And when, they saw him, they worshipped him,**.... With divine adoration, as the eternal Son of God; for so he was now declared to be by his resurrection from the dead, Ro 1:4,

**but some doubted;**

or "some of them", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, some of the eleven disciples: not that they doubted now that Christ was risen from the dead; since he had appeared several times to them before this, and had given them all the proofs of the truth of his resurrection they could desire; but they, who worshipped him now in Galilee, had doubted before in Jerusalem; not only Thomas, but all of them: they looked upon the words of the women as idle tales; nor did the rest believe the two disciples, with whom Christ travelled to Emmaus: wherefore he upbraids them for their unbelief, Luke 24:11, or else the sense is, that some of them, though they believed Christ was risen from the dead, of which they had had the strongest assurance; yet they doubted whether what they then saw on the mountain was he, or whether it was not a spirit, or a mere phantom; and therefore, as in the next verse, he "came" nearer to them, when they knew him: or else this may be understood of some of the seventy disciples, or of the five hundred brethren, who saw him at this time, and at first had some doubts of his resurrection, but were afterwards fully satisfied.

**Matthew 28:18**

Ver. 18. **And Jesus came and spake unto them,**

To the eleven disciples and apostles; for though there might be so large a number as before observed, yet the following words were only spoken to the apostles:

**saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;**

which is to be understood of him, not as God, who has the same original and underived power and authority over all creatures, and things in heaven and earth, as the Father has; but as mediator, to whom all things are delivered by the Father; and not of a power of doing this, or the other thing, or of omnipotence, being the Almighty; nor of doing miracles, and forgiving sins, which he had, and exercised before his death and resurrection, but of governing: he was king before, but his kingdom was not with observation; but now he was declared, and made manifest, to be both Lord and Christ; he had "all" power and authority for the settling the affairs of his church and kingdom, to appoint offices and officers in it, and, to bestow gifts upon men, to qualify them for the same, and to institute ordinances to be observed till his second coming: and this power of his reached to things in heaven; he having the angels in heaven subject to him, as ministering spirits to be sent forth by him at his pleasure; and all the gifts of the Spirit to dispose of as he thought good; and to things on earth, not only to the saints, whose King he is, and who are made willing to serve him; but to all flesh, to kings and princes, who rule and reign by him; and even to all the wicked of the world, who in some shape or another are made to subserve the ends of his mediatorial kingdom and government: and this is not usurped power, but what is given him, and what he has a right to exercise; having finished sin, abolished death, overcome the world, and destroyed the devil; and must reign till all enemies are subject to him: and this he says, and it was necessary to say it at this time, partly on account of his late sufferings and death, which were attended with weakness and reproach; and partly on account of the following commission he gives to his disciples, that it might be seen and believed, he had power and authority sufficient to give them such an one; as also to animate and encourage them under all the weakness, contempt, and persecution that should attend them in their ministry. The Syriac and Persic versions add, "as the Father hath sent me, even so I send you", as in Joh 20:21, from whence these words seem to be taken.

**Matthew 28:19**

Ver. 19. **Go ye therefore,...**

Into all the world; some into one place, and some into another; since his power and authority, and so now the commission he gave them, reached every where: before it was confined to Judea, but now it is extended to all the nations of the world; see Mt 10:6,

**and teach all nations;**

Jews and Gentiles, first the one, and then the other, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; whatever they had learned from Christ, or were ordered by him, or “disciple all nations”: make them disciples by teaching them; or, as the Persic version, by way of explanation, adds, “bring them to my religion and faith”: not that they were able to do this of themselves, but they were to teach men externally, or outwardly minister the word, whilst the Spirit of God internally applied it, and taught, and made men true disciples of Christ: and they are such, who have learned to know themselves, their sin, and lost estate by nature; to deny themselves, both sinful and righteous self; who have learnt to know Christ, and the way of righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation by him; and who are taught and enabled to part with all for Christ, and to bear all for his sake, and to believe in him, and give up themselves to him, and follow him whithersoever he goes:

**baptizing them;**

not all nations, for the antecedent to the relative “them”, cannot be “all nations”; since הַנִּי אֵת אֲתֵנָם, the words for “all nations”, are of the neuter gender, whereas אֵת, “them”, is of the masculine: nor can it be thought that it should be the mind of Christ, that all the individuals of all nations should be baptized, as Heathens, Turks, and Jews; but תַּלְמִידֵי אֵת “disciples”, supposed and contained in the word הַמְּלִמְתֵי אֵת, “teach”, or “make disciples”; such as are taught, and made disciples by teaching, or under the ministry of the word by the Spirit of God: Christ’s orders are to “baptize”: טָבַל, “dip” them, as Munster’s Hebrew Gospel renders it; that is, in water, which, though not expressed, is implied; for with no other baptism could the apostles baptize: not with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; for this was Christ’s peculiar prerogative; but with water, which they in obedience to this commission practised, Ac 8:36, and which was to be done

**in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;**

by the authority of these three divine persons, who all appeared, and testified their approbation of the administration of this ordinance, at the baptism

of Christ: and as they are to be invocated in it, so the persons baptized not only profess faith in each divine person, but are devoted to their service, and worship, and are laid under obligation to obedience to them, Hence a confirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity, there are three persons, but one name, but one God, into which believers are baptized; and a proof of the true deity both of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that Christ, as the Son of God, is God; since baptism is administered equally in the name of all three, as a religious ordinance, a part of divine instituted worship, which would never be in the name of a creature. This is the first, and indeed the only, place in which the Trinity of persons is expressed in this order, and in the selfsame words. Galatinus<sup>811</sup> pretends, that the ancient Jews used the same way of speaking. It would be well if proof could be made of it: he asserts it to be in Zohar on De 6:4, and in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel on Isa 6:3. In the former he says, it is expressed thus, “hear, O Israel; the Lord”, he is called “the Father; our God”, he is called the Son; “is one Lord”, this is “the Holy Ghost”, who proceeds from both; and again, by the same R. Simeon, it is said, “holy”, this is אב, “the Father”; “holy”, this is בן, “the Son”; “holy”, this is הַקָּדוֹשׁ הַרוּחַ, “the Holy Ghost”: and in the latter after this manner, “Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Holy Ghost”; but no such words are now to be found in either of these places. He affirms, that he himself saw a copy of Jonathan’s Targum that had these words. The Jews often speak of the Tetragrammaton, or name of four letters, the name Jehovah, which they say is not lawful to be pronounced; and also of the name of twelve letters, which the above writer<sup>812</sup> makes to be “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost”; and of forty two letters, which from a book called Gale Razia, he says is,

“Father God, Son God, Holy Ghost God, three in one, and one in three;”

which in the Hebrew language make up so many letters; but this wants better authority.

**Matthew 28:20**

Ver 20. **Teaching them to observe all things,**

All ordinances, not only baptism, but the Lord’s supper; all positive institutions, and moral duties; all obligations, both to God and men; all relative duties that respect the world, or one another, those that are without, and those that are within; and these are to be taught

1657 L. 2. c. 1.

812 Ib. c. 11, 12. Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Heb. in voce הוה

them, and therefore to be insisted on in the ministry of the word; and not merely in order that they may know them, and have the theory of them, but that they may put them into practice:

**whatsoever I have commanded you;**

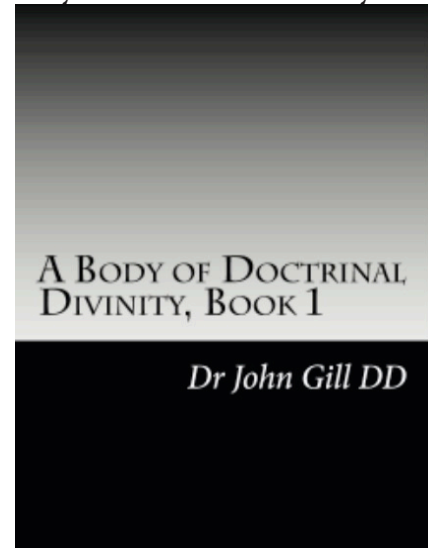
every thing that Christ has commanded, be it what it will, and nothing else; for Christ's ministers are not to teach for doctrines the commandments of men; or enjoin that on the churches, which is of their own, or other men's devising, and was never ordered by Christ; and for their encouragement he adds,

**and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world:**

meaning, not merely to the end of their lives, which would be the end of the world to them; nor to the end of the Jewish world, or state, which was not a great way off, though this is sometimes the sense of this phrase; but to the end of the world to come, the Gospel church state, which now took place; or to the end of the present world, the universe: not that the apostles should live to the end of it; but that whereas Christ would have a church and people to the end of the world, and the Gospel and the ordinances of it should be administered so long, and there should be Gospel ministers till that time; Christ's sense is, that he would grant his presence to them, his immediate disciples, and to all that should succeed them in future generations, to the end of time: and which is to be understood not of his corporeal presence, which they should not have till then, but of his spiritual presence; and that he would be with them, in a spiritual sense, to assist them in their work, to comfort them under all discouragements, to supply them with his grace, and to protect them from all enemies, and preserve from all evils; which is a great encouragement both to administer the word and ordinances, and attend on them.

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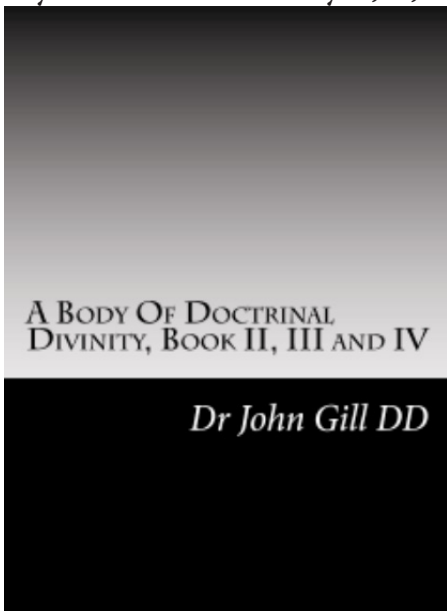
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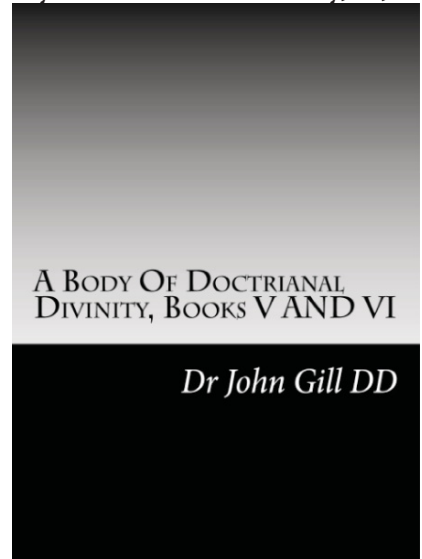
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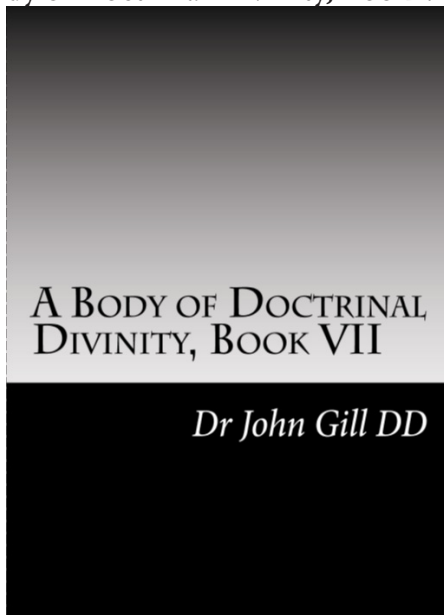
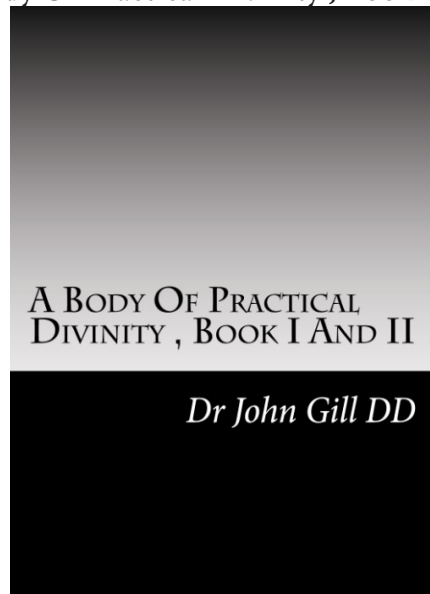
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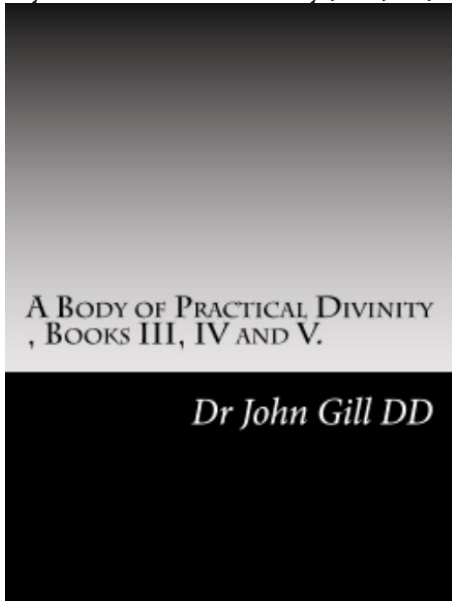
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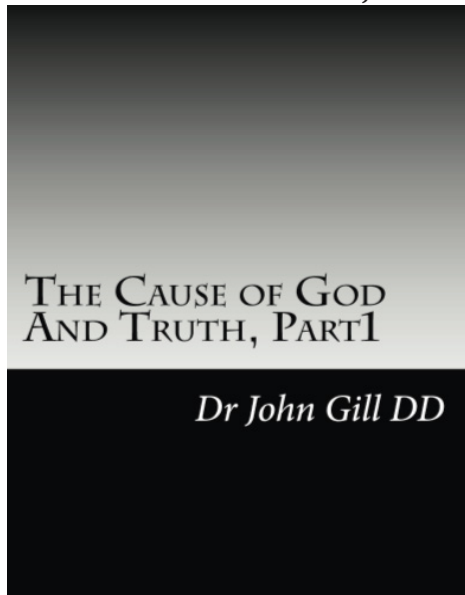
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- 4 The Proof Of This Custom Only From The Talmuds And Talmudical Writers
- 5 The Reasons Why Christian Baptism Is Not Founded On And Taken From, The Pretended Jewish Baptism Of Israelites And Proselytes



**The Cause of God And Truth, Part 1**

Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke CertEd

List Price: \$5.90

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

94 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1544094670 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

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BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

The following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

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Genesis 4:7

Genesis 6:3.

Deuteronomy 5:29.

Deuteronomy 8:2.

Deuteronomy 30:19.

Deuteronomy 32:29.

Psalms 81:13, 14.

Psalms 125:3.

Psalms 145:9.

Proverbs 1:22-30.

Isaiah 1:16, 17.

Isaiah 1:18, 19.

Isaiah 5:4.

Isaiah 30:15.

Isaiah 55:1.

Isaiah 55:6.

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Acts 7:51.

Romans 5:18.

Romans 11:32.

Romans 14:15.

1 Corinthians 8:11.

1 Corinthians 10:12.

2 Corinthians 5:14,15.

2 Corinthians 5:19.

2 Corinthians 6:1.

2 Corinthians 11:2, 3.

Philippians 2:12.

1 Timothy 1:19, 20.

1 Timothy 2:4.

1 Timothy 4:19.

Titus 2:11, 12.

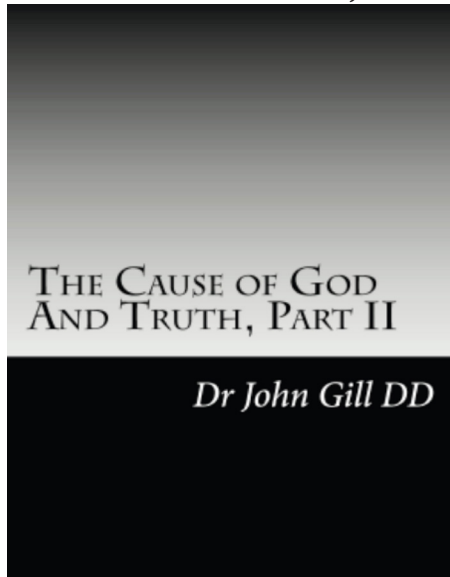
The Epistle to the Hebrews.

Hebrews 2:9.

Hebrews 6:4-6.

Hebrews 10:26-29.  
 Hebrews 10:38.  
 2 Peter 1:10.  
 2 Peter 2:1.  
 2 Peter 2:20-22.  
 2 Peter 3:9.  
 1 John 2:2.  
 Jude 1:21.  
 Revelation 2 and Revelation 3.  
 Revelation 3:20.

### The Cause of God And Truth, Part II



Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke CertEd

List Price: \$7.48

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

108 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1544648729 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1544648723

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

This is volume 2 of this 4 part series and it should be known that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work. In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several

passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture. The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

Contents

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OF REPROBATION

Proverbs 16:4.

John 12:39, 40.

1 Peter 2:8.

Jude 1:4.

Revelation 13:8.

Chapter 2

OF ELECTION

1 Peter 2:9.

Romans 9:10-13.

Colossians 3:12.

Ephesians 1:4.

Romans 8:28, 29.

John 6:37.

Acts 8:48.

Romans 8:29, 30.

2 Timothy 2:19.

Romans 5:19.

Chapter 3

OF REDEMPTION

Matthew 20:28.

John 10:15.

John 17:9.

Romans 8:34.

Romans 8:32.

Romans 5:10.

John 15:13.

Chapter 4

OF EFFICACIOUS GRACE

Ephesians 1:19, 20.

1 Corinthians 5:17.

John 3:5.

Ephesians 2:1.

have very little reason to triumph on that account.

This work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of Popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it ; but the author of this work was of opinion, that the increase of Popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation, This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and Popery together in their religious grievances they were desirous of having redressed ; and indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, Arminianism and Pelagianism, the very life and soul of Popery.

This is Part 4 of 4 parts, and a new edition, with some alterations and improvements, is now published by request.

This work contains:

Chapter

1 Of Predestination

2 Of Redemption

3 Or Original Sin

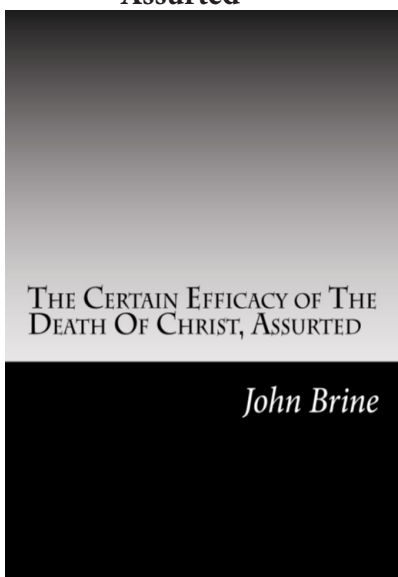
4 Of Efficacious Grace

5 Of Perseverance

6 Of The Heathens A Vindication of The Cause of God and Truth

### **The Certain Efficacy of The Death Of Christ,**

**Assured**



**Authored by John Brine**  
**Created by David Clarke**

List Price: \$7.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

114 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1973922254 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1973922258

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

This work declares the Glory of God in all his Perfections, the Honour of Christ, and the eternal Happiness of his People, all of which are intimately concerned in them. This is treated in four parts: In the First John Brine endeavours to prove the limited Extent of the Death of CHRIST, and the certain Salvation of all those for whom he died.

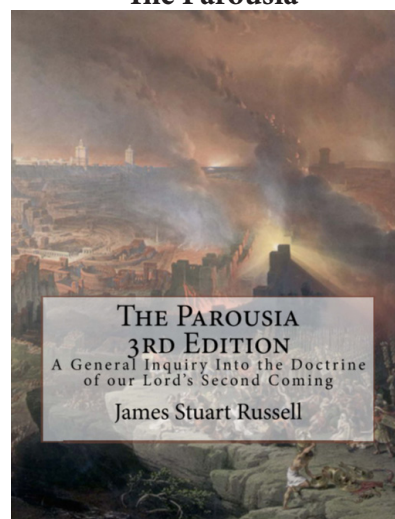
In the Second, the Objections which are usually urged by the Arminians, and others, will be answered.

In the Third shall attempt to prove the Impossibility of the Salvation of the Non-Elect, upon the Supposition of no other than a conditional Provision of Salvation being made for them.

In the Fourth Part shall attend to what he delivers on the Subjects of the Imputation of original Sin to Men, the Charge of Sin on CHRIST, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People.

This has been republished by Bierton Particular Baptists to further the cause of God and truth, it opposes Arminianism, Islam, and duty faith.

### **The Parousia**



Authored by James Stuart Russell

Foreword by David Clarke Cert. Ed.

A reformation - indeed - a revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this

new reformation. This “new” movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled.

The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research in the book, although he did not accept the “final” conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ’s coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions.

This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell’s work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these “skeptical” authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions.

This is where Russell’s work is of such importance. While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that

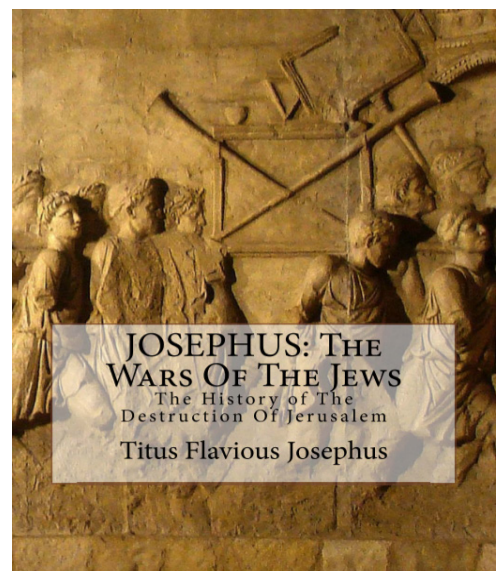
Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of “the end,” he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that “the end” that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age.

Russell’s work is a stunning rejection - and corrective -- of what the “Orthodox” historical “Creedal” church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the “divines” missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell’s main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.

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EAN13:1508659729 / 9781508659723 Page Count: 604  
Binding Type: US Trade Paper  
Trim Size: 5.25” x 8”  
Language: English  
Colour: Black and White  
Related Categories: Religion / Theology  
CreateSpace eStore:

### Josephus: The Wars Of The Jews



### **The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem**

Authored by Titus Flavius Josephus, Designed by  
Translated by William Winston

ISBN-13: 978-1985029132 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1985029138

BISAC: Religion / Christianity / History / General

Josephus was an eye witness to those events that he records in this book, 'The Wars of The Jews', or 'The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem'.

He records historic events that took place during and after the times of the New Testament scriptures.

The book of Revelation was a prophecy, given to Jesus Christ, and published by the Apostle John, about those things that were shortly to come to pass in his day.

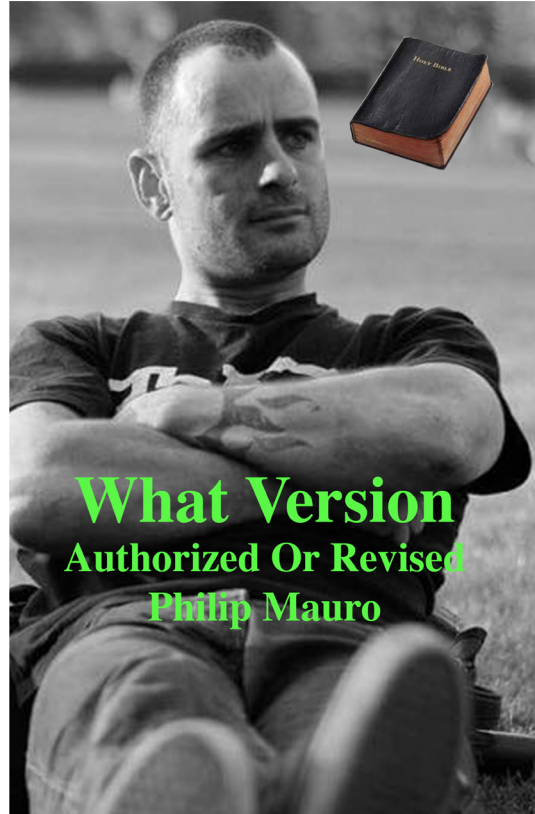
From the internal evidence of the book Revelation was written before the Neuronic persecution, of 66 A.D. and before the fall off Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, in 70. A.D. This is because the book records that the temple in Jerusalem was still standing at the time the book was written and not around 95 A.D. as Eusebius mistakenly says.

The historic events that Josephus records are remarkable as they give evidence to the fulfillment of Prophecy given by the Lord Jesus in his Olivet prophecy. In fact the book of Revelation was a prophecy of those events that were shortly to come to pass when Jesus spoke to John who wrote the Revelation. Jesus had informed his Apostles about future events and they lived in expectation of there fulfillment in their day.

Josephus gives the historic evidence of the fulfillment of those prophecies and that confirms scripture fulfillment.

We recommend the James Stuart Russell's book, 'The Parousia' as a very good introduction to this subject and advertised at the back of this book in our Further Publications.

### **What Version Authorised Or Revised**



Philip Mauro

The book discusses the issues relating to the reliability of the Authorised Version of the Bible and the failings of the so-called Revised Versions. It reminds the reader the greek printed text, produced by Erasmus in 1516, was derived from a broad set of 8 extant Greek manuscripts available to him in his day and in constant use by Christians to that day and not Latin bibles. Since 1861 there has arisen those who claim the Authorised Version is not accurate and Wescott and Hort produced a new compiled Greek Printed text manuscript, derived from, and base upon, two 4th C handwritten extant manuscripts. Codex Sinaiticus, written in Greek and Codex's Vaticanus, written in Latin. They claimed that since these manuscripts were the oldest extant manuscripts in the world (400 years after the original writing of the new testament scriptures) they were far superior and more reliable than the text underlying the Authorised version of the bible. And since 1945 all Bible translations are based upon the New Greek manuscript text of Wescott and Hort published in 1861. This is an eclectic text and not the Received Text used by the translator of the Authorised Version of the Bible and know by Christians, throughout the Christian age, as the Word of God. It has been republished by Bierteron

1 Corinthians 2:14.  
 2 Corinthians 3:5.  
 John 15:5.  
 John 6:44.  
 Acts 11:18.  
 Acts 16:14.  
 Jeremiah 31:18.  
 Jeremiah 31:33.  
 Ezekiel 11:36:26.  
 Philippians 2:13.  
 1 Corinthians 4:7.  
 Ephesians 2:8, 9.  
 Chapter 5  
 OF THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE  
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 Romans 8:7, 8.  
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 OF PERSEVERANCE  
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 John 17:12.  
 Romans 11:29.  
 Matthew 24:24.  
 John 6:39, 40.  
 Romans 11:2.  
 Romans 8:38, 39.  
 Ephesians 1:13, 14.  
 1 Peter 1:5.  
 1 John 2:19.  
 1 John 3:9.  
 Isaiah 54:10.  
 Isaiah 59:21.  
 Hosea 2:19, 20.  
 Jeremiah 32:40.  
 John 14:16.  
 John 10:28.  
 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9.

**The Cause of God and Truth Part III:**

THE CAUSE OF GOD  
 AND TRUTH , PART III

*Dr John Gill DD*

The Doctrines of Grace  
 Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Authored by David  
 Clarke CetEd

List Price: \$9.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

108 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1544810591 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1544810598

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

This book contains John Gill's answers to Dr  
 Whitby objections to The Doctrines of Grace under  
 the following heads.

Chapter

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Of Reprobation.                             |
| 2 | Of Election and Reprobation.                |
| 3 | Of Redemption.                              |
| 4 | Of Efficacious grace.                       |
| 5 | Of The Freedom of the Will of Man.          |
| 6 | Of The Perseverance of the Saints           |
| 7 | Of The Prescience and Providence of<br>God. |
| 8 | Of The State and Case of the Heathens.      |

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 be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue,  
 and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost  
 in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the  
 Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced  
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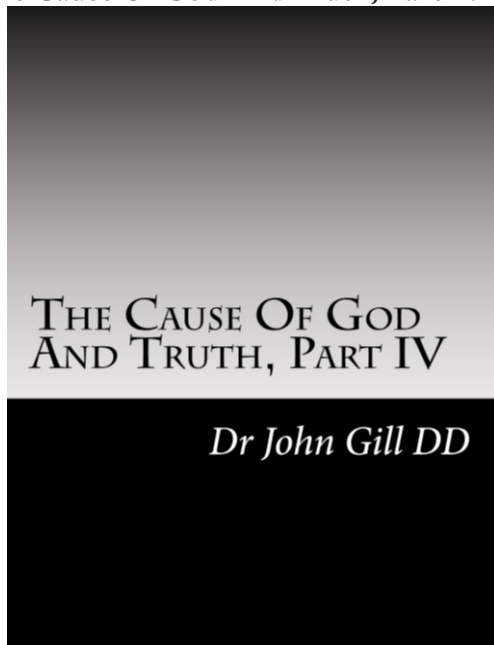
found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work.

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The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminians, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

The Third Part was published in 1737.

#### **The Cause Of God And Truth, Part IV**



Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke CertEd

List Price: \$8.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

126 pages

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ISBN-10: 1544848706

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

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The Third Part was published in 1737, and is a confutation of the arguments from reason used by the Arminians, and particularly by Dr. Whitby, against the above doctrines ; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favour of them, in which it appears that they are no more disagreeable to right reason than to divine revelation ; to the latter of which the greatest deference should be paid, though the Rationalists of our age too much neglect it, and have almost quitted it ; but to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.

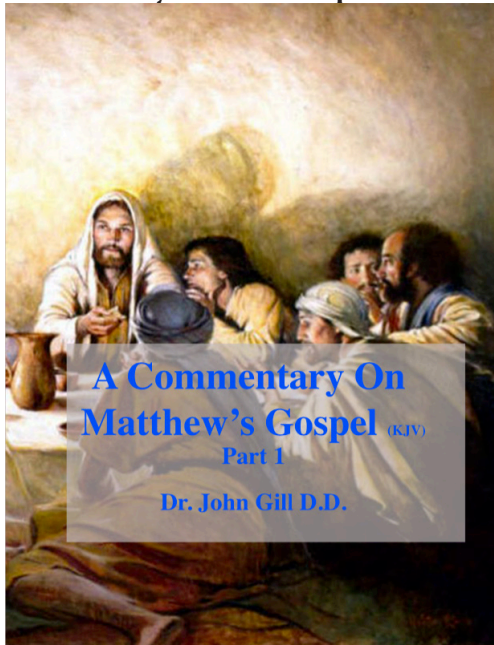
In this part of the work is considered the agreement of the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes and the Stoic philosophers with those of the Calvinists, in which the difference between them is observed, and the calumny removed ; to which is added, a Defence of the Objections to the Universal Scheme, taken from the prescience and the providence of God, and the case of the Heathens.

The Fourth Part was published in 1738, in which the sense of the ancient writers of the Christian Church, before the times of Austin, is given ; the importance and consequence of which is shown, and that the Arminians

Particular Baptist to educate serious minded people about the subject of Bible translations and support the Authorised version of the Bible. Philip Mauro was a lawyer in America, who practiced before the Supreme Court. He prepared briefs NOTES for the Scopes Trial WHICH was an American legal case in July 1925 THAT had made it unlawful to teach human evolution in any state-funded school.[1] The trial publicized the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which set Modernists, who said evolution was not inconsistent with religion,[4] against Fundamentalists, who said the word of God as revealed in the Bible took priority over all human knowledge. The case was thus seen as both a theological contest and a trial on whether “modern science” should be taught in schools. Mauro was ALSO passenger on the British ocean liner RMS Carpathia when it rescued the passengers of the Titanic in April 1912. It is hoped that this book will rescue any that are sinking in the sea of the natural Modern man’s opinion as to the reliability of the Authorised Version the bible.

[Available from Amazon \(Click to view\)](#)

**A Commentary On The Gospel Of Matthew**



By John Gill

The Gospel According to Matthew was the first written gospel and published sometime between (AD 31-38). It was written before Mark’s (AD 38-44) and Luke’s Gospel (AD-61).

Matthew was a Jew and one of the 12 Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and named Levi. He was a tax collector for the Romans. There are two strong traditions that

Matthew made a personal copy of his gospel and gave it to Barnabas, a companion of the Apostle Paul.

Matthew tells of the birth and lineage of Jesus. The life death, resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven.

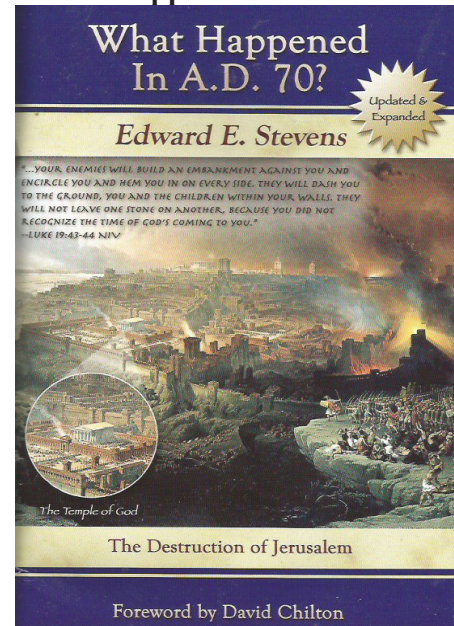
This publication is presented knowing that Matthew penned his gospel that contains all those things the Lord Jesus wanted him to publish.

Matthew records the Olivet prophesy of Jesus concerning those fearful things that were to come to pass within the period of that generation and after his ascension.

It is the intention of the publisher that this will assist in making the gospel known to all people and is published in two parts PART 1 chapter 1 to 16.

And PART 2 chapter 17 to 28.

**What Happened In A.D. 70**



This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a *consistent view* which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more *conservative* on most other issues than traditional views. And there is *no compromise* of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written (*audience relevance*). Two thousand yeas from now our history, culture, politics



and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine someone then having to learn the ancient language of “American English” to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the “donkeys and elephants” (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the Bible which are “hard to understand” (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical art cultural context (audience relevance)

One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many have found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that *the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them.* It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age.

Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christs and the inspired NT writings.

Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus repeatedly said His Kingdom is “not of this world” and that it would “not come with observation.” It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived We live in it. Both futurist

Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this.

Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the fatally flawed *futurist* interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

“Preterist” simply means past in fulfillment It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and “search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true” You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read.

Edward E. Stevens

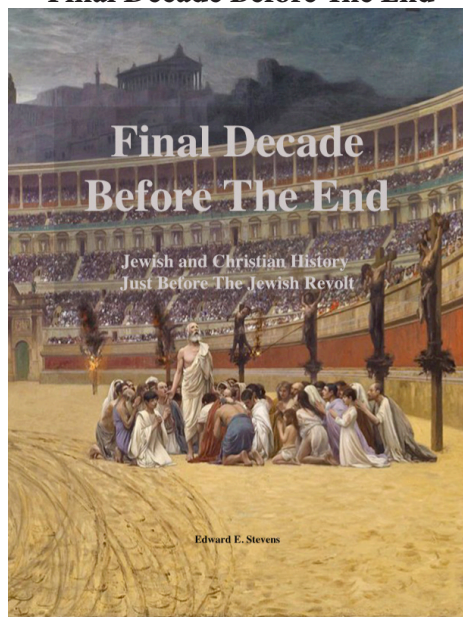
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION

<https://www.preterist.org/>

Bradford, Pennsylvania

April 17,2010

### Final Decade Before The End



### INTRODUCTION

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell’s view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological

events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to “teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul’s other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this

work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the endtime prophecies that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronian persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the endtime events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of “tribulation” upon the church and the “days of vengeance” upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

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