AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

PARABLES OF OUR LORD;

SHOWING

THEIR CONNECTION WITH HIS MINISTRY,

THEIR PROPHETIC CHARACTER,

AND

THEIR GRADUAL DEVELOPEMENT

OF THE

Gospel Dispensation.

WITH A PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION ON THE PARABLE.

BY THE REV. B. BAILEY, M.A.

DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD TORPHICHEN.

Scilicet Deus Pater, quemadmodum per Filium suum Mundum primitus condidit creavitque; ita per eundem Filium se deinceps Mundo patefecit.

Bulli Episcopi Defensio Fidei Nicenae.

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1828.
TO

THE EPISCOPAL CONGREGATION

OF ABERBROTHWICK

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

THE FOLLOWING EXPOSITION OF

THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD

BY THEIR LATE PASTOR

THE AUTHOR.
MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

The substance of the present Volume was originally composed for your use, and, in sermons or lectures, was delivered in the Episcopal Chapel, in Arbroath, during the period that I was your Pastor.

It afterwards occurred to me that, by some such arrangement as I have attempted to make of these inestimable portions of the Sacred Oracles, I might compile a work, though humble, yet of more extensive usefulness than discourses delivered only once from the pulpit. But as the several expositions were, with very few exceptions, first composed for your use, I have thought it but justice to you, as it is a pleasing office to myself, to inscribe the whole volume to you.

With regard to the work itself it becomes me to say little. It is before the public; it is beyond the Author's province to decide upon it, as it is out of his power to recall it. In this, as in every
age of the Republic of Letters, no one is justified in coming before the Public Tribunal, unless he at least supposes his Work to be in some respects new, either in its matter, or in its arrangement. The Arrangement of the Parables of the New Testament, in this Work, is all that can be claimed as original. The Author may indeed, as will be discovered by the intelligent Reader, have formed opinions for himself on some points; but the substance of the Exposition lies within the reach of every Biblical Scholar,—not to say of every Clergyman,—who is tolerably skilled in Christian Theology. That which may perhaps recommend it to my former parishioners,—the form, which some of the expositions still retain, of their original character, as delivered from the pulpit—rather injures the work as a whole. But it is difficult, as all who are accustomed to literary composition must know, to alter the first form of matter, when it is wished to be prepared in a form more suited to the press.

If the present arrangement be not, as I humbly think it is, original, I must throw myself upon the mercy of the public; and, rather than be dishonest, I must confess my ignorance, which indeed is no excuse. I am aware that, partially, the Parables
have been considered as in this Exposition. Some of them have been—and must always have been—considered as prophetic. But I know not that there has been a total arrangement of them, which professes to show their connection with the ministry of our Lord, as well as their prophetic character, and their gradual development of the Gospel Dispensation.

Diffident, as I feel myself, as to the details of the work, the arrangement itself, though it should in some respects be found erroneous, may, I humbly think, lead to discussion which cannot fail to be useful. If it show, in a novel—and surely a powerful—light, the Divinity of the Redeemer, much indeed will be accomplished; and this is the main subject, which has never been out of the Author's mind throughout the whole of the following Exposition. The Parables, more than any other parts of the New Testament, prove, almost to demonstration, the substance of what is prefixed in the title-page of this work, from the profoundly learned Bishop Bull—"That as the Father originally framed and created the world by his Son; so by the same Son he afterwards manifested himself to the world."
One other subject very naturally suggests itself; in the inscription of this small work to you who, for some years, were under my pastoral charge. This is the character of sermons, which is best adapted to the people, and best fitted to keep together a congregation, especially in Scotland, the difficulties of which I never experienced until I had a charge in that country.

In an age, too much addicted to preaching, in preference to prayer and the practical duties of religion—in a country, surrounded by those who, to speak most mildly, are by no means friendly to our cause and to our church—unprotected as we are, by the State, except as a Sect of Dissenters from the establishment—an English Clergyman finds himself placed in a much more arduous situation than in the southern part of the Island,—a situation which is the more difficult, because it is entirely new to him,—a situation which demands all his ability and all his prudence.

Under such circumstances he must comply with the temper of the times without compromising his duty. While, as a conscientious Pastor, he will place the highest value upon the prayers and the sacraments of the Church, and upon those offices
which are properly pastoral, he must provide his people with such discourses as, both in matter and manner, will not induce, or rather will not tempt them, to wander elsewhere for instruction; he must combine pleasure with profit, Christian principles with the manner and language of a public speaker.

The demand, likewise, of two sermons in every week not only augments the labour of the preacher, but very considerably increases the difficulty of satisfying his audience with that variety of subjects, and of the manner of handling them, which may instruct the mind without fatiguing the attention.

With these views, as to the usefulness of our public discourses, my usual habit has been to preach on some doctrinal point of our holy religion, generally connected with some part of the services of the day, in the morning, addressed indeed to all classes of people, but chiefly adapted to the better educated among the higher, and to the more thoughtful among the lower. The evening discourse has been, generally, practical or expository.

It is upon this last species of sermon, or lecture, that I wish to say a few words. The common subjects of practical usefulness, when singly handled, are soon exhausted; and a few paragraphs,
at the close of an expository or a doctrinal sermon, which has been confined to the doctrines or the language of the Holy Scriptures, will be frequently more efficacious than a single discourse, however eloquently composed or energetically delivered, upon a solitary subject.

For this purpose, I humbly suggest to my clerical brethren that expository discourses on chosen portions, either of the Old or New Testament, will be found in a high degree useful. The characters, for instance, of the Hebrew Scriptures are so infinitely varied; there is a truth and simplicity about the manners of the patriarchs, and in the narratives of the sacred historians; there is an unveiled exposure of the vices, as well as a natural and almost unconscious display of the virtues, of men who were the chosen instruments of the Divine dispensations;—all which, exhibited in action and painted to the life, cannot fail to strike an audience much more forcibly than many elaborate moral discourses against the vices, or in favour of the virtues, thus held out, in the characters of human beings like themselves, for their praise, or for their reprobation.

Such discourses, moreover, give the preacher an opportunity of correcting, as he goes along, many
vulgar errors respecting various passages of the Scriptures, which have been handed down from generation to generation without contradiction, or which may have been more recently infused into the public mind by the insidious sneers of the infidel scoffer.

Much more rises to my mind on this interesting, and, I must think, important subject than it befits me to write in this address. But I need no further argument to enforce my opinions than the authority of the justly admired Bishop Horne, who, in the elegant preface to his Commentary on the Book of Psalms, speaking of himself, writes thus:—

"The Author has frequently taken occasion, in the course of his ministry, to explain a Psalm from the pulpit; and wheresoever he has done so, whether the audience were learned or unlearned, polite or rustic, he has generally had the happiness to find the discourse, in an especial manner, noticed and remembered."*

The following Exposition of the Parables of our Lord was first, as you, my friends, must be aware, preached, with very few exceptions, in separate evening discourses, upon each parable: and if, as I hope, they were neither uninteresting nor unin-

* Preface to Horne's Commentary on the Psalms, p. lxxi.
Circumstances, over which I have no control, have removed me from my pastoral charge over you. The bodily affliction of one most near and dear to me transports me to a foreign country and to a milder clime. I pray God, and I cannot doubt, that your souls' health will prosper in other hands. But although it is most probable that you will see my face in the flesh no more, I trust that my ministry among you, imperfect as I must painfully feel that it has been, has, nevertheless, not been wholly without fruits. And while I pray that God may preserve your bodies, and souls, and spirits unto the Coming of the Lord Jesus, and, at the same time, entreat your prayers for myself, I present to you this Volume as an humble but sincere testimony of my regard, and of my affection for the flock, over which I have been, for some years, the appointed Overseer, and as the best pledge that I can give that

I am, and shall ever remain,

My dear friends,

Your faithful and affectionate servant.

London, May 12, 1828.
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ERRATA.

Page 1,—l. 5, 6. for “in which words are used instead of colours,” read “in which colours are used instead of words.”

Last line of Notes, for “e. 6. s. 20.” read “c. 20. s. 6. p. 279. 5th Edit.”

— 18,—Note. 1. 2. after “Cicero Tuscul.” instead of “Lucret.” read “Quaest.”

— 70,—l. 2. for “to the exclusion, but to the abatement,” read “to the abatement, but to the exclusion.”

— 74,—l. 8, 9. for “which this world, as he passes through it, presents to the eyes of every man,” read “which this world presents to the eyes of every man, as he passes through it.”

— 154,—l. 14. for “them,” read “it.”

— 224,—Note. 1. 5, 6. for “μετάνωσις,” read “μετάνοια.”

— 245,—Note. for “verses 15—19,” read “Eph. ii. 14, 16, 18, 19.”
The Parable is a species of allegory, and has been accurately defined, a figure which, under the literal sense of the words, conceals a foreign and distant meaning.* An allegory has been compared to an hieroglyphical painting, in which words are used instead of colours. They produce the same impressions upon the mind. An hieroglyphic excites two images; one seen, which represents one not seen. An allegory describes the subject intended to be represented by such figures as lead the mind to compare the resemblance, and to apply the description to the subject represented. The figure, as the name implies, regards the expression, not the thought; and therefore, though the words are to be taken in a literal sense, they conceal, and are intended to convey a meaning altogether distinct from that which is proper to them.†

* Lowth’s Praelections, x.
† Kingsley’s Elements of Criticism, vol. ii. c. 6. s. 20.
As for instance, in that fine allegory of the Jewish State, in the eightieth Psalm, which commences in these words:—"Thou hast brought a Vine out of Egypt;" the word "vine," and the other figurative expressions throughout the allegory, are to be taken in a literal sense; but the meaning which they convey is not that a vine was really transplanted from Egypt into Palestine, but that the Jewish people were delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and removed into the land of Promise, where they flourished in freedom and prosperity.

The parable is that kind of allegory which consists in a continued narration of a fictitious event, applied, by way of simile, to the illustration of some important truth. It is in short a fable, to which, in addition to the allegorical resemblances of facts or natural truths, is affixed a moral meaning. A celebrated critic remarks, that "What we call fables or parables, are no other than allegories; where, by words and actions attributed to beasts or inanimate objects, the dispositions of men are figured; what we call the moral is the unfigured sense or meaning of the allegory."*

The allegory which symbolizes facts is indeed, as the rhetoricians have justly designated it, an ænigma or riddle, in which the resemblances are darkly contrived in order that they may exercise the ingenuity of the reader to unfold them. Such is the well-known allegory of Solomon, which so pathetically, though obscurely, depicts old age by the gradual debility

* Blair's Lectures, xv.
of the mind and body, by the torpor of the senses, and by the gradual decay and insensible decline of the whole machine. All the images are derived from facts incidental to our common nature, the resemblances of natural phenomena; and by this ænigma, after the manner of the Oriental sages, did Solomon choose to exercise the acuteness of his readers. The resemblances, indeed, are so obscure, that they have employed the learning and ingenuity of succeeding ages to resolve the riddle.

But the parabolic kind of allegory is not only the comparison of things together by means of fictitious resemblances, which indeed is the meaning of the word Parable; but it is this comparison, when it conveys some important moral truth, which is the unfigured sense or meaning. The figurative resemblances of this species of allegory, which is the Parable, should not be too dark. "The meaning should be easily seen through the figure employed to shadow it. Such compositions require a proper mixture of light and shade, and exact adjustment of all the figurative circumstances with the literal sense, so as neither to lay the meaning too bare and open, nor to cover or wrap it up with too many or too obscure resemblances."

Of this character are the Scriptural allegories, particularly the beautiful one, already referred to, in the eightieth Psalm. The Vine is made to represent God's own people, the Jews. The leading events of the history of the Divine dispensations respecting that

* Blair's Lectures, xx.

B 2
people are beautifully shadowed; and the moral truth of their ingratitude and unworthiness is artfully insinuated, by the fact that the justice of the Divine Being has punished them in withdrawing from them his distinguished favour. This is more clearly shown by the literal expression of the Psalmist's prayer at the conclusion:—"Return, O God of Hosts; look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this Vine."

The antiquity of this species of composition excites our veneration, while it adds keenness and ardour to our inquiry into its origin. "Whoever," says an ingenious writer, "enters into the learning of antiquity, or, if already learned, recollects what he has met with, will soon discover that theologians, moralists, politicians, philosophers, astronomers, all who have made any pretensions to wisdom, have used the language of symbols: as if the mind were turned by nature to this kind of expression, as the tongue to sounds; and indeed this language of signs is, properly speaking, the language of the mind; which understands and reasons from the ideas, or images of things imprinted upon the imagination."

It is likewise the remark of the profound Lord Bacon, "That in the infancy of learning, and in rude times, when those conceits which are now trivial were then new, the world was full of parables and similitudes; for else would men either have passed over without mark, or else rejected

"Such a general concurrence," says Warburton, "in the method of recording the thoughts, can never be supposed the effect of chance, imitation, or partial purposes; but must needs be esteemed the uniform voice of nature, speaking to the first rude conceptions of mankind: for the reader may be subjoin the following translation, by M. Letronne, of a celebrated passage on Egyptian writing, from the Stromata of Clemens Alexandrinus, 'which,' says a modern writer, 'was strangely misunderstood by Warburton, though his sagacity showed him what it ought to signify.'—"Ceux qui parmi les Egyptiens reçoivent de l'instruction, apprennent d'abord le genre d'écriture Egyptienne qu'on appelle Epistolographique: [ils apprennent] en second lieu l'Hieratique, dont se serve les hiérommistes; et enfin l'Hieroglyphique. L'hieroglyphique [est de deux genres], l'un exprimant au propre les objets par les lettres, l'autre les représentant par des symboles. L'hieroglyphique Symbolique [se subdivise en plusieurs espèces]: l'une représente les objets au propre par imitation; l'autre les exprime tropiquement; la troisième, au contraire, les rappelle au moyen de certains allégories énigmatiques. Ainsi, d'après la méthode de représenter les objets au propre, les Egyptiens veulent-ils écrire le Soleil, ils font un cercle; la lune, ils tracent la figure d'un croissant. Dans la méthode tropique, ils représentent les objets au moyen d'analogies [ou de propriétés semblables], qu'ils transportent dans l'expression de ces objets, tantôt par des modifications [de forme], tantôt, et plus souvent, par des transformations totales. Ainsi, ils représentent par des anaglyphes [bas-reliefs allégoriques], les louanges de leurs rois, quand ils veulent les faire connaître au moyen de mythes religieux. Voici un exemple de la troisième espèce [d'écriture hiéroglyphique], qui emploie des allusions énigmatiques: les Egyptiens figurent les astres [planétaires] par un serpent, à cause de l'obliquité de leur course; mais le soleil est figuré par un scarabée." 

"M. Letronne has shown in his commentary on this passage, (Precis, 329—401.) that the three kinds of writing mentioned by Clemens, the Epistographic, Hieratic, and Hieroglyphic, correspond exactly with the two named by Herodotus, Diodorus, and the Rosetta Inscription; for the first, which 'expressed ob-
pleased to observe, that not only the Chinese of the East, the Mexicans of the West, and the Egyptians of the South, but the Scythians likewise of the North, (not to speak of those intermediate inhabitants of the earth, the Indians, Phœnicians, Ethiopians, Etruscans, &c.) all used the same way of objects as they are, without figure or metaphor, by means of the letters of the alphabet, is manifestly the Demotic of Herodotus and Diodorus, and the Enchorial of the Rosetta Stone: the second and third, which are 'the sacred letters' spoken of by the two historians, are the hieroglyphics of the Inscription. He also proves by a passage from Plutarch, (Symp. ix. 3.) that by 'the first letters of the alphabet,' Clemens means those borrowed from the Phœnicians by Cadmus, which are the very letters for which M. Champollion's researches have found hieroglyphical representatives in the Egyptian papyri and inscriptions.'—British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review, No. I. p. 150.

I shall add Warburton's version, with the original Greek of Clemens, with which both versions may be compared by the learned reader.—"Now those who are instructed in the Egyptian wisdom, learn first of all the method of their several sorts of letters; the first of which is called Epistolic [Epistolographic]; the second Sacerdotal [Hieratic], as being used by the sacred scribes; the last, with which they conclude their instructions, Hieroglyphical. Of these different methods, the one is in the plain and common way of writing by the first elements of words, or letters of an alphabet; the other by symbols. Of the symbolic way of writing, which is of three kinds; the first is that plain and common one of imitating the figure of the thing represented; the second is by tropical marks; and the third, in a contrary way, of allegorizing by enigmas. Of the first sort, namely, by a plain and direct imitation of the figure, let this stand for an instance:—To signify the sun, they made a circle; the moon, a half circle. The second, or tropical way of writing, is by changing and transferring the object with justice and propriety: this they do, sometimes by a simple change, sometimes by a complex multifarious transformation; thus they leave en-
writing by picture and hieroglyphic.—But, "adds this learned and ingenious author, "to show still clearer, that it was nature and necessity, and not choice and artifice, which gave birth and continuance to these several species of hieroglyphic writing, we shall now take a view of the rise and progress of its sister art, the art of SPEECH; and having set them together and compared them, we shall see with pleasure, how great a lustre they mutually reflect upon one another; for, as St. Austin elegantly expresses it, Signa sunt VERBA VISIBLE; verba SIGNA AUDIBILIA."*

We need not follow the learned prelate through graven on stones and pillars the praises of their kings, under the cover of theologic fables. Of the third sort, by enigmas, take this example: the oblique course of the stars occasioned their representing them by the bodies of serpents; but the sun they likened to a scarabæus." Div. Leg. ut supra, p. 142, 400.

"* Div. Leg. ut supra, p. 132.
the whole of his system respecting the origin of language; but it will be sufficient for our purpose to present the reader with a brief summary of it, mixed with other observations.

Many strange theories have been framed respecting the origin of language by ingenious writers who have wished to separate it from divine inspiration. But the most able and respectable writers concur in opinion that all language must have had its origin in revelation. Many of the ancients, without the aid of revelation, have confessed that the discovery of this art exceeded all human powers. Socrates, in the Cratylus of Plato, is stated to have affirmed, that "a power more than human assigned the first names to things; and that in consequence they must of necessity be rightly established." In another part of the same work, he at once declares that "the first names were framed by the Gods."*—With the sure light of revelation we can safely assert, that language was derived solely from divine instruction; for if, as must be allowed by all religious persons, God instructed the first man in religion, it will hardly admit of a doubt that the same Divine Being would instruct him in language, which is necessary to support the intercourse between man and his Maker; as we know that it is now necessary to the subsistence of that society of men with each other, which is likewise of divine appointment.

"The first use of words," says a learned author, "appears from Scripture to have been to communicate the thoughts of God. But how could this be done, but in the words of God? And how could man understand the words of God, before he was taught them? The Apostle has told us, that 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God:' thus clearly pronouncing all knowledge of divine things, and consequently all language relating to them, to have had its origin in revelation."*

This is confirmed by the testimony of Moses, who tells us that God brought every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air unto Adam, to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowls of the air, and to every beast of the field."† "Here," as Warburton well observes, "by a common figure of speech, instead of directly relating the fact, that God taught men language, the historian represents it, by showing God in the act of doing it, in a particular mode of information; and that, the most apposite we can conceive, namely, elementary instruction, in the giving names to substances; such as those with which Adam was to be most conversant, and which therefore had need of being distinguished each by its proper name."‡

Reason as well as history intimates that mankind have always used speech; the young, in all ages since the first men and women, must have learnt it

by imitation; and our first parents must have received it by immediate inspiration. Nor is the variety of languages any solid objection to the opinion that language itself was derived from God; for it is not contended by any who understand themselves, that the primitive language, taught to our first parents by divine inspiration, was perfect, and to be had in special reverence by all mankind in preference to all other tongues, because it was the first, and immediately inspired by God. All that is necessary to our present argument is, that the elements of language were communicated by inspiration to the progenitors of the human race; and from these elements innumerable languages may have been, and must have been, constructed without injuring in any respect the stability of our reasoning in favour of the divine origin of human speech.*

* On this interesting subject the reader is referred to a very able article on Language, in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and the authors there quoted and referred to; and likewise to a dissertation, already noticed, in Archbishop Magee's work on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 1-25.—Sir William Jones, one of the best Oriental scholars ever known, believed that the primitive language, spoken by our first parents and their immediate descendants, is entirely lost: a fact which, if established, would overthrow many fine-spun theories respecting the Hebrew language, which is thought by some critics to have been spoken by our first parents in the Garden of Eden. That there was a primæval language, out of which all other languages are formed, is demonstrated, as far as the subject is capable of demonstration, by this learned Orientalist; but the first language, he declares it to be his decided opinion, is lost. On this subject the reader is referred to "a Dissertation on the Literature of the ancient Indians," by the author of the Indian Antiquities, in which will be found collected many interesting facts, and ingenious remarks on the first languages by that learned
But though the elements of language were derived from divine instruction,—which can hardly be doubted, or at least is most difficult to controvert,—language must have been at first extremely rude and simple; and this is evinced by the remains of the most ancient languages yet extant. This obvious deficiency in the primitive speech appears to have been supplied by significative actions or external signs. Many examples are furnished by the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, in the awful interview between Jehovah and Moses, as it is related by Moses himself in the third and fourth chapters of Exodus, which is carried on by signs, this species of language, if it may be so designated, is called "the Voice of the Sign," which was most probably an Eastern phrase in common use.*

It may be alleged, that when the more frequent and the permanent use of these significative actions and analogous figures of speech was made by the inspired writers, the cultivation of Hebrew poetry was arrived at that perfection, which, from the poverty of language, did not require these signs, but that they were the result of choice. But, as Bishop but irregular writer. He asserts the existence of "a primâval language, universally prevalent among the earlier branches of the family of Noah, and diffused with the first colonies through the habitable world; but in the course of ages, as new events arose, as new governments were formed, and as new ideas poured in upon them, undergoing such material alterations and modifications, as scarcely to leave any vestige of its origin remaining, except the radices of some principal words in every dialect of it, by which the relation of the secondary to its primary tongue may be faintly recognized." Indian Antiquities, vol. vii. p. 114.

Warburton has justly remarked, "use and custom improving what had arisen out of necessity, into ornament, this practice subsisted long after the necessity was over; especially amongst the Eastern people, whose natural temperament inclined them to a mode of conversation, which so well exercised their vivacity, by motion; and so much gratified it by a perpetual representation of material images."*

As their language became enriched with words and images—as the imagination became more vivid by exercise, this rude method of speaking by action was exchanged for the delightful and elegant apologue, or Parable. The human mind was slow in attaining those powers of reasoning which we find only among the most cultivated people. But though men could not for many ages follow abstract reasoning, which requires much mental discipline, they could apprehend the moral of an apologue or parable, conveyed by images of nature, or even of life, which were familiar to them. The Hebrew Scriptures furnish us with the most ancient and the most beautiful specimens of this species of fable. The most ancient example of this attractive form of instruction, which is extant in any language, is the speech of Jotham, in the Book of Judges, to the men of Shechem. The object of the beautiful apologue, which was delivered on that occasion, was to paint, in the most vivid colours, the folly of the Shechemites, and to foretell their ruin in choosing Abimelech for their king. This apologue I shall insert in this place.

* See Warburton's Div. Leg. ut supra, p. 133; and the instances he adduces from Scripture of this mode of conversation.
The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

"Thus," says the learned author of whom I have made such free use, "we see the common foundation of all these various modes of writing and speaking, was a picture or image, presented to the imagination through the eyes and ears; which being the simplest and most universal of all kinds of information (the first reaching those who could not decipher the ar-

* Judges ix. 8—15. See note to Chap. VII. Sect. 2. for an explanation of the words—"Should I leave my wine which cheereth God and man"—in this apologue, which has excited much scoffing in the infidel.—The reader will naturally call to mind the exquisite parable of "the little ewe-lamb," (2 Sam. xii. 1.) by which the prophet Nathan reproves David for his sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.
bitrary characters of an alphabet; and the latter instructing those who were yet strangers to abstract terms), we must needs conclude to be the natural inventions of rude necessity.*

I shall conclude this introductory Dissertation with some remarks on the parables of the New Testament, which are attempted to be arranged and expounded in this work. But before I take leave of the allegorical parts of the Old Testament, I cannot refrain from observing, and, as far as I am able, refuting, a very dangerous notion, cherished at all times by infidels, and occasionally entertained by believers both among the ancients and moderns. This is, that the Garden of Eden, and indeed all the circumstances of the Creation and Fall of our first parents, are not real, but allegorical. This notion has been recently revived by an author, eminent indeed for his learning, and in the highest degree

* "How nearly the apologue and instruction by action are related, may be seen in the account of Jeremiah's adventure with the Rechabites, (ch. xxxv.) ; an instruction partaking of the joint nature of action and apologue. This was the birth of the FABLE; a kind of speech which corresponds, in all respects, to writing by hieroglyphics, each being the symbol of something else understood. And, as it sometimes happened, when an hieroglyphic became famous, it lost its particular signification, and assumed a general one; as the Caduceus, for instance, which was at first painted only to denote the pacific office of Hermes, became in time to be the common symbol of league and amity: So it was with the Apologue; of which, when any one became celebrated for the art and beauty of its composition, or for some extraordinary efficacy in its application, it was soon converted and worn into a Proverb."—Div. Leg. ut supra, p. 138, 140.
imitable for his faith and veneration of the inspired writings.* Without presuming to cope with this writer in erudition, for which, as well as his genius, I have the highest respect, I shall state my reasons for believing this opinion as unfounded as, I think, it is dangerous.

The history of the Creation and Fall of man is indeed very remarkable; and the great conciseness and brevity of the history, and the very wonderful circumstances of the formation of the woman, and her temptation by a speaking serpent, and the other particulars of this narrative, have induced some ingenious persons, who have been firm believers in the inspiration of Moses, to consider the whole as an allegory, or fable, representing certain moral truths by images and figures. "Divines," says Mr. Coleridge, "of the most unimpeachable orthodoxy, and the most averse to the allegorizing of Scripture history in general, have from the earliest ages of the Christian church adopted or permitted it in this instance. And, indeed," he continues, "no unpre-

* See Mr. Coleridge's "Aids to Reflection," page 250, where, in a long and elaborate note occupying some pages, the doctrine of original sin, held by Bishop Jeremy Taylor, is attempted to be overthrown by the revival of Origen's opinion of the allegorical nature of the Mosaic history of the Fall. Without entering into the controversy of original sin, and with all my respect for the genius and learning of Mr. Coleridge, I cannot but remark, that the doctrine, which he substitutes for Bishop Taylor's, and for all others with which I have ever met, on original sin, can be entertained by no sound churchman, nor, I think, by any consistent and reasoning believer in the Christian religion. But the examination of this doctrine is not the purpose, nor the proper business, of the author of this work.
judiced man can pretend to doubt, that if in any other work of Eastern origin he met with trees of life and of knowledge; talking and conversible snakes;

'Inque rei signum serpente serpere jussum;'

he would want no other proofs that it was an allegory he was reading, and intended to be understood as such.* Nor, supposing him conversant with Oriental works of any thing like the same antiquity, could it surprise him to find events of true history in connection with, or historical personages among the actors and interlocutors of, the Parable."

That believers have entertained this notion is indisputable; but the infidel has availed himself of this admission to the detriment of the religion revealed by the whole Bible. Allegories were, as we have seen, the common expression of moral truths in the earlier nations of the East; but when used by inspired authors, they must be compared with the same species of composition used by other inspired authors, and not with the fanciful allegories of other writers. If so compared, this opinion falls to the ground; for the allegories or parables of the Old and New Testament, the nature of which cannot be disputed, bear no resemblance whatever to the his-

* Mr. Belsham likewise says, that "certainly no reasonable person in modern times can regard the Mosaic history of the Fall in any other light than as an allegory or fable." By much the greater proportion of the Christian world, and the most learned and reasonable men, have, however, believed it to be a real history. See Christian Remembrancer for September 1827, No. 105, p. 500.
tory, detailed in the second and third chapters of Genesis, of the creation and fall of our first parents, nor of the Book of Jonah, which is likewise interpreted, by Mr. Coleridge and others, to be allegorical.

But this history is altogether inconsistent with the nature of the allegory, as a distinct species of composition. An allegory is the vehicle of certain truths under fictitious images: but every image is fabulous, and none is real. Such was Jotham's apocalypse, or allegory, of the trees choosing a king, which is cited above. Such are our Lord's parables, which are allegories. If any thing, in these fables, be called by its real name, as Egypt in the Psalmist's beautiful allegory of the Vine, it is so distinctly marked as to admit of no doubt whatever. Every image of these sacred allegories is fabulous, but conveys moral truth. But this is not the case of the Mosaic history of the Garden of Eden and of the fall of man. This narrative is so connected and consistent with itself, that, as Bishop Horsley* has observed, it "must be either all plain matter of fact, or all allegory. It cannot be matter of fact in one part, and allegory in another. For no writer of true history would mix plain matter of fact with allegory in one continued narrative, without any intimation of a transition from the one to the other. If, therefore, any part of this narrative be matter of fact, no part is allegorical. On the other hand, if any part be allegorical, no part is naked matter of

fact; and the consequence of this will be, that every thing in every part of the whole narrative must be allegorical. If the formation of the woman out of man be allegory, the woman must be an allegorical woman. The man, therefore, must be an allegorical man; for of such a man only the allegorical woman will be a meet companion. If the man is allegorical, his Paradise will be an allegorical garden; the trees that grew in it, allegorical trees; the rivers that watered it, allegorical rivers: and thus we may ascend to the very beginning of the creation; and conclude at last, that the heavens are allegorical heavens, and the earth an allegorical earth. Thus the whole history of the creation will be an allegory, of which the real subject is not disclosed; and in this absurdity the scheme of allegorizing ends.”

This reasoning, which, as it respects the creation, is unanswerable, may be, and must be transferred to the fall, the history of which is related with it. But respecting the fall, and the temptation of the woman by the serpent, there are other considerations which render it quite unnecessary to resort to allegory for the explanation and elucidation of this very important part of the sacred history.

The chief cause of the fall of man, or rather the instrument in effecting his fall more speedily than it might otherwise have happened, appears by the Mo- saic account, as well as by the subsequent Scriptures of the Old and particularly of the New Testament, to have been Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, a higher order of Spirits, who, though at first made like other celestial Spirits, had fallen from their high
and happy stations into the depths of misery and moral degradation. This wicked Spirit assumed, or shrouded himself under the form of a serpent. Notwithstanding the objections urged against the literal interpretation of this narrative by the believer, and the sneer of the infidel, there really appears nothing incredible in this, certainly to us, wonderful circumstance. That man should assume, or conceal himself under, the form of any animal, were indeed incredible, because it is contrary to our experience of the power of man; and with his present powers over nature it is utterly impossible. Over animate nature man possesses no such power as to assume the form, or in any way change the nature, of an animal. But over inanimate nature, the progress of science plainly proves that man possesses a power, which, comparatively speaking, is almost unlimited; for, within these few years, discoveries have been made in various departments of physical science—with the results of which, such as those of Steam, the most illiterate persons are acquainted—which our ancestors would have considered as absurd and as impossible as for a man to assume the form of a brute. If then an inferior rational being, like man, possesses such unquestionable power over inanimate nature—a power so great, and so capable of increase by new scientific discoveries, that we are not able to assign limits to it—is there any thing incredible in the power permitted by God to a superior order of intellectual creatures, such as the angels, to be exercised over animate nature, over the bodies of brutes and of men, which the Devil exercised over
the body of the serpent, in whose form he tempted the woman to taste of the forbidden fruit?

In this history, wonderful as it certainly is, the truly rational mind of an enlightened believer, nay, the mind of any thinking man, unprejudiced by system and unseduced by infidelity,* may see abundant cause of reverence and of faith. To the Christian this should afford not the least difficulty; because up to the time of our blessed and Divine Redeemer, who came "to destroy the works of the Devil," Satan, and other apostate Spirits, exercised the same power over the bodies of men: for the devils, who possessed the demoniacs, made use of the faculties of men for their own purposes. To the question of Jesus, "what was their name?" the devils replied, in human language, "Legion!"† On another occasion they addressed Christ in human language and with human organs:—"Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come to torment us before the time?"‡ The only difference between these demoniacal possessions of men, and the Devil assuming the form of a serpent, and conversing with Eve, was, that he used human language and organs under the form of a

* "A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion: for when the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no farther; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."—This golden maxim of the great Lord Bacon is universal in its application to every shade and every species of infidelity. See his Essays—Works, vol. ii. p. 290; and Advancement of Learning, vol. i. p. 9.
† Luke viii. 30.
‡ Matt. viii. 29.
brute. But this is a difference of the circumstances and exercise of the power, not of the power itself, which was exercised in the only possible manner: for there was no other human being, except the first pair; and it were in the highest degree incredible that he should have assumed the form of Adam to have tempted Eve, or the form of Eve to have tempted Adam. She did indeed tempt her husband, but in her own form and nature, and by means, for which her previous temptation by the Devil satisfactorily accounts.

The following remark of Mr. Townsend must therefore, I think, be acceded to by all rational believers:—"The history of the Fall, and the account of the Garden of Eden which precedes it, must be taken literally. There is no proof or appearance of allegory; and that they were always so understood, is sufficiently evident from the remains of the traditions of the ancient nations."*

The word Parable is used in various senses in Scripture. No less than ten † different meanings, in

* Townsend's Arrangement of the Old Testament.
† Dr. Adam Clarke has inserted, from Glassias, a very good dissertation on the nature and use of parabolical writing, at the end of his notes on Matt. xiii. He finds the following ten significations in Scripture.
1. The word parable means a simple comparison, Matt. xxiv. 32—3.
2. An obscure similitude, Matt. xv. 13—15; where Pharisaism is represented as a plant, &c.
3. A simple allegory, as in Matt. xiii.
4. A maxim, or wise sentence, as the corresponding Hebrew word בֵּרֵא is used in 1 Kings iv. 22.
which this word is used, have been collected from the Sacred Volume. But the most frequent and common sense of the word Parable in the New Testament is that which is generally understood of our Lord's parables, which are in fact sacred allegories, and are confined exclusively to the conveyance of moral and religious truths. Many of the parables delivered by our Lord are to be found in the writings of the Jewish Rabbis which are still extant, and were applied by Christ to the mysteries of his kingdom. They were at once the most popular and the most appropriate means of instruction, which could have been devised for the temper of the Jews.

5. A by-word, or proverb of reproach, 2 Chron. vii. 20. Ps. xlii. 14. and lxix. 11; Jerem. xxiv. 9.

6. A frivolous, uninteresting discourse, or a disregarded and despised address, Ezek. xx. 49.


8. A type, illustration, or representation, Heb. ix. 9; where the first tabernacle is said to have been a figure, a parable, to last only for a time.

9. A daring exploit, an unusual and severe trial, a case of imminent danger and jeopardy. It may be doubted whether this part of Dr. Clarke's criticism is managed with equal judgment. The instance he adduces, Heb. xi. 19, where Abraham is said to have received his son from the dead, ευ παραβολη, "he being in the most imminent danger of losing his life," does not seem satisfactory; the common translation being undoubtedly preferable.

10. The word parable signifies also a very ancient and obscure prophecy, Ps. xlix. 4; Prov. i. 6; Matt. xiii. 35.—Townsend's Arrangement of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 224. The word Parable signifies any kind of prophecy, as is evinced by the story of Balaam, who, when he prophesied, is said "to take up his parable." Numb. ch. xxiii. xxiv.
But the object of our Lord's parables has been misapprehended by many; and it is necessary that this misconception should be set right in these introductory remarks, before we proceed to the exposition of these simple and beautiful compositions. When our Saviour delivered the parable of the Sower to the assembled multitude, his disciples privately inquired its meaning, which they had not understood. "And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." This text of St. Luke, and the parallel one in the Gospel of St. Mark,* have been very generally misunderstood. The common notion is, that our blessed Lord spoke in parables that people might not understand him, and that their condemnation might be increased. This interpretation is, however, as unfounded as it is blasphemous, and degrading to the Divine attributes, and the preaching of Christ, who came as "the light of the world, as a city that is set on a hill, and cannot be hid; and not as a candle put under a bushel."† He came to save, and not to condemn the world.

The apparent harshness of these texts will be removed, if, as learned men have suggested, the particles iva, 'that,' in one part, and μήποτε, "lest," in the other, be rendered 'because,' and 'if per-adventure.' They may then be thus read:—"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the king-

† Matt. v. 14, 18.
ON THE NATURE AND

dom of God, but to others in parables; because see-
ing they have not seen, and hearing they have not
understood."—The Jews, by reason of their pre-
judices, not being able to understand the great
mysteries of the Gospel, our Lord, out of love to
their souls, accommodated himself to their capaci-
ties by speaking to them in parables.—Then follows
the continuation of St. Mark—"If peradventure
they may be converted, and their sins be forgiven."*

* Luke viii. 10. ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσιν, καὶ ακούοντες μὴ συνωσιν. "That seeing they might not see, and hearing they
might not understand," Mark iv. 12. "That seeing they may see,
and not perceive, and hearing, they may hear, and not un-
derstand, lest they should be converted, and their sins forgiven
them." See Whitby. The particle ἵνα, in these passages, has
not the force of a final cause, but of a certain event—Vel
habet non causae finalis, sed eventus certi. Vide Valpy's
Test. Græc. in Luc. viii. 10, et Marc. iv. 12. See the texts
quoted in Schleusner's 4th meaning of the word ἵνα. See like-

Our Saviour's forbearing to explain the parables to the mul-
titude, must by no means be understood as proceeding from any
unwillingness in him to give them all necessary instruction;
but it was plainly only his putting in practice that rule himself
which he afterwards gave in direction to his disciples, that they
should not "cast their pearls before swine," that is, before pre-
judiced and unworthy persons; lest thereby they should expose
themselves to injuries, and their doctrine to contempt. It is
the very same case, as in the instance of his forbearing to work
miracles in his own country; not that he was more unwilling to
convert those of his own country than others; but because the
unreasonable prejudices and obstinacy of those particular per-
sons made them unworthy, and would have rendered the mira-
cles themselves useless. This seems to be the true account of
our Saviour's forbearing to interpret the parable to the mul-
titude; and it shows how dangerous a thing it is to raise doc-
This completely rescues these texts from the blasphemous interpretation, that Christ spoke in parables that the people might not understand him, and might not be converted, and might not have their sins forgiven. On the contrary, he used this parabolic mode of speech that the people might understand as much as, with their prejudices, they were able, "if peradventure" this should, under the Divine Providence, create the desire in them to know more of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, that thus they might be converted, and their sins forgiven.

St. Luke and St. Mark, who wrote their Gospels for the Gentiles and the converted Jews at Rome, appear moreover to have omitted, as unnecessary for their purpose, the latter part of the speech recorded by St. Matthew. But St. Matthew, who wrote his Gospel for the Jews in Palestine, records the fact that this blindness of the Jews was the fulfilment of a prophecy of Isaiah, which was that day completed. "And in them—the common people of the Jews—is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross; and their ears are dull of hearing; and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand from particular and single texts of Scripture, without comparing them with other parallel places, which more fully represent the same sense under different expressions. Dr. S. Clarke's Sermons, vol. v. p. 300. Dublin, 1751.
stand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."*

But in whatsoever sense these texts are verbally understood, it becomes a matter of minor importance when it is considered that it is a common mode of speech in the Scriptures, to express a fact, brought about by the waywardness and perverseness of the human heart, as the determination of the Divine will.† Thus Jehovah is said, in the Old Testament, to harden Pharaoh's heart; which merely expresses that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, not by God, though with his permission, but by Pharaoh himself, who, like other headstrong and wicked men, followed the dictates of an obstinate will in direct opposition to the will of God. His hardness of heart became his own punishment, which God permitted as the just retribution of his impious blasphemy and infidelity. In the same manner the hardness of heart, and grossness of perception in reference to spiritual things in the Jews, were the consequence of their previous iniquity, the cause of their present rejection of the Messiah, and of their judicial punish-

† "The design of our Lord's speaking to the people in parables was, as himself declares, "because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand;" which words, both in sacred and profane authors, are a proverbial expression concerning men so wicked and so slothful, that either they attend not to, or will not follow the clearest intimations and convictions of their duty; and therefore, to awaken their attention, and make the stronger impression upon them, our Saviour was forced to have recourse to parables." Stackhouse, vol. iii. p. 155.
ment for such previous iniquity and present infidelity. But it was, like Pharaoh's, the voluntary dictate of an obstinate and self-willed disposition.

To those who read the Scriptures with attention these expressions so continually occur that they explain themselves. From the minds, however, of such pious persons as are perplexed with these difficult passages, false impressions should be wiped away; that, on future perusals of the Sacred Volume, their progress in religious knowledge may not be impeded; and they will perceive the meaning, and understand the will of a gracious God.* To such persons it may be said, in the beautiful words of our Lord to his disciples—"Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear: for verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."†

That it was "given" to the disciples "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them—the people—it was not given," does not therefore imply that the parables, in which our Lord addressed and instructed the people, were dark and obscure sayings, which it was impossible that they could

* "Hence we may learn the power and efficacy of the Word, when it is heartily believed, and seriously attended to, to work in those that hear it, conversion to the salvation of the soul; it being only through the want of seeing and understanding, that is, of believing and considering the importance of it, that it hath not this effect upon men." Whitby's Additions to the Annotations upon St. Luke, No. 13.
† Matt. xiii. 16, 17.
comprehend. This would have rendered his teaching a mockery of the people, a sentiment which cannot be entertained for a moment. Christ concealed nothing from the people which it was necessary and useful for them to know, and which indeed they could understand; but he communicated to his disciples many things concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which were contained in his parables, and which it was not proper, for many reasons, that the people should be told. The disciples' desire to be made acquainted with such mysteries, and the aversion of the people, who were under the dominion of the Scribes and Pharisees, from the knowledge of any truths which opposed their rooted prejudices in favour of traditions; these constituted the difference between the disciples and the people.

The knowledge of divine things in the East, and particularly among the Jews, was very much evinced by parables. This mode of instruction, which was adopted by our Lord in compliance with the customs of his country, was not without the greatest use and advantage for his peculiar purpose. It was a means of ascertaining those who had an ardent love of divine things, and who were qualified for the reception of the light of the Gospel. It was, moreover, the only way of reasoning which could be apprehended by the people generally; for the philosophy of Greece and Rome was by much too abstract to arrest the attention of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. "The only method of reasoning, therefore, which was agreeable to
the Jewish taste, was to usher in an handsome simile or story apposite to the matter in hand; to apply a smart saying of some ancient worthy; or to bring good proof from their law or ancient tradition; but to go to prove morality to them, as Plato or Tully do, from the eternal rules of justice, from the rectitude and honourableness of virtue, and the pravity and turpitude of vice, would have been such a way of talking as the wisest men of their way of education would have greatly despised; and therefore our Blessed Saviour, who was well accustomed to the temper and customs of the people with whom he conversed, took care that his way of instructing them should be such as was most agreeable to their education, and consequently such as would tend more to their edification than if he had introduced the philosophic method of morality, which was only in use in such nations as were destitute of the benefits of a Divine Revelation."


The Jews, above all nations, delighted in this way of reasoning. Their books at this day are filled with such parables as our Saviour used. Many of these, which were taken from the Talmudical writings, have been noticed in the subsequent exposition. Had the author had access to more books of this description than were within his reach, he might have made his exposition more perfect, and more satisfactory to himself than it now is.

"No scheme of Jewish rhetoric was more familiarly used than that of parables: which perhaps, creeping in from thence, among the heathen, ended in fables. It is said in the Talmud, 'From the time that R. Meri died, those that spoke in parables ceased:' not that that figure of rhetoric perished in the nation from that time, but because he surpassed all others in
A custom of the disciples of the Jewish doctors, who went to their Rabbis for an explanation of such parts of their parables as they did not understand, accounts for the circumstance of the disciples resorting to our Lord to know "what his parables might be." The rest of the people, who heard our Lord's parables, were, in compliance with their common custom, at liberty to have done the same: but they clung to the errors and prejudices of the Scribes and Pharisees.

In compliance therefore with the customs of the Jews, as well as for other cogent reasons, Christ taught the people in parables. One reason, and perhaps the strongest that can be adduced, has been given for his adoption of this parabolic mode of instruction. The time was not yet come that he should offer himself up as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. We find him, therefore, at first very cautious not to enrage the rulers of the Jews. On this account, in the earlier part of his ministry, he taught the people, and wrought his miracles rather in the country parts of Judea than at Jerusalem. His parables are more dark and obscure at his first preaching than at the close of his ministry. Indeed his last parable of the Sheep and the Goats, depicting the Day of Judgment, is so plain and perspicuous, that it could hardly be misunderstood by any of his hearers. But had he delivered many those flowers.—The Jewish books abound everywhere with these figures, the nation inclining, by a kind of natural genius, to this kind of rhetoric."—Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 193. folio.
of his parables, which describe himself as the Messiah and the Son of God,—which the Jews esteemed blasphemy; had he delivered those which contradicted their traditions, and those which foretold the destruction of the Jewish church and polity in plainer language; had the people been more plainly told—as the first parables delivered, and now to be found in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, intimate—that the Gospel, which he was then preaching, would so rapidly increase as that in a few years it would be diffused through the whole civilized world, and be preached to every creature under heaven; the Scribes and Pharisees would have excited the people to destroy him long before his three years' ministry had expired, and before the fulness of time was come that the sacrifice should be offered.

But this parabolic mode of teaching was appropriate in another point of view. The parables do not contain the doctrines and fundamental precepts and principles of the Gospel, which Christ taught in his Sermon on the mount, and on other occasions, with great plainness to the people. But they contain a prophetic view of the mysteries, and of the progress of the Gospel, and of the event of it among both Jews and Gentiles. Such prophecies, according to the Jews themselves, were always veiled in allegory. Hence our Saviour uses the allegory of the Vineyard, which had been employed by David, Isaiah, and other prophets, to represent the church of God, and to depict, by way of prophecy, the progress and events of the Jewish church. It is the object of the following
work to expound the parables with this view, and to show that they are a series of prophecies depicting the progress and events of the Christian church. Hence our Lord himself designates the truths veiled in his prophetic parables, "the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven," and regards the disciples' knowledge of them as a high and peculiar privilege,—

AN INSPECTION OF THE PAGE OF PROPHECY.*

* It is worthy of remark that our Lord did not begin to teach the people in parables until the Scribes and Pharisees had accused him of performing his stupendous miracles by the power of an Evil Spirit—through the power of Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils. The Messiah then in mercy and compassion, and not in condemnation of his hearers, began to teach them in parables. This is well expressed by a very old translation of the passage, cited above from St. Matthew's Gospel,—"Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they overlook what they see; and are inattentive to what they hear; neither will they comprehend." Townsend's Arrangement of the New Test. vol. i. p. 224.
CHAPTER I.

PARABLES INTRODUCTORY TO THE MORE DIRECT PROMISES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

SECTION I.

THE PENITENT SINNER, IN WHICH IS INTRODUCED THE PARABLE OF THE CREDITOR AND TWO DEBTORS.

The beautiful incident in the life and ministry of our blessed Lord, in which the short parable of the Creditor and two Debtors is introduced, I shall particularly examine,—not so much for the sake of the parable, as that it presents an admirable introduction to the following work, by placing the personal character of our Redeemer, if I may be allowed the expression, in the most attractive colours of that Divine Love which the inspired Apostle hath declared to exceed all other Christian graces. As this section will introduce to us the personal character of our Redeemer, the next, which contains the parable of the Sower, will present us with his doctrine.

The event, which the Evangelist hath so exquisitely related, happened at the city either of Capernaum or Nain in Galilee, at both which cities our Lord
had just wrought miracles; and this parable was the first which he delivered, and is therefore appropriately placed at the head of these discourses. At Capernaum he had healed the centurion's servant; and at Nain he had raised to life a dead man, the son of a widow, whom they were carrying on a bier to the grave. It was therefore most probably from that city in Galilee, and between the second and third passover, not long before he left Galilee and went to Jerusalem, that this woman came to see Jesus. The event is thus related by the inspired Evangelist:

"And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him: and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them
will love him most? Simon answered, and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Commentators are not agreed as to the identity of the person so signally favoured and forgiven by her Lord and Saviour in this beautiful narrative of St. Luke. A similar incident is related by all the four Evangelists.† The person, alluded to by the three other Evangelists, is generally agreed to be Mary, the sister of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, as related by St. John. But it is thought that the person, so prominently set forth in this narrative of St. Luke, was either of Nain or Capernaum, the

only cities mentioned; and she is designated "a woman in the city:" whereas Mary and Lazarus were of the village of Bethany, near to Jerusalem. In the eighth chapter of St. Luke’s Gospel, and immediately subsequent to the feast at which this incident occurred, it is related that Jesus "went throughout every city and village preaching, and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." But after that he had raised Lazarus, we are told, he walked no more openly. Mary’s unction, moreover, was made for Christ’s interment only six days before the last passover, when he continued in Bethany.*

The identity of this favoured woman is not, I apprehend, a very important circumstance. The examination, however, of such points may reward itself by the habit which it teaches of accurately weighing what we read; and in perusing the Holy Scriptures this habit is invaluable. The Gospels are written with such brevity that much is left to be supplied by our diligence of research and our most attentive meditation, though every thing, which is necessary to be known for our salvation, is abundantly recorded. Perhaps this mode of narrating the events, contained in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, was so wisely ordered by the Divine Providence, that we might be compelled to pay a more close attention to those invaluable records of our salvation, than if the narrations were more full and

* John xii. 7. See Townsend’s Arrangement of the New Test. vol. i. p. 215, 375, and the Commentators, Hammond, Whitby, and others.
perspicuous; and that, in the beautiful words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, "our delight should be in the Law of the Lord, and that in his Law we should meditate day and night." The human mind is so constituted that the very imperfection of our knowledge, the dim obscure which remains to be penetrated by our faculties, gives an elasticity and incitement to the understanding, without which the lives even of studious men would become the "pedlars' packs which bow the bearers down." But while we still "add knowledge to knowledge," the soul never flags, but is fired with "that ambition" which, as Addison well expresses it, "is natural to the mind of man." Thus the concluding sentence of St. John's sublime Gospel—that "if all the things which Jesus did should be written every one, even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written"—this sentence fills the soul of a thinking man with more sublime apprehension of the power of this Divine Being, and strikes the mind with infinitely greater admiration and awe, than if all had been recorded. A vast space remains to be filled up by the imagination; and the soul, while it reposes itself upon the wonderful power and wisdom of the Deity, almost pants with a restless anxiety for the unfolding of the magnificent mystery in a future state.

Something of this pleasing mystery hangs about the present narrative. Whence, we naturally inquire, could this woman—whose story is so affectingly told by the Evangelist—have derived so much knowledge of the Divine Power and the Divine Love?
She must have believed that he was a Divine Being—that he was more than man—that he was the Son of God, and had power to forgive sins; for her homage was much more than was warranted even by the manners of the East to superior persons. But we are nowhere informed that she had ever before seen our Lord. The story abruptly tells us, that "a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment."

The fulness of faith, the remorse, the penitence, and yet the confiding and almost affectionate adoration of this humbled sinner, and indeed the numerous cases of a nature equally extraordinary which occur in every page of the Gospels, we can scarcely conceive, though to our understanding they appear natural and proper. But we cannot appreciate the feelings of such persons until we see our glorified Lord at the Day of Judgment. We must, however, infer from the whole action, that this humble and penitent woman had both seen and heard the wonderful words and works of the blessed Jesus. He had been long going about Galilee; and this sinner might probably have witnessed, and certainly had heard of one or both of the miracles, which he had wrought in the cities of Nain and Capernaum, upon the widow's son and upon the centurion's servant. The Evangelist indeed records no particular ser-
mons or conversations uttered in either of those cities, nor in numerous other places through which he passed, and in which he sojourned. But we are not therefore to conclude that in those cities he said and did nothing but these miracles; for we find, in the next chapter, that "he went throughout every city and village (of Galilee) preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." From this general diffusion of Divine instruction, and wonderful works, are selected the two miracles already mentioned, and this affecting story of the penitent sinner,—for our more particular observation. Unquestionably, therefore, she had repeatedly heard and "wondered at the words of grace," which had proceeded from those Divine lips. She had probably heard him in the city, in which she had lived a notorious sinner: and having profoundly meditated on his words, she believed—she repented —she loved; for these are the things for which she is pardoned and commended by her Redeemer. These feelings impel her to follow him into the country and the cities through which he passed; and when she heard that he had gone into the Pharisee's house, probably in the city of Nain,* she followed him thither, and paid that more than Eastern homage and adoration which are described by the Evangelist.

"The arrow, —as it is quaintly expressed by

* "Upon the whole, I think it the most reasonable to conclude, that the matter here related was transacted at Nain, or some place thereabouts."—Townsend's Arrangement of the New Test. vol. i. p. 216.
Bishop Hall,—"stuck fast in her soul, which she could not shake out, and now she comes to this sovereign dittany to expel it. But," he adds, with great truth, "had not the Spirit of God wrought upon her ere she came, she had never either sought or found Christ."*

The Holy Spirit saw her tears shed in secret, accepted her contrition and penitence, and urged her into the presence of her Lord and Redeemer, who openly received and pardoned her. Her meek and humble deportment in his presence, her silence, her tears, her humble kissing of his feet after that she had wiped off her tears with the hairs of her head, are described with such beauty and simplicity by the Evangelist, that he must be heartless and insensible indeed who is not deeply affected by the picture. She "stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment."

Another circumstance, which is well worthy of remark in this story, is that divine insight into the thoughts of the heart, which was so frequently displayed by our Lord in the course of his ministry, and never more strikingly than upon this occasion.

"Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."†

† Grotius is of opinion that this woman was not altogether so
Instead of replying in a direct manner to the suspicious Pharisee, whose heart he discerned, he shows him his thoughts by the following short parable—an act of omniscience so frequently exercised by Christ, and which must have convinced the Pharisees that he was the Divine Messiah, since he, who read their hearts, could be no other than God. "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee; and he saith, Master, say on.

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

The creditor represents God, the Jehovah then present in the person of the adorable Jesus, God and man; and the two debtors were the penitent woman and the proud Pharisee. The Pharisee* es-

abandoned a sinner as to have been lost to all sense of shame, and seems to insinuate that such an one would not have sought the presence of Christ. These are his words:—


* Macknight thinks that this Pharisee "was a man of better disposition than the generality of his sect." He might have been so; but he was still a Pharisee. His natural disposition might have been less soured by the Pharisæic leaven; but the
teemed himself righteous to the condemnation of all others, and especially of this woman, who, sinner as she was, condemned none but herself, saw and repented her sins, wept at her own unworthiness, and by her silent, but most expressive actions, said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"—She believed in Christ—she worshipped him as God; and she was pardoned and accepted.—But the proud and haughty Pharisee would have spurned the poor penitent from him, and considered her touch pollution; and while he affected to believe in God, he despised and rejected the Messiah, the only Son of God. Pardon and forgiveness was offered to him; but he rejected the proffered salvation. He was therefore rejected from the kingdom of God.

Christ continues the discourse* to the proud Pharisee, at whose table he sat, and thus compares with his the superior love of this sinful, but penitent and believing woman, who stood weeping at his feet.

"He said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water

principles of his sect fostered that pride of heart and uncharitable condemnation of others, which this Pharisee testified on the present occasion. See Macknight's Harmony, vol. ii. p. 253.

* Hammond inclines to think that the discourse was directed to Simon Peter; and in that case the reproof becomes doubly severe. I had at first written the text with this impression; but I am now rather disposed to think the common reading more in unison with the story, and perhaps more consistent with the character of this Pharisee than with the sect generally, whom our Lord reproved in no measured terms. Vide Grotii Opera, tom. ii. p. 387. fol.
for my feet;* but she hath washed my feet with tears,† and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

* These words sound somewhat harsh to us, who live in the Western parts of the world, where servants perform all menial offices. Nevertheless, they will be found agreeable to the nicest propriety of good breeding, if the manners of the Eastern countries are considered. There persons of the highest rank did not think it below them to honour their guests, by performing offices of this kind to them. Thus Gen. xviii. 7. we read, that on the arrival of three angels, "Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf, and took butter and milk, and the calf which his servant had dressed, and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree," to serve them, "and they did eat." Thus also in the 9th Iliad. v. 205.

"Achilles at the genial feast presides,
The parts transfixed, and with skill divides:
Meanwhile Patroclus sweats the fire to raise," &c.

Dr. Shaw in his Travels, p. 301, tells us, these customs subsist among the Eastern nations to this day, and particularly among the Arabs, who are remarkable for retaining their ancient manners; and that the person who first presents to give a stranger welcome and wash his feet, is the master of the family. For as they still walk barefooted, or with sandals only, this piece of civility is absolutely necessary. Macknight's Harmony, vol. ii. p. 254. See a note of Hammond to this effect.

† Because by accident she had happened to do what some might think a rude thing, had wetted his feet with her tears, he gave it an agreeable turn, well knowing from what spring her tears had flowed. That the company might know it was not offensive to him, he called it a washing of his feet, a compliment which was usually paid to guests on their coming into a house, especially after travelling, but which Simon, somehow or other, had happened to neglect. Ibid. p. 255.
My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."

What a strain of natural and affecting eloquence,—in which the Scriptures, and particularly the Gospels, abound! What author, ancient or modern, can be produced, in which a scene is more naturally, more affectingly, and more eloquently told than this sinful woman weeping at the feet of her Saviour, bedewing them with tears, wiping them with her hair, and anointing them with ointment, in token of an humble and sorrowful spirit, a broken and contrite heart! And that broken and contrite heart, O God, thou didst not despise. For after having thus exquisitely described the love of this penitent sinner, which conveyed the most poignant reproof of the proud Pharisee, he turns to the weeping woman, and thus pronounces her forgiveness:

"Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."

These words, as they now stand, seem to imply that her sins were forgiven, because "she loved much;" whereas her sins were forgiven, because she believed and repented. Had she never believed, she could never have repented and have been forgiven. Our Lord therefore tells her, "Thy faith hath saved thee."—"Wherefore," says Jesus, "her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for—as it stands in our translation—she loved much." The original word ἐκτός, rendered "for," should be, as it is in other pas-
sages, rendered "therefore,"* and the sense will be in unison with the whole discourse. It will then stand thus:—"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; therefore she hath loved much: but to whom little is forgiven—as in the parable which he had just spoken,—the same loveth little. And he said, unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."

The profound love, which she expressed, was the indication of her deep sense of the mercy of God now extended to her in pardoning her many sins; and this do I, says Jesus, who am the Prophet and the Son of God,—in both which characters he was rejected by the unbelieving Pharisees,—declare unto her. This is illustrated by the parable of the Creditor and two Debtors; for he, to whom the Lord had frankly forgiven five hundred pence, loved much, because much had been forgiven.

The economy of grace and the constitution of the human mind are so framed in harmony with each other, that as soon as we are convinced of the Divine truth of the Christian religion, and believe from the heart, the influence of the Holy Spirit immediately induces the believer openly to confess his faith, and to repent his sins, however enormous. Thus we are told by the Apostle that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."† The woman which was a sinner, in this narrative, being convinced that Jesus was the Christ, or at least that he was a prophet sent from God

* See Hammond and Whitby on the place.
† Rom. x. 10, 11.
was impelled by the Holy Spirit, who did but strengthen in her those natural feelings which, so excited, would have led her, into the presence of Him on whom she believed. He being now removed into heaven, we are commanded by the Apostle to "confess with the mouth" the faith of the heart, that we may testify before men, as well as God, that we believe. But in the personal and visible presence of the Divine Redeemer in whom she believed, her tears expressed her faith—her silence was the eloquence of grief—and she was accepted. She believed on him—she felt the deepest contrition for her sinful life—and she was not ashamed to testify that faith and that contrition by the lowest acts of obeisance, the most profound marks of humility. "She stood at his feet," and wept. "She washed his feet with her tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment. Her sins, therefore, which were many, were forgiven; therefore she loved much."

There remains one more incident in this striking and beautiful narrative.

"And they—most probably Pharisees—that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

His prophetic and Divine Omniscience was immediately displayed by his knowledge of their thoughts, to which he again speaks, as he had, by the parable, spoken to the thoughts of the Pharisee by whom he was entertained. He therefore shows them that without faith they could not possibly be saved. But to evince the power of faith, as a principle of salva-
tion, he declares that it has been the instrument of saving this poor sinner, who had else gone on in her course of sin. She believed in Christ, she came to him, and wept at his feet, and washed them with her tears in token of her penitence for her sins, and of her faith in and love of that Divine Person:—and she was forgiven. He saw into her heart, as he saw into the heart of the dying malefactor on the cross, and he pardoned all her past iniquities. But that the Pharisees might know why she was pardoned—that it was faith, and not affection—he again addressed her, and "said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

I shall make but one practical observation on this part of the narrative. The pride of the human mind leads thousands of our fellow creatures into this fatal sin of the Pharisee. Many a proud and heartless infidel mixes familiarly with Christians, and inwardly despises them for that faith which will save them and condemn him: and many a professed Christian, in whose heart dwells little faith, not only despises sinners, but all those who are charitable to them,—and knows not that, like this wretched prostitute, they have repented before God and the Lord Jesus,—that their pardon is sealed—their faith hath saved them—they will depart in peace.
SECTION II.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them; but others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

"Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth
the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

In the exposition of this parable, we will follow the explanation given of it by our Lord, which will refer us to the parable itself, when there is any phrase which requires our more particular attention.

"Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.† When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side."‡

It cannot be supposed, by the instance of him who "heareth the Word, and understandeth it not," that the Word of Christ ever becomes unprofitable to men from the natural weakness of their under-

* Matthew xiii. 3—9, 18—23. See also Mark iv. 1. Luke viii. 4.
† It is most probable that almost all the parables of our Lord were taken in whole or in part from the current traditions of the Jews. In the progress of this work we shall trace most of them to this source, being yet extant in the Rabbinical writings. If these were examined with a view to the Parables, much light might yet be thrown upon those beautiful and important compositions. The Parable of the Sower I have not met with: but this figure of speech was perfectly familiar; as appears from the following passage of the learned Lightfoot. "Discourse is had concerning some laws of the Kilaim, (of the seeds of different kinds) and of the seventh year; where among other things we meet with these words: "R. Simeon ben Lachish saith, That he is freed (from these laws) who sows his seed by the sea, upon rocks, shelves, and stony places."—Lightfoot’s Works, vol ii. p. 194. folio, London, 1694.‡ Verses 18, 19.
standing, or through any obscurity in the Word itself. In such a case the blame could not rest with men whose natural incapacity disabled them from understanding, but with the Divine Preacher who taught the Word; and this cannot, for a moment, be entertained by the pious believer. The Greek word,* which we render "understand," means, according to the best critics and commentators, to consider, to think on, to lay to heart. When, therefore, the Word is preached, and the hearer doth not consider or lay it to heart, though he may perfectly comprehend it with the faculty of understanding, it makes no impression upon him, and therefore exposes him to the dangerous machinations of the enemy of man. The devil is therefore said, according to St. Luke,† to "take away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." But as faith is an act of the understanding, he must believe what he understood. Our adversary therefore, who, though the enemy of the Gospel, knows its power, would snatch away the Word from him, who does not lay it to heart, who does not ponder and profoundly consider it. This is well imaged by seed sown by the way side: for the words rendered,—"This is he which received seed by the way side,"—may be more literally translated,—"This is that which is sown by the way side;"—not

* Συνίεσαι. See Hammond, Grotius, Whitby, and other Expositors.
† Luke viii. 12.
‡ I am aware that this is not the common interpretation of this passage, though it appears to me less forced and more natural than that which is perhaps more generally received.—But I subjoin a respectable authority.—"That the οὕτως ἐστι
the man or the ground, but the seed or the Word, which is not valued by the heart into which it falls, and is therefore more easily snatched away by the wicked one.

"But," continues our Lord in explanation, "he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of the word, by and by he is offended."†

In the parable it is thus expressed:

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away."

σπαρεις signifies literally not "him that receives the seed," but "that which is sown," either ὁ σπορος "the seed" in St Luke, or ὁ λόγος "the Word," or the like, appears both by the parable, in which answerable to it is the ἄ μεν επεσε &c. "some fell," that is, in sowing fell, and also more particularly by the parallel place, Luke viii. 11. where it is said, that ὁ σπορος εστι λόγος, "the seed is the Word," and v. 14. instead of σπαρεις "sown," is the το σωσον, "that which falls," which must needs be the corn, and not the ground, and in St. Mark iv. 19, it is clearly "the corn," (and not the man or the ground) that becometh unfruitful, and therefore it is clear that as οὗτος refers to the whole precedent oration, "when any one hears," &c. so the σπαρεις "sown" is the whole of that part of the parable, the seed, and the ground, and the sowing, and the fowls picking it up altogether, and then ἕστι signifies "is denoted by."

Hammond. See also Grotius, and Le Clerc.

† Verses 20, 21.
This figure is very frequent in the best classic authors, and is applied to the cultivation of the mind. Quintilian seems to delight in the metaphor, and makes this application of it in several parts of his works. "As," says this elegant writer, "the fertility of the earth is increased, and the seed deposited in her bosom derives its quickening and nourishment from the deepest furrows of the ploughshare; so, in the cultivation of the mind, knowledge must be sought in the depths, that the fruit of our studies may be the more abundantly poured forth, and the more faithfully preserved. Without this consciousness, indeed, the very faculty of a ready eloquence becomes a mere empty loquaciousness, and words alone have issue from the lips. But in this are the roots; in this lie the deep foundations; in this consists our intellectual wealth, which may be produced, like sacred and concealed treasure that is opened for the supply of some sudden and extraordinary emergency."

In another place he speaks of a precocious genius, which rarely comes to maturity, and compares it to those seeds, which, being sown on the surface of the earth, spring up quickly, because they took no deep root.*

* "Nam ut terra altius effossa generandis alendidique seminibus fecundior est: sic profectus, non a summō petitus, studiorum fructus et fundit ulerius et fidelius continent. Nam sine hāc quidem conscientiā illa ipsa extemporē dicendi facultas inanē modō loquacitatem dabit, et verba in labris nascentia. Illic radices, illic fundamenta sunt: illic opes velut sanctiōre serario reconditae, unde ad subitos quoque casus, cum res exiget, proferrantur." Inst. Lib. x. Sect. 3. p. 515, 4to.—"Illud ingenii-
The use of this similitude in the parable is not less beautiful. He who is there represented by "stony places, stony ground, or the rock,"* "heareth the Word," and, according to St. Luke, "believeth for a time;" but it is only for a time. But we are hereby instructed that it is not sufficient that we believe, however sincerely, at the instant in which the Word is preached to us, and for a short time afterwards, even though, during that period, we act consistently with our faith; but we must persevere to the end, and "bring forth fruit with patience." For by comparing the Evangelists, we find that it is in effect the same thing to be unfruitful, and to "bring no fruit to perfection."† The character, here represented, not only believes, but "receives the Word with joy." At first he is much affected by it; but having "not root in himself," no strong principle and confirmed habit of religion, this vivid impression "dureth but for a while;" for upon the slightest temptation or trial of affliction, or persecution for the sake of his religion, "he is offended," that is, as this word is to be understood in the

*Compare the three Evangelists, St. Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
Gospels, he falls away from his faith; and thus it is expressed by St. Luke, "in time of temptation he falls away."* But to be affected, however vividly, with the force of faith at any particular period, we learn by this parable, is not enough, though our spiritual joy be very great, to make us good Christians. But we must continue as sincere and as fervent in our faith as at the hour in which we believed, and obedient to all the precepts of the Gospel, however hard they may press upon us at particular times and under peculiar circumstances, lest we become the defective believers represented by the parable, and "in time of temptation fall away."

"He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful."

There are various things which choke the Word of God, and render our religion altogether unprofitable to the attainment of our salvation.

The first consists in "the care of this world." With this sin our blessed Lord reproached one of his most favoured female disciples, who was "cumbered about much serving," while her sister "sat at Jesus' feet:" on which occasion Jesus said to her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."† This severe reproof was uttered to a person whom, St. John de-

clared on another occasion, Jesus loved,* and who now entertained her Lord in her own house, and was "cumbered about serving" him, as she supposed, in a suitable manner. But her excessive anxiety for such a purpose was pronounced sinful, inasmuch as it withdrew her attention from the immediate presence of her Redeemer.

If a person was reproved by our Lord himself for her excessive care for so apparently laudable and amiable a purpose as his personal entertainment, how greatly indeed must the worldly care of ordinary persons "choke the Word," and impede the progress of their salvation; for how little thought do the children of this world bestow on the great objects for which all rational beings, especially Christians, are sent into this probationary state,—the moral and intellectual culture of the soul, the education and preparation for a higher state of existence, and the assimilation of their temper to the heavenly temper of Him who lived for our example, and died for our salvation from the fatal effects of Adam's transgression, and generally for the propitiation of our sins;—how little thought is bestowed by men on these things which constitute the real business of life, in comparison of that which is lavished upon "the care of this world."

This engrossing sin, which is so universal that no person can be pronounced altogether free from it, consists in such an attachment to this life, such an attention to the necessary business of the world

* John xi. 5.
which wholly absorbs the thoughts and affections, as to banish from the mind all considerations of another state to which this is only preparatory. To a mind possessed by this sin, the idea of death becomes gloomy and dreary, which should be a cheerful prospect to the religious man, to whom it opens a world of honour, glory, and immortality. We have indeed implanted within us a natural repugnance to death, for the wise purpose of the preservation of our lives during our appointed time. This natural apprehension, however, should not render dark that futurity which religion has invested with light. But the cares of this world fill our minds with so many schemes and contrivances, that we leave ourselves no leisure to think of another state, no space for the proper business of the soul, no moments to prepare ourselves for our awful change from time to eternity. To many this change must be miserable; to multitudes, it is hoped and believed, it will be glorious and happy; but to all it must be awful. When, however, the cares of this world fill our minds and absorb our attention, all thoughts of another world are forcibly expelled from the soul, and the Word of God is "choked" with "the thorns" of life.

"The deceitfulness of riches," or the love of the deceitful riches of this world, is another formidable obstacle to true religion. It is the parent of covetousness, and therefore, as that vice is stigmatized by the Apostle,* is a species of idolatry. Such is the dangerous character of this vice, that when men's minds

* Col. iii. 5.
are once captivated by the love of riches, there is hardly a sin into which they may not be tempted for the additional acquisition of wealth. No vice is more universal. The love of riches pervades the bosoms of almost all people; and it exhibits itself in numberless forms. The possession of wealth commands the respect and homage of the vulgar and gross part of the world, from the highest to the lowest order of people; for the idolatry of Mammon, like the heathen idols with which the Israelites insulted the pure worship of Jehovah, usurps the sovereignty of all hearts which have not a superior devotion to true religion. As that gross and perverse people danced with indecent gestures before the golden calf while Moses was in the mount with God; so rank and fashion, as well as the children of commerce, bow before the idolatrous shrine of Mammon when the sense of religion has abandoned the soul. Hence we find the men and women of rank and fashion and affected refinement of manners, as greedy after riches for the purposes of dissipation, as is the avaricious wretch who palpably covets money for the unnatural and revolting pleasure of "heaping up riches, though he cannot tell who shall gather them." But with such a passion to choke our better feelings, it is impossible that we can bestow a due portion of our care and attention upon the salvation of our souls. "He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for the friendship of this world is enmity to God."* "No man can

* 1 John i. 15. James iv. 4.
serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." *

Two other things are mentioned in the parallel places of St. Luke and St. Mark, which choke the Word of God; namely, "the pleasures of life, and the lusts of other things.”

"The pleasures of life” constitute those sensual gratifications, the excessive indulgence of which expressly excludes us from the kingdom of heaven. They are likewise those recreations, the moderate enjoyment of which we are by no means forbidden: but they become dangerous and sinful when they are indulged to the almost total oblivion of another world, of the shortness and the probationary nature of our existence in this state, and indeed of every thing but that which tends to the gratification of momentary ease and present pleasure. This is that "pleasure of life” which “chokes the Word” of God, and which will tempt us into the eventual commission of the greatest crimes and enormities. There are indeed a "thousand paths which slope the way to crime.” Men insensibly become the associates of loose and vicious characters, imitate their profane language and disgusting vices, and are enslaved by vicious men and vicious pleasures; until they justly fall under the denomination of those who are styled by the Apostle "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” †

"The lusts of other things” comprehend what St.

* Matt. vi. 24.  † 2 Tim. iii. 4.
John calls "the lusts of the eye,"*—such as the love of splendid apparel, rich furniture, numerous attendants, and gorgeous equipage; or such as by the same Apostle are designated "the pride of life,"* the ambitious desire of popular applause, and of eminent station and the homage of the world.† Nay, even

* 1 John ii. 15, 16.
† The learned Dr. Lightfoot, who has been followed by an ingenious commentator on the Temptation of Christ by the Devil, has reduced the sin of the world to the three species enumerated by St. John, and draws the parallel between the temptations of Adam in Paradise and of Jesus in the wilderness. "According to St. John, the sin that tempts mankind may be comprised in these three terms; the lust of the flesh—the lust of the eye—and the pride of life; and to these three may be reduced the temptations both of Adam and of Jesus. In the temptation in Eden these three temptations of evil are evidently alluded to, in the description of the forbidden fruit. In the temptation in the wilderness Christ was tempted like unto Adam; and, in a more general sense, like unto all the children of Adam."

Adam was tempted to the lust of the flesh, by indulging his natural appetite for food, in a manner contrary to the express command of God. Christ was tempted to gratify his wish for food in a manner forbidden by the spirit of the law of God. Adam was tempted to the lust of the eye: "He took of the fruit, because it was pleasant to the eye." Our Lord was tempted by the perversion of Scripture itself, to indulge that feeling which is gratified by the admiration and homage of the world—to proclaim himself the promised Messiah—and to throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple; and such acts as should evince ostentation, presumption, and vanity. [But these, it should seem, come rather under the third temptation, the pride of life.] Adam was tempted to the pride of life. "It was a tree to be desired to make one wise." Our Saviour was taken by the Devil into an exceeding high mountain, and tempted with
the excessive love of our natural relations, not only to the exclusion, but to the abatement, of our love of God, must be included in these "lusts." All these affections in excess tend to sin, inasmuch as they choke the Word of God, they still the voice of religion in the heart: for he who loves father or mother, wife or children, brethren and sisters or friends, better than Christ, is none of his. These are "not of the Father, but of the world;" and if on these we set our whole hearts and affections, "the love of the Father is not in us."

"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Or, as St. Luke states it—"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

The honest heart, which thus retains the Word, is an heart unoccupied by the vices which we have enumerated; without covetousness, avarice, love of pleasure, ambition, or pride; nor so much engrossed by the affections, however natural and lawful, of this world as to be insensible to the glory and blessedness of the kingdom of heaven. Such an honest heart hath a rich and deep soil of its own: unlike the stony ground which retained the seed a while only,


and then cast it out, when it sprung up and withered away; the seed sown in the honest and good heart is there retained, and "brings forth fruit with patience." Unlike the thorny ground, which is so choked with weeds and thorns that it "brings forth no fruit to perfection;" the honest and good heart "brings forth fruit to perfection," triumphs over sensual and worldly appetites, makes the love of God to prevail over the love of life, and of the nearest and dearest relations of this life, and thus becomes fruitful, and "bringeth forth some an hundredfold,* some sixty, some thirty;" "abounding in all

* These words are spoken according to the fruitfulness of the land of Israel; concerning which the Talmudists speak much, and hyperbolically enough: which nevertheless they confess to be turned long since into miserable barrenness, but are dim-sighted as to the true cause of it.

R. Jochanan said, "The worst fruit which we ate, in our youth, excelled the best which we now eat in our old age: for in his days the world was changed."

R. Chaija bar Ba said, "The Arbelite bushel formerly yielded a bushel of flour, a bushel of meal, a bushel of bran, a bushel of coarse bran, and a bushel of coarser bran yet, and a bushel of the coarsest bran also; but now one bushel scarcely comes from one bushel." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 194. fol.

The produce of "an hundredfold" is to be understood of one grain, and not throughout the produce of the field. One grain will not unfrequently produce six or seven stalks, with ten corns on each; ten of these stalks, which, though liberal, happens in fruitful soils, is a hundred. Hammond. Pliny, N. Hist. lib. xviii. c. 10, relates, that wheat will produce by the bushel an hundred and fifty-fold in a fruitful soil, as Africa; "in Byzaico Campo;" that four hundred stalks (germina) were sent thence to Augustus, raised from one grain; and ccclx stalks (stipulae) to Nero; that Sicily, Bætis, and Egypt easily produce
the works of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

Such is the purport of the beautiful parable of the Sower, which, while it warns the weak in faith and the heedless of heart, the covetous, the lover of pleasure, the lover of this world, and all profane and irreligious persons, holds out a salutary lesson of humility to the proud and presumptuous fanatic, an hundredfold. Le Clerc, note ad Gen. xli. 47. So Varro of the country near Sybaris. Grotius, Hammond, Macknight, and Valpy's Annotations on the Four Gospels.

* Phil. i. 11. See Whitby.

† I have not made any exposition of the parable of the Seed springing up imperceptibly, Mark iv. 26—29, for it seems to be contained in those of the Sower and the Tares. By Macknight it is placed after the parable of the Tares, and among the parables descriptive of the increase of the kingdom of God. To this interesting progress of the Gospel it must be referred, but was, I think, spoken between the parables of the Sower and the Tares, as it is placed by other harmonists and critics. See Townsend and Whitby. Whitby thinks that the seed refers to the good ground in the preceding parable of the Sower, which is expounded in the text. As the seed springs and grows, the husbandman knows not how; so in the honest and good heart the fruit daily increaseth, though we know not how the Word and Spirit worketh that increase. Christ is here the husbandman who soweth the seed, and reapeth at the last day; though it can with no propriety be said, that it grows he knoweth not how, or that he sleepeth and riseth daily; which are only descriptive, and no parts of the comparison. See Whitby, and Valpy on the Four Gospels.

The parable generally relates to the sowing the Word of God; and chiefly by the Apostles, by whose labours it will take root and grow, even in those places to which they had not returned to cultivate it, or even after their death.—This, with small variation, is the substance of the several expositions of this parable. See the various expositors, Hammond, Whitby, Doddridge, Macknight, Grotius, Le Clerc, &c. &c.
who dares to believe, or to profess that he believes, that he can never fall from what he thinks his state of grace.

The temptations and vicissitudes of human life, the weakness and corruption of our common nature, and the melancholy experience of these in ourselves and our fellow creatures, should make us very watchful over our own hearts, very modest and humble respecting our own salvation, and very charitable in our conclusions respecting the salvation of others. In this parable we perceive four different species of weak and wicked hearts, which, when separately examined, we find to contain many more,—and but one "honest and good heart, which, having heard the Word, can keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

All Christians are warned, by this parable, of the importance of religion, and of the danger of error and presumption. It does indeed become them to consider, to ponder, to lay to heart the Word of God, the sound and rational principles of the faith of a Christian; lest the good seed be snatched away by the common enemy from our hearts; lest the pride of understanding, the pride of fanaticism, the love of the world, our own weakness, or any other false and vicious principle, tempt them into infidelity, whereby they incur the forfeiture of the promises of salvation. It becomes them to "take heed, when they think that they stand, lest they fall;" and that, though they may hear the Word of God, though they may have been trained in the path of true religion, yet to "watch and pray" that, when tribulation and persecution
arise, they may not sink under them through the insolidity of their faith, the pusillanimity of their temper, or an overweening presumption upon their own part in the promises of God, and thus "in time of temptation fall away." It becomes them to beware, above all things, of the thousand paths and avenues to vice and irreligion, to profligacy of manners and of principle, which this world, as he passes through it, presents to the eyes of every man, and in which, it cannot be doubted that such power as is permitted to the Evil One, is exercised to tempt the human race to involve themselves.

All these shoals and quicksands await every Christian. Let none therefore presume that, by chance or necessity, by the secret decrees of God, or by any mystical or philosophical doctrine, he is secure from temptation, that he is removed from danger, or that he is exempt from that final responsibility, which we must all incur, at the tribunal of our Eternal Judge. For what the inspired Apostle said to the Athenians, who were vain of their philosophy, and derided, like modern infidels, the doctrines of Christianity, is now more strongly applicable to all men, especially in Christian countries:—"The times of ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."*

CHAPTER II.

PARABLES DESCRIPTIVE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

SECTION I.

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of
Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Of the parable of the Tares there are two opinions among commentators. By some, the good and bad seed are interpreted to represent good and bad Christians; for the word, rendered "tares," is supposed to mean a degenerate kind of wheat; and the whole parable is, by these commentators, expounded of the whole church, divided and corrupted by heresies. By others, the field is expounded literally of the world, as it is called by our blessed Lord in his explanation of the parable, and not of the church, according to the above exposition. The tares, it is said, are the children of the devil, who could not produce the members of the church, which are the children of the kingdom.†

* Matt. xiii. 24—30, 37—43.
† Lightfoot, from the Talmudists, would here have דשת Zunin, to be a kind of degenerate wheat. Kilaim, c. 1. hal. 1. So they both were Christians, good or totally bad. Thus the ten vir-
THE PARABLE OF THE TARES.

In the following exposition, it will appear that I have inclined to the last sense of the parable, and this for two reasons:—it adheres more closely to the language of the parable, which makes the application of it more universal; and it includes within it all that can be said of the first interpretation. The world contains the church, but the church includes a small portion only of the world; and out of the world the church is elected.

In my exposition of this parable, which in its subject and structure bears a strong resemblance to the parable of the Sower, I shall observe the same course as in that parable, and follow our Lord's explanation.

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man." On the designation of "the Son of Man" it is scarcely necessary to remark; because it must be

gins, c. xxv. But Whitby apprehends, that the field is the world, not the church. The tares are the children of the devil, ver. 38, who could not produce members of the church, 2 Cor. vi. 15. And this he seems to advance to obviate an argument against excommunication, and the power of the magistrate, ver. 28, drawn by the Erastians from this parable. But yet the tares appear to be springing up in the church, or in the visible body of Christians. To this purpose also Grotius, who observes, that in like manner, ver. 47, 48, the good and the bad are in the same net. The children of God are those Christians who imitate his goodness c. v. 9, 45,—and of the devil, those who follow his malice, John viii. 44. Grotius ad ver. 38, et 49.

Whitby, however, replies, that the net is not the church at all, but the doctrine of the Apostles; and that that parable relates to the end of the world, and not to the members of Christ's present kingdom. Whitby on ver. 47. Valpy's Annot. on the Four Gospels. See also Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 195, folio.
known to every one that "the Son of Man," and "the Son of God," are equally the titles of our blessed Lord.* He calls himself the Son of Man to signify his great condescension in assuming our nature to his own Divine nature; for he was the Son of God from all eternity, "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God;" and, as it is admirably expressed by the Apostle to the Philippians.—"Christ Jesus subsisting in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

* The Son of Man, and the Son of God, are distinct titles of the Messiah. The title of the Son of Man belongs to him as God the Son; and the title of the Son of God belongs to him as man. The former characterizes him as that one of the three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity which was made man; the other characterizes him as that man which was united to the Godhead." Horsley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 292.

† This remarkable passage so plainly declares the Divinity of Jesus Christ, that it requires the utmost ingenuity to evade it, for it cannot be overthrown; while the sincere and unsophisticated believer securely reposes his faith in so distinct an avowal, by the pen of an inspired writer, of the Divine nature of our glorious Redeemer. The text, however, as rendered in our excellent translation, has not all the force which is exhibited in the original. Literally rendered, the passage will stand thus:—"Christ Jesus, subsisting, ὑπηρέτων, in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but divested himself, ἐκείνος ἐξενάνθεται, seipsum exinanivit, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." That he is of "one substance with the Father," ὑμούνιος τῷ Πατρὶ, is clearly shown by his "subsisting, ὑπηρέτων, in the form of God;" and in what manner he "divested himself," appears from
"The field is the world."—I incline to the literal interpretation, that the field means the world, and not the church. The Messiah, the only-begotten Son of God, was sent to the whole world. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Many, who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ, and cannot therefore constitute his church, will, I believe, reap the benefit of his passion. For it is added to the above text, that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." These appear to be the general purposes of Christ's coming into the world. Our Lord is conversing with Nicodemus, "a master of Israel;" and therefore, after stating these great and general purposes of his being sent into the world, immortality and salvation, he immediately adds, addressing himself to Nicodemus, and applying his observation to himself and the rest of his nation—"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." That this applies to the Jewish nation only, and not to the world at large, is evident from the continuation of the discourse, which refers to Christ's having come to, and been rejected by that people: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved the darkness the text, by his "taking the form of a servant," which the Apostle explains to signify "being made in the likeness of men."—See Schleusner on ὑπαρξω and μορφή.
rather than light, because their deeds are evil.”

But to no nation of the world was the Light come, but to the Jews, whose condemnation for the rejection of the Messiah, the Light of the world, is here pronounced, and of all persons who voluntarily reject that light, when manifested to them, but not the condemnation of those who lived before the coming of Christ, nor of those who since have never heard, and therefore could not “believe in, the Name of the only-begotten Son of God.”*

The free gift of immortality, which was lost in the fall of our first parents, was restored to the whole human race by the Atonement of Jesus Christ. This doctrine is thus laid down by the Apostle to the Romans: — “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement, or reconciliation. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: and as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” And “as sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”† Our Saviour Jesus Christ is declared by the same Apostle to

* John iii. 16—19.  † Rom. v. 10—12, 18, 21.
Timothy to have "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." * Whatsoever, therefore, may be the fate of individuals, it would appear that to abolish natural death, and to restore the free gift of immortality to the whole world of reasonable creatures, which they had lost by "the offence of one," was the first great object of the sacrifice of Christ; and the second, to renew the world in righteousness, that we might be "made meet," by suitable dispositions and desires, and without which we cannot attain, "to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."†

The parable, as explained by our Lord himself, next descends to particulars.

"The good seed are the children of the kingdom." — The children of the kingdom are those good and faithful servants of Christ, who, having "done well" in his kingdom, the visible church on earth, will

* 2 Tim. i. 10.
† Col. i. 12.—It has been said, and perhaps it is the generally received doctrine, that "the fall was the triumph of the animal nature of man, and to restore the human race to its original spirituality, is the great object of that one religion, which has been gradually revealed to mankind under its three forms, the Patriarchal, Levitical, and Christian dispensations." (Townsend’s Arrangement of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 32.)

Others insist almost wholly on the restoration to the human race of the free gift of immortality, by the atonement through Christ; not sufficiently considering the spirituality of our holy religion. But surely as the penalty of the sin of Adam was death, the first object of the passion of Christ was, as the Apostle states it, to "abolish death, and to bring life and immortality to light." The second, to fit us for that immortality by renewing us in the spirit of our minds: and both are done "through the Gospel."
"enter into the joy of their Lord," when his "kingdom is come;" when his reign, which commenced in his church upon earth, will be complete in his church triumphant in heaven. While, however, the church subsists upon earth, and among all societies of men, there will be a mixture of evil; for such is the condition of our present existence, and that which forms no inconsiderable part of our trial in this probationary state.

"The tares, therefore, are the children of the wicked one; and the enemy* that sowed them is the devil."

This enemy, though principally opposed to Christianity,—which was expressly designed "to destroy the works of the devil," and was set up against the kingdom of darkness of which he is the ruler,—is doubtless, in every possible way, opposed to that which is good. He was, therefore, it has been supposed, worshipped as God by various nations of the heathen world, who "adored devils instead of deities." At all events, if he and his apostate band were not themselves adored as deities, it cannot be questioned that so inveterate an enemy, whose pure malice contrived the fall of our first parents, would seduce men into every species of idolatry, and of hero and brute worship, which were so universally practised by the nations of antiquity. He would likewise tempt the disciples of Christ into sins of the same kind, and indeed into every kind of sin. Ido-

* ἔχθρος is, enemy; in German, fiend; so that fiend by this means has gained the import of "devil." Valpy's Annot.
latry has therefore appeared, with slight change of its form, in Christian churches, and, it is but too much to be feared, still reigns in several churches; and it is, as it was of old, productive of a peculiar profligacy of manners which does not exist in countries whose religion is more pure.

As, therefore, Jesus Christ is the great benefactor of the whole human race, and was, as it is revealed to us, "the lamb slain before the foundation of the world," as a propitiatory sacrifice to atone for the sin of Adam, and to restore to all mankind that immortality which Adam had forfeited; so is Satan the enemy of our race: and whether men be of the visible church of Christ, or not, it is equally his desire to distress them, and to keep them from the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, for his love of the world, suffered death upon the cross: for by faith in his name, we are expressly promised everlasting life and happiness; while natural immortality is as expressly declared to pass upon all men by Christ's atonement.

The tares, therefore, which are sown by this enemy, who is the devil, are called his "children;" because they are incited by him to cause and to commit all manner of evil in the world; to make heathen idolaters continue bigoted to their idols; and to sow dissension among believers, who are "the children of the kingdom," which was soon evidenced in the early heresies that sprung up in the Church shortly after the death of our blessed Lord.

"The harvest is the end of the world."—The end of the world is frequently in Scripture compared to
the harvest; but it is not the judgment of the wicked, but the reward of the righteous to which the term is appropriated. The punishment of the wicked in this case appears an exception from the general course of things at the harvest, which is for the good corn, not for the tares. At the harvest, therefore, the tares are separated from the good corn, as unfit for that joyful and happy period of the Christian scheme, and are cast out "into a furnace of fire."*

"The reapers are the angels," who are appointed to separate the wheat from the tares. "As therefore," continues our Lord, "the tares are gathered and burned in the fire" at the natural harvest; "so

* "The vintage is always an image of the season of judgment; but the harvest, of the ingathering of the objects of God's final mercy. I am not aware that a single unexceptionable instance is to be found in which the harvest is a type of judgment. In Rev. xiv. 15, 16, "the sickle is thrust into the ripe harvest, and the earth is reaped;" i. e. the elect are gathered from the four winds of heaven. The wheat of God is gathered into his barn, (Matt. xiii. 30.) After this reaping of the earth, the sickle is applied to the clusters of the vine, and they are cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. Rev. xiv. 18—20. This is judgment. In Joel iii. 13. the ripe harvest is the harvest of the vine, i. e. of the grapes fit for gathering, as appears by the context. In Jer. li. 33, the act of threshing the corn upon the floor, not the harvest, is the image of judgment. It is true, the burning of the tares in our Saviour's parable, Matt. xiii. is a work of judgment, and of the time of harvest, previous to the binding of the sheaves. But it is an accidental adjunct of the business, not the harvest itself. I believe the harvest is never primarily, and in itself, an image of vengeance." Bp. Horsley, on Hosea vi.11. Biblical Criticism, vol.iii. p.344.
shall it be at the end of the world," which is represented under this figure.

"The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things (or scandals) that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

The latter part of the parable seems more particularly confined to the church, into which, we are told by our blessed Lord himself, "offences must come; but woe to him by whom the offence cometh."* Among "the children of the kingdom" schismatics and heretics will intrude themselves; and these will be cast out, which is imaged by the tares being separated from the wheat, before "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

There is unquestionable difficulty in the exposition of this parable, a species of composition which is called by the Psalmist "a dark saying,"† and which must therefore be expected to involve some difficulty. Although our Lord explains the parable to the disciples, much yet remains in obscurity. Why he made use of this species of fable, which to the people was a "dark," but not unintelligible, "saying," has been already explained.‡ One difficulty, which has perplexed the different expositors,—upon

* Matt. xviii. 7.
† Ps. lxviii. 2.  ‡ See the Preliminary Dissertation.
which however they are at variance,—is the import of "the field," which our Saviour calls "the world," and of "the good seed," which he interprets "the children of the kingdom." But by comparing the parable itself with our Lord's exposition, I think that the field may, according to the strict sense of its denomination by our Lord, be taken literally for the world, in which the good seed, who are the children of the kingdom, are sown. In this advanced age of the church, scarcely a fifth part of the population of the earth are Christians; but all are under the general protection of the Providence of the same God and Father of all; and all are, in some degree, affected by the wonderful Redemption which is wrought by the mysterious interposition of the Son of God. The kingdom of God therefore, which in this parable must mean the church of Christ, forms a part of this wide field: and thus by modifying both, but rejecting neither of these interpretations, this parable may be reconciled with itself, and with the conflicting interpretations of its various expositors.

Much reflection and much instruction are deducible from this parable, which applies generally to all mankind, but particularly to Christians; and by pursuing this train of thought, much light will probably be thrown upon the parable itself.

The whole human race have to contend with the same common enemy, because all descend from one common stock: and we learn by divine revelation that this enemy overthrew man's primitive happiness, and, from that fatal period, hath never ceased
his hostility. The redemption through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is therefore as universal in its scope as the malignity of this inveterate enemy of our race: “The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.” This evil spirit, and the band of which he is the head, appear to have fallen, for their apostacy from their Creator, from some higher state of God’s grace; and therefore, like all debased moral beings, of which we want not examples among men, they study to allure others into the same delinquency. Of the fall of the angels our knowledge is very limited. A signal act of judgment is more than hinted in the Scriptures to have been passed upon a higher order of rational beings than men. “The angels,” as St. Jude expresses it, “kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.” Nor is this judgment of expulsion from their first and happy estate final; for it is added, that God “hath reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”† St. Peter likewise affirms, that “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment.”‡

These are positive revelations of their fall, and their expulsion from their first estate of happiness in which they had been placed; and not only is their present punishment specified; but it is added, that they are reserved to a final punishment at “the

* 1 John iii. 8. † Jude 6. ‡ 2 Peter ii. 6.
judgment of the great day." Nor are we left in the dark as to the positive and dreadful nature of this punishment, which wicked men are condemned to partake with them; for to the unrighteous, at that great day, our Lord hath declared, that the Judge will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."*†

Their offence therefore, as their punishment, would seem to have some connection with the mighty mystery of the atonement of the Son of God. Much of their sin now unquestionably consists in their malignant hatred of the human race, and the opposition and hostility of the Prince of the power of the air, and the angels or spirits of the kingdom of darkness, against the Prince of peace, and God and the kingdom of light—especially against Him who is "the Light of the world." That the alleged confinement, however, "in everlasting chains," is not to be understood according to the literal construction of the words, is evident from other parts of Scripture, wherein we find the chief of those fallen spirits ac-

* Matt. xxv. 41.
† There were traditions of these fallen spirits among the heathens.—"Pythagoras probably derived much of his philosophy, and many opinions and institutions, from the Jews in their dispersion at the time of the Babylonish captivity. He was of opinion that the world was full of demons. Thales too, the contemporary of Pythagoras, and after them Plato and the Stoics, affirmed that all things were full of demons. And it is well known that the priests, in giving forth their oracles, are always represented as being possessed with their gods." Townsend's Arrangement of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 150.
tively employed against men, and against Him who was both God and man; and this strengthens the opinion that the sin of Satan, and his apostate band, very probably consisted in their opposition to the Son of God, and his great work of Redemption, which may extend to innumerable worlds besides the planet which we inhabit.*

Pride, a portion of which he infused into the minds of our first parents, who hoped to be as gods or angels† by disobeying the Divine command, was probably the immediate cause of the fall of those angelic spirits. When the prophet would reprove the pride of Babylon by the prediction of her future destruction, the figure of the fall of the Prince of the apostate angels is beautifully employed to convey that fearful denunciation.—"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning;"—The pride and presumption of that mighty empire are then described under the personification of Lucifer, and in terms which clearly intimate the cause of

* The curious and learned reader is referred to a work, which is not perhaps so much known as it deserves, by the Rev. Dr. Nares, entitled, 'ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ, 'ΕΙΣ ΜΕΣΙΤΗΣ; or "an Attempt to show how far the philosophical notion of a Plurality of Worlds is consistent, or not so, with the language of the Holy Scriptures." This ingenious work was published long before the popular astronomical discourses of a celebrated Scottish preacher, and, to a thinking man, will be found much more interesting, because it contains much more copious matter of reflection than those celebrated discourses.

† The word Elohim in Gen. iii. 5, is interpreted by Onkelos, and by Maimonides, to mean angels or princes, Αρχαί, principalities and powers, &c. See Patrick.
his fall, which was Ambition.—"Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit in the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet," adds the prophet, "thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."*

When our Lord sent out the seventy disciples, who declared, on their return to him, that "the devils were subject unto them through his Name," he used the same figure, in allusion to the first fall of the angels, to express that he had now fulfilled his office as "the Son of God," who was "manifested to destroy the works of the devil:" "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."† The meaning of this text evidently is, that Christ saw the downfall of the kingdom of Satan in this world, of which he is styled the Prince, by the conversion of the heathens. But the figure of speech is probably taken from his original fall from heaven, along with those angels who "kept not their first estate."

Whatever was the sin, or the fall of Satan, it is very evident that, ever since his own fall and moral degradation, he and his apostate band have, as it is admirably expressed by the judicious Hooker, "by all means laboured to effect an universal rebellion against the laws, and, as far as in them lieth, utter destruction of the works of God."‡

‡ The following is Hooker's hypothesis respecting the fall of the angels.—"A part of the angels of God, we know, have fallen,
In the heathen world, it has been generally believed, these wicked spirits were honoured as gods, and worshipped in oracles, in idols, as household guardians, and in a thousand other shapes, either being themselves worshipped, or inciting the heathens to the various species of false worship and idolatry practised in the ancient world; until the advent of Christ destroyed, as had been predicted by the prophet, the powers of the kingdom of darkness. “From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.”* That this prophecy was completely fulfilled in the Roman Empire, which comprised the whole civilized world, a few centuries after and that their fall hath been through the voluntary breach of that law which did require at their hands continuance in the exercise of their high and admirable virtue. “The fall of the angels was pride; since their fall, their practices have been the clean contrary of those before mentioned; for being dispersed, some in the air, some on the earth, some in the water; some among the minerals, dens, and caves that are under the earth; they have, by all means, laboured to effect an universal rebellion against the laws, and, as far as in them lieth, utter destruction of the works of God. These wicked spirits the heathens honoured instead of gods, both generally under the name of Dii inferi, gods infernal, and particularly, some in oracles, some in idols, some as household gods, some as nymphs: in a word, no foul and wicked spirit which was not one way or other honoured of men as god, till such time as light appeared in the world, and dissolved the works of the Devil.” Hooker’s Eccles. Pol. B. 1. Sect. 4.

* Mal. i. 11.
the birth of Christ, must be known to every reader of history. Whether demons really gave the oracular responses, or suggested them to the priests or priestesses; or whether they were themselves worshipped, or tempted men into the worship of the heavenly bodies, dead heroes, and brute images;—are questions of minor importance: for all learned and pious men agree, that into every species of idolatry, and into every kind of sin, it hath been the labour and the study of these depraved spirits to tempt the human race; and since the transgression of our progenitors, their machinations and stratagems have been but too successful, as is testified by the idolatries and wickednesses of heathens and of Christians.

In the sacred oracles, both of the Hebrew Scriptures and of the New Testament, we have abundant evidence of the activity of Satan, the enemy of man, in his sleepless hostility against good men.

The story of Job, whether the facts occurred exactly as they are told in that highly poetical book, is unquestionably founded in truth; for Job is expressly mentioned by two inspired writers, the prophet Ezekiel and the apostle St. James.* And although, as it has been contended by one ingenious writer,† it should be but an allegorical fiction, writ-

† Bishop Warburton, who elaborately contends that the book of Job is an allegoric poem, written by Ezra on the return from the Captivity, and representing the circumstances of the people of that time. See Div. Leg. Book 6. Sect. 2. No inspired book has given rise to more controversy and more various opinions than the book of Job. Some imagine that they perceive its antiquity in its style, others in the manner, and others, like Bishop
ten for the instruction and consolation of the captive Jews, it being by all allowed to be an inspired book, the part ascribed to Satan proves the existence and the character of that fallen spirit, and the conviction of the inspired author of his enmity against the human race.

But in the historical and prophetical books,* which are the undoubted records of facts, and the inspired predictions of things to happen to the church, we find the same malignity attributed to Satan. In the 21st chapter of the first book of Chronicles we read that "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked—or tempted—David to number Israel." This was the same species of temptation, the excitement of pride, by which he wrought the fall of our first parents, and also the snare of sin, as in the instance of David, whereby he lays wait for many good men. In the first book of Kings we read of one of these fallen spirits, who offers himself to become "a lying spirit in the mouth of all his (Ahab's) prophets."†

Warburton, who treats his opponents very unceremoniously, deny and deride these marks, especially of style. The Bishop decides dogmatically that it was written by Ezra. The reader may see these different opinions stated by Archbishop Magee in his able work on the Atonement; Bishop Lowth in his elegant Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, and by Bishop Warburton, as above.

* Zech. iii. 6. Ps. cix.
† 1 Kings xxii. 22.

This passage hath perplexed the pious reader, and made sport, I doubt not, to the infidel who frequently sports with his ignorance, like the madman with his misery; and it is hard to decide which is the most melancholy spectacle. The speech of Micaiah, however, in this passage of sacred history, is to be understood as a parabolical representation of a certain event, which
The very names of Satan and Devil indicate his enmity; for they mean an adversary, an enemy, and an accuser.

In the New Testament the enmity and malignity of this spiritual adversary and his associates are displayed with the greater energy as they are approaching the confines of their power. The most remarkable scene in this collection of inspired writings, is the temptation of Christ by this apostate spirit. But this was the most ineffectual of all his efforts; for neither the allurement of food, of power, nor of pride, could seduce from his allegiance the second Adam, who was "the Lord from heaven." He then changed the mode of his attack upon the King and the kingdom of light: but he never abated, during the life of the holy Jesus, the unalterable malignity of his purpose. He stirred up the bigoted and ferocious Scribes and Pharisees;—he influenced their passions, and infuriated their souls, first to persecute, and finally to destroy him. He incited one of his own disciples to betray his Divine Master: and that such a fell act of wickedness and infernal was about to come to pass. The several circumstances are designed only to illustrate the narration, and are not to be taken in a literal sense, but in the sense of other parables, in which the end and the design of the speaker are considered. These, in Micahiah's case, were to show the reason why so many prophets declared what was false upon this occasion; that they were moved, not by the spirit of truth, but by that of adulation; and to make on the minds of his hearers that deep and vivid impression, which, in poetical description, corporeal images can alone produce. See Stackhouse's History of the Bible, new edit. 4to. vol. ii. p. 331.
malignity should be made known as a terrible warning to the sons of men, the Holy Spirit hath recorded it as the act of Satan, though it neither takes away, nor diminishes the guilt of the detested traitor, who knew that he had such an enemy, but voluntarily adhered to the dictates of his avarice:—“After the sop, which Jesus gave Judas Iscariot, Satan entered into him.”* The triumph and the success, however, of this wicked and unhappy spirit in this, his capital plot, did but the more completely defeat his purpose; for the all-wise and gracious Providence of God, though he leaves his creatures to the liberty of their free will, overrules, when he sees it necessary, the results of the sinful acts of devils and of men. The death of Jesus was the life of man and the overthrow of Satan; it restored to us the free gift of immortality which had been lost in the fall; and sin and Satan can have no longer any permanent dominion over the sons of men.†

* John xiii. 27.
† I cannot deny my readers nor myself the pleasure of transcribing the following eloquent passage from the neglected poem, “The Paradise Regained,” of our great Milton; in which the despair and the yet inextinguished hope of the fallen spirit are drawn by the hand of a master. Indeed, the conception of unmixed and unmitigated despair is so difficult as to be almost impossible to a rational being; and the poet has done ample justice to this sentiment.

Our Saviour checks the devil’s curiosity by telling him that his fall is necessarily involved in the exaltation of the Messiah:—

“What moves thy inquisition?
Know’st thou not that my rising is thy fall?”
Through the whole life and ministry of the blessed Jesus, the hostility of these apostate spirits was carried on by all imaginable devices, and manifested the more visibly, that their approaching destruction might be shown. Demoniacism,* or the possession of persons by evil spirits, was one of the most com-

And my promotion will be thy destruction?
   To whom the Tempter, inly rack'd, replied:
Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace: What worse?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear:
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst: worst is my port,
My harbour, and my ultimate repose;
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime; whatever, for itself condemn'd
And will alike be punish'd, whether thou
Reign, or reign not; though to that gentle brow
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire,
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell,)
A shelter, and a kind of shading cool
Interposition as a summer's cloud."

Par. Reg. B. iii. v. 200.

Milton's Arian notions are evident in this extract. But the author will not be suspected of coinciding in such opinions. It is, however, for the sentiment of Satan, as a true delineation of our feelings, and perhaps of the nature of angels, for which this inimitable extract is made.

* For an admirable collection of the arguments against the infidel, who objects that Demoniacism was a bodily disease, the reader is referred to the excellent note in Townsend's Arrangement of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 156.
mon, though to us most extraordinary forms in which their power was displayed. We, therefore, find the miracles of Christ directly opposed to them in casting out devils or demons from persons, into whom they were allowed to enter, and whom they distracted with madness. To the seventy disciples he gave the like power, who, as we have already noticed, "returned to him with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding—he adds—in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; (because this is to evince my empire over them;) but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." *

The enmity of Satan hath not, however, abated, though his power is diminished by the glory of the Son of God; nor, until the great day, will his power be extinguished, and finally trampled under the feet of the Messiah. His permitted power is yet very considerable. We find that, after the ascension of our Lord, he tempted Ananias and his wife to "lie to the Holy Ghost." † Nor, as we learn from the Apocalypse, ‡ will his enmity cease, save with his power,—not until the great day for which he and the rest of the fallen angels are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness."

We are therefore warned by the Holy Scriptures to be watchful against the wiles of an enemy so active and so powerful; and not, like the men in the parable, to "sleep, lest this enemy come and sow tares among our wheat."* If we resist him, we are told, he will flee from us. "Humble yourselves," saith St. Peter, "under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."†

* "The Spirit of evil does not desire to diminish the supposed happiness of man in this world; it endeavours to immerse him in the pursuit of worldly enjoyments, comforts, vanities, and pride, in such manner that the soul becomes imbruted and embodied in material objects. The Spirit of evil so endeavours to sensualize and animalize the intellectual and moral faculties of man, that his inferior nature may be triumphant; and consequently when he shall be summoned into another state of existence, he may be rendered totally unfit to be the eternal companion of God the Judge of all—of Christ the Mediator—of holy angels—and of perfect spirits." Townsend's Arrangement of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 93.

† 1 Peter v. 6—9.
SECTION II.

THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.

The smaller parables of our Lord, which follow those of the Sower and of the Tares, in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, describe, under the veil of allegory, the mighty increase of the Gospel from the smallest beginnings, and the invaluable nature of those blessed tidings which it would spread abroad over the whole earth.

The first and the most beautiful of these smaller parables is the Grain of Mustard Seed.

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

This, and the following parable of the Leaven which was hidden in three measures of meal, describe the wonderful increase of the word of God, the seed of the sower, among the nations of the earth. The truth of these parables is confirmed and illustrated by the events which occurred not long after the general promulgation of the Gospel.

* Matt. xiii. 31, 32. Mark iv. 31, 32.
Irenæus,* who flourished towards the end of the second century, enumerates the churches of Germany, Gaul, and Spain in Europe, and of the East, of Egypt and Libya, and of the South. Tertullian,† who flourished about the year of our Lord 200, affirms that in his time the Gospel had spread to the Getuli, a people of Libya, the Mauri, an eastern people settled in Spain, and the utmost bounds of the Spanish territory; that it was diffused throughout Gaul and Britain, and in remote parts of those countries which were inaccessible to the Romans; also over Sarmatia and Scythia,—countries at the northern extremities of Asia,—and Germany; and over many other nations, provinces, and islands, unknown to, and beyond the Roman empire. The declaration of the inspired Apostle was therefore more than figuratively just—that "the Gospel had been preached to every creature which is under heaven:‡ for to all who had any light of knowledge and civilization, were carried the blessed tidings of salvation.

The parable of the Mustard Seed is a very just

† These are the words of Tertullian:—Getulorum varietates, Maurorum multos fines, Hispaniarum omnes terminos, Galliarum diversas nationes, et Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, et Sarmatarum, et Dacorum, et Germanorum, et Scytharum, et abditarum multarum gentium et provinciarum, et insularum multarum Romanis ignotarum. Grotius ut supra.
‡ Col. i. 23.
illustration of this universal diffusion of the kingdom of heaven. We are not to judge of the growth and size of this plant as we are acquainted with it in these colder regions of the earth. The warm climate and the fertile soil of Judea, and of many eastern countries, produced an immense tree from "a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth." *

The Jews give a wonderful account of the growth and increase of this seed. "There was a stalk of mustard seed in Sichin, from which sprang out three boughs, of which one was broken off and covered the tent of a potter, and produced three cabs of mustard." † R Simeon ben Calipha said, "A stalk of mustard seed was in my field, into which I was wont to climb, as men do into a fig-tree." ‡

We have likewise the testimony of modern travellers that the mustard seed, which with us produces only a small plant, grows in the East to such a height, and to so considerable a size, that it affords a shade: § while the seed, which thus increases into an unbragious tree, was so small as to be proverbial among the people of the East. In like manner, the state of the Gospel,

* Mark iv. 31.
† A cab is a Hebrew measure, which contains about three English pints.
‡ Lightfoot, Whitby, Buxtorf ad voc. Chardal.
§ Hence the propriety of the Evangelist,—that it "shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it." Mark iv. 32.
small as it was at first, was daily spreading and increasing, and continues even yet to spread and increase; so that however mean and contemptible it might at first appear, when it was received by few persons, and those of the lowest condition, it will in time spread over the whole earth:* doctrines, which the Jews then despised and rejected, will be embraced and flourish among all the nations of the Gentiles; and the prophecy will be fulfilled—that "the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The Jews themselves will at last be converted, and come in to the fold of Christ. The Gospel will "become a tree," which will "shoot out great branches" into the most remote places of the earth, "so that the birds of the air will come and lodge in the branches thereof," and people of all nations and languages will repose sweetly under its outspread "shadow."†

* Dr. S. Clarke, Beausobre, and others, quoted in D'Oyley's and Mant's Bible.

† Macknight, with great ingenuity, supposes that our Lord had his eye on Nebuchadnezzar's dream, (Dan. iv. 10.) in which the nature and advantages of civil government are represented by a great tree with spreading branches, fair leaves, and much fruit, "and in it was meat for all. The beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it."—See his Harmony, vol. ii. p. 306.

Both this and the following parable are again used by our Saviour in his last journey to Jerusalem before his crucifixion, and in allusion to that more advanced state of his kingdom, which is not of this world.—See Luke xiii. 18—20. "There seems (says Mr. Townsend in his admirable Arrangement) in this parable (of the Mustard Seed) to be some allusion to the
SECTION III.

THE LEAVEN.

"Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." *

This parable appears to have the same allusion to the general diffusion of the Gospel, with the addition of the power which it would possess to convert all the nations of the earth; that, as it was predicted, kings should be its "nursing fathers, and their queens its nursing mothers; and that Gentiles should come to its light, and Kings to the brightness of its rising."† As therefore a small piece of leaven, which was hidden in a large measure of meal, to which its size could bear no proportion, was at first imperceptible, yet was perceived at last to have leavened the whole; so the Gospel, from small beginnings and by insensible degrees, should in time spread itself circumstances in which our Lord was now placed. He was proceeding to Jerusalem, where he intended, as his hour was approaching, to address himself to the rulers of the Jews, with as much boldness as he had hitherto spoken to the people. He foresaw the result of this conduct; that it would lead to his painful death, and the accomplishment of the promises of God. The future was ever present to him. As the seed was committed to the ground, and became a great tree, so in the same manner would his kingdom begin from his death, and gradually increase and extend itself over the world."—Townsend's Arrangement of the New Test. vol. i. p. 333.

* Matt. xiii, 33.
† Isaiah xlix. 23. lx. 3.
through the nations of the world, and by its own Divine Power so operate upon them as totally to change their character in the same manner as leaven affects the meal till it become wholesome bread. The bread, to carry on the similitude, would conduce to the sustenance of animal life; but the Gospel is the bread from heaven, which is the food of immortality.

The similitudes of this parable are thought by some commentators to have reference rather to the effect of the Gospel on particular individuals; and that it differs from the former one of the Mustard Seed growing into a tree, inasmuch as that represents the extensive propagation of the Gospel from the smallest beginnings; but this exhibits the nature of the influence of its doctrines upon the minds of particular persons.* But as all the parables have, in the first instance, a general character, by making the application of this parable universal, we do but extend the meaning of those commentators who would confine its application to individuals; and while we adhere to our own interpretation, we can hardly be said to impugn their opinion.

The three measures of meal, in which the woman is represented by the parable to have hidden the leaven, was the usual quantity consumed, or made up at one time into cakes. The attentive reader of the Old Testament will call to mind several incidents which will illustrate this part of the parable. If indeed the manners of the Hebrew Scriptures are not attended to, the simplest passages of the Gospels

and Epistles may be misapprehended. I will mention two places in illustration of the similitudes of this parable, which is exactly agreeable to the customs of the Hebrews. When Abraham entertained the Angels, he desired Sarah to "make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, and knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth." * These three measures made an Ephah. We therefore read in the Book of Judges that "Gideon made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an Ephah of flour."†

SECTION IV.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."‡

This parable, like the two foregoing ones of the Mustard Seed and Leaven, is obviously connected with the one immediately following, of the Pearl of great price. As the former parables alluded to the general increase and operation of the Gospel in the whole civilized world, to "every creature under heaven," these allude to the different classes of converts to this blessed dispensation of grace. The design of both is to represent in general, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest and most invaluable blessing of the earth; the treasure which

* Gen. xviii. 6. † Judges vi. 19. See Lightfoot and Grotius.
‡ Matt. xiii. 44.
gives the field its sole value in the eyes of him who discovered it—"the pearl of great price," the value of which exceeds the price of all other pearls put together. The divine truth of the Gospel gives this world all its value in the eyes of the true Christian, who looks upon it as the passport to a higher and a nobler state of existence. In this light it exceeds the price of worldly wealth and grandeur, all the pride of honour and distinction, and the gratification of such short-lived pleasures as this transitory state can possibly afford.

The different instruction conveyed by these parables—different in degree, but not in kind—consists in this: that they show the different dispositions of the converts to the truth of the Gospel. The first class of persons, who are represented by the chance-found treasure, would receive it with joy as a happiness altogether unexpected and unmerited, and would at once dispose of all their worldly wealth with the greatest alacrity, so that they might be instructed in the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven, and the saving truths of the Gospel dispensation, the transcendent secret of the redemption of man through the mysterious interposition of the Son of God, now for the first time revealed to the world.*

Many converts, therefore, we find, upon the first

* "The Gospel," says Hammond in his paraphrase of this parable, "being by some not looked after, is yet sometimes met with by them, and becomes matter of infinite joy and desire to them; and so is likened fitly to a treasure, which a man finding casually in a field, hid again, or concealed it, and then desiring to get it into his possession, accounts no price that he can obtain, too dear for it."
preaching of the Gospel, came and laid all their possessions at the feet of the Apostles. They sold their lands. They parted with their birth-rights. They severed themselves, as Christ had predicted, from all natural ties of consanguinity and relationship, and "left all and followed Christ." They "went and sold all that they had, and bought that field," in which was the hidden treasure of life and salvation.

Such were the first effects of the promulgation of the joyful tidings of the salvation of the world. That in this age of the church, when the religion of Christ is fully established, and hath taken root in the earth, and become "like the goodly cedars," and hath "sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river,"*—that we are now required to make these sacrifices, will, I believe, be affirmed by none but the veriest enthusiast. But that such sacrifices, such generous self-annulment,† such noble exertions of the best energies of our nature, were indispen-

* Psalm lxxx. 10, 11.
† This sentiment is very finely expressed by our great moral poet, who, by the mouth of a departed Spirit, unites the links of earthly and heavenly love.

"Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
Towards a higher object:—love was given,
Encouraged, sanction'd, chiefly for this end.
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annul'd; her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."

Wordsworth.

Thus Milton:

"Love is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend."

P. L. viii. 591.
sable to the first propagation of the Gospel, when a few obscure men contended against the infidelity, the superstition, the vices, and the prejudices of the potentates and people of the world, will be denied by no thinking mind.

But though neither among the clergy nor the people, now that the Christian religion hath taken root in the earth, are such personal labours and sufferings as were endured by the first martyrs to the faith—such sacrifices of wealth and personal ease as were made by the first converts,—now required of the disciples of Christ; yet of all classes of people—of the clergy and of the laity—more zeal, more labour, more disinterestedness, more love of God and less love of the world, are unquestionably demanded than are visible in this age of the church, and in this Christian country, which has been providentially protected by the Arm of the Almighty amid the fall of surrounding nations. But it should be remembered—it should never be forgotten by Christians—that Persecution may again lift up his iron hand, and that the strong endurance of the primitive martyrs, the noble sacrifices of the first converts, may again be demanded of the faithful; nor is our history wanting of those eventful and calamitous periods, when all those incentives to fortitude and nobleness of soul have been put to the test. And what has been the struggle of the last thirty years, but for the salvation of our own country from a repetition of the horrors from fanatic infidelity, which she has already experienced from fanatic enthusiasm! But shall we always be preserved, while the empires around us bend before
the storm? No. Unless the irreligion and profligacy of principle and of practice, the daring and the covert infidelity, and the worldliness of the present age, give place to religion and virtue, to humble faith and heavenly hopes and expectations, our turn will come, and our fall will be heard amid the hissings and the mockings of the nations, who have feared us in the meridian of our power and glory, and will scorn and deride us in our fall and desolation.—“The chief ones of the earth—all the kings of the nations shall rise up from their thrones—all they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”*

SECTION V.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”†

This parable describes the humble, but industrious searchers after truth; those among the Jews and among the heathens, who, as we may suppose some of the Jews, and find in the extant writings of great

* Isaiah xiv. 9—12.  † Matt. xiii. 45, 46.
heathen authors, had looked, not for a temporal Messiah and an earthly conqueror as was the vulgar expectation of the Jews, but for the true "Consolation of Israel," and had entertained hopes of a heavenly Instructor, who would illumine the darkness of the minds of men as to a future state. This class of persons would gladly embrace the blessed tidings of Salvation, would hail afar off the feet of the messengers upon the mountains, and would cling to, as their dearest hope, that "life and immortality which was brought to light by the Gospel."

These persons are therefore beautifully depicted in this parable by "a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when his diligent search was rewarded in having found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."* Truth was "the pearl of great price," which was sought with diligence by all the great and high-minded men before the publication of the Gospel. But when those glad tidings were proclaimed, and carefully examined by those divine merchantmen, "they sold all that they had"—they regarded their former acquisitions of knowledge and wisdom as nothing in comparison of this "pearl of great price." In the words of the wise man, they "received instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice

* Hammond is equally happy in his paraphrase of this, as of the last parable.—"Others there are which have followed the study of wisdom, and thirsted after some instructor, and then the Gospel of Christ comes as a rich prize doth to a merchant which is in pursuit of rich merchandize, and meeting with a jewel for his turn, lays out all his estate upon it."
gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all things that may be desired, are not to be compared to it."*—" More to be desired is she than gold: sweeter than honey and the honey-comb."†

The traffic of pearls formed a very considerable branch of the merchandize of the East. Hence the propriety and the beauty of this parable. It is said of the Jews, and of all the nations of the East, that they held pearls in the highest estimation;‡ and the adjacent coast of the Red Sea, from whence the pearls were taken, rendered this article of traffic very familiar to the Jews. It has been disputed whether the word "pearl" was not used in the East to denote any other precious stones.§ But this is of no importance to the beauty and propriety of the parable, which, both in a critical and practical point of view, are equal, whether the word was used to denote other precious stones, or that particular gem which it is commonly understood to signify.

* Prov. viii. 10, 11. † Psalm xix. 10.
‡ Principium, says Pliny, culmenque omnium rerum pretii margaritae tenet. See Grotius.
§ Michaelis thinks that "among the nations of the East, the word Pearl is used for precious stones in general. In this sense we must take μαργαρίται, Matt. vii. 6. xiii. 46. And Rev. xxi. 21, it seems incapable of any other meaning, since gates of pearl, which every acid could dissolve, would hardly enter into the imagination."—Marsh's Michaelis, vol. i. p. 139. His translator and annotator, the present learned Bishop of Peterborough, so far agrees with his author that, as pearls are the produce of the East, it is more than probable that the Greeks borrowed the name from the Orientalists. The Arabic and Persian word, it should seem, signifies both a precious stone and a pearl; and from this word the Greeks derived their μαργαρίτα, nor is it ne-
SECTION VI.

THE NET.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”*

The kingdom of heaven, compared to a net containing good and bad fish, hath been applied by most commentators to the visible church of Christ, which contains both good and bad persons; but that at the last day the angels will "sever the wicked from among the just," and that the invisible church shall contain the just only.

I shall place the opinion of a justly celebrated critic in the context, that it may be compared with that which I have adopted.—"The parable of the net cast into the sea, which inclosed many fish of every kind, intimates, that by the preaching of the Gospel a visible church should be gathered on earth,

cessary to have recourse to the termination of μαργαρις, because ṃn is a very common termination of nouns substantive, both in Syriac and Chaldee.—Ibid. vol. i. p. 412.

* Matt. xiii. 47—50.
consisting both of good and bad men, mingled in such a manner, that it would be difficult to make a proper distinction between them, but that at the end of the world the bad shall be separated from the good, and cast into hell, which the parable represents "under the image of casting them into a furnace of fire, because that was the most terrible punishment known in the eastern countries."*

But the kingdom of heaven seems, in this and the foregoing parables, to apply rather to the doctrine of the Gospel, which, as "a net is cast into the sea, and gathers of every kind," should be preached to the whole world at large by the Apostles, who are the fishermen; from whose former occupation the parable was evidently conceived. And, as it has been well observed, "the scope of this parable is not to show who do at present belong to Christ's kingdom, but who hereafter shall be excluded from the kingdom of heaven."†

Christ told the Apostles Simon Peter and Andrew his brother, when he first called them, that "he would make them fishers of men," and the doctrine which they would preach is here compared to a net.‡ Many heard who received not their doctrine; many now hear the doctrine of Christ from his mi-

† Whitby.
‡ The import of the original word of "net," σαργανή, which is of that capacious nature to sweep all within its reach, seems to point rather to the doctrine sown, like the seed of the sower, in all places of the earth, than to the visible Church, which, even in Christian countries, contains not all. See Schleusner on the word.
nisters, and reject it; such will be rejected from the kingdom of heaven.—"These bad fish," says an ancient writer, "are no sooner pulled unto the shore, but the fishermen sit down, and cast them away, and thereby show they belong not to this kingdom."*

The church of Christ was not formed until after the death of the Divine Founder who laid the corner-stone of the Temple. But the doctrine of the Gospel, and the kingdom of the Messiah, were preached by Christ during his ministry, and by his Apostles after his death and resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. It was rejected by the great mass of the Jews, and by the pride of the learned heathens; these were never of the visible church; but having rejected the doctrine of the Gospel, they are rejected from the kingdom of heaven. As the fishermen gather the good fish into vessels, and cast the bad away; "so shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

This dreadful figure of speech is commonly used by our Saviour to denote exclusion from the benefits of the Gospel dispensation, and the future punishment of the wicked. The meaning of the parable, therefore, seems to be simply this:—Those who hear and reject the doctrine of Christ, and the dispensation of the Gospel, which hath "abolished

* Theophylact. See Whitby.
death, and brought life and immortality to light," necessarily forfeit those benefits which are thereby offered to them. They reject the kingdom of heaven as it commences in the visible church upon earth, and will be rejected from the kingdom of God at the day of judgment. These persons cannot be said to belong to the visible church, though they may have been once incorporated by baptism into that holy society; but they scoff at and reject the doctrine of the Gospel, neither being nor professing to be Christians. The same sentence of exclusion from the kingdom of God, and of the fearful punishment of the wicked, will be passed upon all hypocrites who, for the worldly and wicked purpose of gain, like Simon Magus, or for any other worldly purpose, shall dishonour that holy and pure religion of which they are unworthy professors, and that Name which is above every name, through which alone we can obtain health and salvation.

SECTION VII.

THE HOUSEHOLDER.

Our blessed Lord concludes the beautiful series of parables, to be found in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, with these words, which likewise contain a parable representing the true disciples of his kingdom, which it was his object in the preceding beautiful apalogues to unfold.

"Jesus saith unto them,—his disciples,—Have ye
understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every Scribe, which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”*

The meaning of this short parable is, that he who becomes a disciple, like those chosen apostles then with their heavenly Master, and is “well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,” which must here mean the Gospel dispensation, may bring out of his knowledge of the Law and the Gospel—from Moses and the prophets, and from the peculiar doctrines of Christ’s kingdom—things new and old, whatever is needful to feed God’s family and household; as the householder brings forth from his store such things, both new and old, as are necessary for the sustenance of the family.

The Law and the prophets, the mysteries and the types of the Old Testament, foreshadowing the kingdom of the Messiah, and even the usages of the Jewish religion, which were added by the Pharisees, must be carefully studied, and clearly understood, before a Christian minister can unfold the sense of the Gospel, the mysteries of the New dispensation. He therefore warns his hearers, and all who now read his Divine Gospel, to study the Hebrew Scriptures, and to lay up in their minds those things and doctrines which they heard from his lips, that they might become effective preachers of the Gospel—that

* Matt. xiii. 51, 52.
they might be able on all occasions to bring forth from their memories, as from a well-furnished storehouse, such stores of knowledge and instruction as might be suited to persons of all capacities, of all the various shades of character, and in all possible situations and circumstances. Such, we find, to have been the nature of the preaching of those gifted men, especially of St. Paul, the great apostle both to Jews and Gentiles, who constantly refer to the writings of Moses and the prophets for confirmation of the truth as it is in Jesus.*

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SECTION VIII.

THE PATCHED GARMENET, AND THE NEW WINE.

"He spake also a parable unto them; no man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But

* The Scribes were properly the assistants of the judges, and being skilled in the Jewish law, are named also lawyers. Thus Esdras is named by Artaxerxes, άδαξακας. Christ, as the prophets, applies the name in use with the Jews to the gifts and offices of the Christian Church. Isa. lxvi. 21. Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 17. The Scribe here may correspond with ἄδαξακας in the Acts, and St. Paul. See Grotius, Whitby, and especially Hammond on the word γραμματεύς, scribe,—and Valpy's Annotations on the Gospels.
new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better."

I have placed the above with the smaller parables of St. Matthew, and as the last section of this chapter, for obvious reasons. The chronological order, which I have followed throughout this work as nearly as the subjects of the several parables will admit, is best observed by this allotment; for some of the harmonists place it somewhat prior to the delivery of those parables in St. Matthew's Gospel, which are examined in the preceding sections of this chapter, and others place it a short time subsequent to that period.† It must, therefore, have been delivered very near to that time. The subject, moreover, of this short parable is very similar to the subject of the last. Both contain rules for the conduct of our Lord's disciples, and are therefore appropriately arranged with parables descriptive of his kingdom.

This parable was delivered on the occasion of his dining with St. Matthew, when the Scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples because they ate with publicans and sinners, and inquired of


† Macknight places this parable before those in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew, which is agreeable to the order of St. Matthew himself, who records this parable, though more briefly, in the ninth chapter of his Gospel. Mr. Townsend places it subsequent to this period. His excellent Arrangement is on the basis of the Harmonies of Lightfoot, Doddridge, Pilkington, Newcome, and Michaelis.
Jesus why the disciples of St. John the Baptist and of the Pharisees fast often and make prayers, while his ate and drank. After telling them that the children of the bride-chamber cannot fast while they have the bridegroom with them—figures whereby he very commonly designates himself and his church—but that when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they shall fast; he illustrates his meaning by the parable of the patched garment and the new wine.

The first similitude—that "no man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old;" for that it "maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old"—means probably, that to lay on his disciples rigid precepts of abstinence, was unsuitable to that Gospel which they would shortly preach, and which would, with the rites and ceremonies, abolish the greater severities of the law.

The second similitude is, that "no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved."—The bottles here mentioned were leathern bags, which, if they were not themselves new and strong, were liable to burst by the fermentation of new wine.* This has been interpreted, that the old corrupt nature of men would not all at once admit of a thorough reformation, and that it is dangerous to put infant virtue to the greatest

* Macknight's Harmony, vol. i. p. 200. See also Hammond, and Le Clere.
severity of trial, lest it should be blasted in the bud. Old habits are unquestionably most difficult to be rooted out; and for the sake of the converts, rather than of the disciples themselves, our Lord might thus have chosen to display the more gentle character of his religion. It hath also been insisted upon that because the disciples were fishermen, and were not by their habits accustomed to fasting, they were not, out of tenderness, commanded the practice of this abstinence: but to this it may be replied, that had Christ desired to have established this mortification as essential to his religion, he might have chosen his disciples from those more rigid sects of the Jews, who practised fasting and other austerities, or from the schools of the prophets, who were trained in such discipline. Many of those sectaries and disciples lived in mountains and deserts; and many were Nazarites, and as such consecrated to the service of God.*

But the more proper interpretation seems to be, that both these similitudes show the injury which would be incurred to the new religion by these austerities. As the new cloth would make a rent in the old, and as new wine would ferment and burst old bottles; so, by reversing the similitudes—for such allegories are not to be construed too closely and literally—by the continuance of those old habits of

* The Essenes, a species of hermits, a sect of Jews, whose retired lives account for their not being mentioned in the New Testament, were much more rigid in their mortifications than the Pharisees. They are described by Josephus. They were a kind of fatalists. See also Whitby on Matt. ix. 16, 17. See note on the parable of the Good Shepherd, Chap. VII. Sect. I.
fasting, which had degenerated into a proud and formal self-righteousness, the new religion would be rent asunder, and seriously, nay vitally, injured.*

The last verse of the parable is—"No man also having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better."—This has been explained in two ways—as applicable to the disciples, who were unaccustomed and therefore unable to bear such severities: and to the Pharisees, who were better pleased with the traditions of the elders, than with the doctrines of Christ.†

We would, however, suggest an interpretation more agreeable to the view already taken of the scope of this parable. It was not for the sake of the disciples, or out of tenderness to their previous habits of life, nor was it in reproof of the Pharisees, that this was added to the parable. But the Divine Founder of our religion intimately knew the heart of man which as God he had framed. His religion was not, like the Jewish, a temporary, but a permanent dispensation. The austerities of the Law were abolished. The milder spirit of the Gospel was congenial to the common nature of man. Having therefore shown, by the similitudes of the patched garment and the new wine, that the continuance of those old severities, as the permanent law, was from

* Our Lord represents not the unfitness, but the hurt or damage of doing either of these things, namely, that the doing of the first would make the rent worse; the doing of the second would endanger the breaking the bottles, and the spilling the wine." Whitby.
† Macknight.
the very nature of the thing detrimental and destructive to the new religion, he adds the strongest principle of our nature, habit, as an additional reason for not imposing the same discipline on his disciples which was practised by the Pharisees and the disciples of St. John. The habitual practice of these austerities created and sustained that bigoted attachment to them which was displayed by the Pharisees and some ascetic sects of the Jews. Were the disciples of Christ to adopt the same practices, the other corruptions of the Jewish religion would be rendered the more difficult, if not impossible to amend even in converts from Judaism to Christianity.* This he illustrates by the love of old wine, of which having drunk, no man will desire new. He who is accustomed to his habitual observances, in like manner desireth not new ones; "for he saith, with the parable, The old are better."†

It may be alleged, in reply to what has been just said, that our Lord himself has declared, that when he is "taken away from his disciples, they shall fast in those days." But this is rather the prophecy of an event, than that it is declared to be the spirit of his religion, which is shown to be otherwise both by this parable and various parts of the New Testa-

* The dispute among the disciples, and even the apostles, respecting circumcision, shows the attachment of the Jewish converts to the old observances of the Law.

† "Forsake not an old friend; for the new is not comparable unto him: a new friend is as new wine; when it is old, thou shalt drink it with pleasure." Ecclus. ix. 10. Cicero, de Amicitiiis, has the same thought—"Veterrimae quaeque, ut ea vina quae vetustatem ferunt, esse debent suavissimae."
ment. Fasting was not prohibited; for we know that it was practised by our Lord himself, and by the most pious Christians. But the superstition, the vain glory, the pride of the Pharisaic fasting,—which was considered by them, and is still considered by some Christian churches, and by individuals of all churches, as in itself a meritorious service—these things are condemned by our Lord.

The religion of Christ is not a religion of mortification and austerity, but of sobriety, temperance, and charity.* Of these, or some of them, fasting is

* Bishop Jeremy Taylor, whose opinions and habits were those of an ascetic, and who in his "Holy Living" has laid down regular rules for fasting—and if any times required such aids of piety and Christian fortitude, they were those in which he lived—this great and good man was, however, in this guided by his characteristic good sense and sobriety; for in his "Considerations upon Jesus's Fasting in the Wilderness" he expresses himself with great caution on this subject. He says that the conversation of our Lord, in the interval of forty days between the commencement of his temptation and his suffering hunger, was "but a resemblance of angelical perfection, and his fasts not an instrument of mortification, for he needed none; he had contracted no stain from his own nor his parents' acts; neither do we find that he was at all hungry, or afflicted with his abstinence, till after the expiration of forty days. He was afterwards 'an hungered,' said the Evangelist; and his abstinence from meat might be a defection of his faculties, and an opportunity of prayer, but we are not sure it intended any thing else. But," he adds, "it may concern the prudence of religion, to snatch at this occasion of duty, as far as the instance is imitable; and in all violences of temptation to fast and pray, prayer being a rare antidote against the poison, and fasting a convenient disposition to intense, actual, and undisturbed prayer."—Life of Christ, Part I. ad Sect. 1x. Works by Heber, vol. ii. p. 195.
an emblem; and in order to their attainment, it may with some be a necessary, or at least an useful discipline. Times of public distress may render the occasional practice of such austerities generally advisable; and the particular constitutions of individuals may require them. Of this every man's conscience must be his monitor; and for this we have an unerring rule, which at once points out the distinction between the Jewish and Christian religions—the one formal and external, the other internal and spiritual.—"When ye fast," says our Lord, "be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which seeth in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." *

* Matt. vi. 16—18,
CHAPTER III.

PARABLES SETTING FORTH THE GRACES AND DUTIES WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO, AND VICES WHICH EXCLUDE FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

SECTION I.

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT.

The design of the parables of our Lord was, as it has been already observed, to indicate the progress of the Gospel, and gradually to unveil the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The moral changes are therefore exhibited by several parables, which are now become the finest lessons of practical Christianity. The character of the Jews is strongly depicted in the several parables which are expounded in the present chapter, while the great moral change to be effected by the Gospel is as powerfully displayed. The cruel temper of that people, especially of the Pharisees, is shown in the unmerciful Servant; their want of compassion, in the good Samaritan; and their worldliness, pride, covetousness, unfeeling luxury, and avarice, in the four last parables of this chapter,—the rich Glutton, the highest and lowest Rooms, the unjust Steward, and Dives and Lazarus: while the opposite temper of compassion, humility, heavenly-mindedness, generosity, temperance, charity, and
THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT.

contempt of riches, are declared to be the characteristics of the Gospel dispensation, the virtues and graces which alone can render us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

The occasion of the parable of the unmerciful Servant, and the parable itself, which forms the subject of this section, are thus related by the Evangelist.

* "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 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. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped—or besought—him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into pri-

son till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 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: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

The question of St. Peter—whether he should forgive his offending brother seven times—is agreeable to the Hebrew form of expression denoting frequency. "A just man," says Solomon, "falleth seven times and riseth up again."*—"Seven times a day," says the Psalmist, "do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments."† This expression is used, in the same sense, in St. Luke's Gospel, to convey the doctrine of forgiveness of injuries; and to this, it is probable, St. Peter alludes. ‡"Take heed—our Lord warns his disciples—to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."

But to show that the expression was not full enough to convey the sense of our blessed Saviour's

* Prov. xxiv. 16. † Ps. cxix. 164. ‡ Luke xvii. 3, 4.
doctrine of forgiveness of injuries,—"Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but until seventy times seven."

The principle could not be expressed, nor measured by number. Hence the almost unlimited number expressed by the blessed Jesus: for it is almost impossible that any individual can commit seventy times seven, or four hundred and ninety, offences against another. He therefore teaches more plainly in other places, that, "if we forgive men their trespasses," however frequent their occurrence, "our heavenly Father will also forgive us,"* who offend every day, nay every hour of our lives.† "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants."

In the times of the Messiah, which are intended by the kingdom of heaven, forgiveness of injuries

* Matt. vi. 4.
† Doddridge attributes the inquiry of St. Peter to his fear that Christ's preceding admonition readily to accommodate differences, might be perverted by the ill-disposed, as an encouragement to offer injuries. Macknight and others think that it alludes to Christ's precept in Luke xvii. 4, to forgive seven times a-day. But Grotius observes, that that expression was a usual Hebrew phrase for "very often," most frequently; as Proverbs xxiv. 16. Ps. cxix. 164. cited in the text. The question of the Apostle rather seems to arise from the custom of the Rabbis, who from Amos i. 3.—"For three transgressions, and for four, I will not turn away wrath,"—held, that three offences were to be forgiven, and not the fourth; or uniting the two numbers, made seven times the extreme limit of their forgiveness." Grotius, Whitby, Valpy's Annotations, Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 216, fol.
shall not be restricted by the number of offences, but shall be as ample as in the following instance of "a certain king," whereby Christ is designated judging the world at the last day. We are his servants, who, as in the parable of the talents, are intrusted with certain gifts or talents; and of these we are to make the most beneficial uses to which they can be possibly applied, and to render an account of them at the Day of Judgment. At that day how many of us will be found debtors. But we shall be pardoned, if we have believed in the merits of our Divine Redeemer, and repented of our sins.*

This is affectingly prefigured in the parable.

"And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 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. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped—or besought—him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt."

In the parable of the Talents, we find that interest, whether by commerce or usury, was required for the sums severally committed by their lord to his servants. The debt therefore, which the lord in this parable demanded, and afterwards forgave, was

* The reader is referred to a note of Whitby, too long for insertion here, containing the practical and doctrinal inferences on this passage.
for principal and interest. This corresponds to the spiritual debt incurred by Christians. Vast as that may be, it will be forgiven us, if we repent our offences, though not as soon as they are committed, yet before we are summoned before the judgment seat of Christ. That this is necessary to our pardon at that awful day, is taught us likewise by the well-known text of St. John:—"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." *

A remarkable circumstance, quite foreign to modern manners, occurs in this part of the parable. The lord desires the servant, "and his wife, and children, and all that he had, to be sold, and payment to be made." The original word of servant, in this passage, and the parallel Hebrew word in the Old Testament, commonly mean slave; for that species of service which we now denominate slavery—personal liberty for personal subsistence—was the universal mode of service in the ancient world, and in the time of our Saviour and his Apostles. But it was never stigmatized by our Lord, nor by his Apostles, as it now is by the ignorant, or evil-minded fanatics of this day. The remedy of such an unquestioned evil was left to time, civilization, and the sure and steady course of Divine Providence: for it is an evil generated and fixed by long habit, and must be removed, not by instantaneous and violent

* 1 John i. 8, 9.
revolutions, but by other gradual and superinduced habits.*

In this passage, however, the word must mean ser-

* ῥῦν Hebr. άδωνος in the LXX. and N. T., is used to express either a servant or a slave. Here it appears to mean servant; it not being usual or consistent to sell a slave, already the master's property, to pay the debt he has incurred to his master.—Le Clerc. The Jews had only a right of seizing debtors for bondmen, (2 Kings iv. 1.), or of selling them afterwards for six years, and that to one of their own nation.—Joseph. Antiq. xvi. i. (Exod. xxii. 2.) This law, however, respected men-servants only. A woman, as appears by the story of the widow in 2 Kings iv. 1, could not be seized for debt; but her sons were about to be sold as bondmen. Nor did the law apply to maid-servants of the Hebrews who were sold by their parents. As soon as a female servant was marriageable, if she were not married by her master, or his son, she was set at liberty; and her master was compelled to make her a liberal present. (Exod. xxii. 7—11.) The words ῥῦν and άδονος seldom express a servant in the present sense of the word, but a bondservant or slave, or one about to become so, as in the parable. This is evident from the terms of the Levitical Law, which contains the exemption of Hebrew servants from the service treatment of bondservants, or slaves purchased of the Heathen:—"If thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant, ῥῦν, but as an hired servant, ρωμήσας. (Lev. xxv. 39, 40.) The LXX. thus render the passage: Οὐ δουλευτεί σοι δουλησαν οἰκετού. Ως μισθωτος εστί. Non eum opprimes servitute familiorum, sed quasi mercenarius erit. Vulg.—Servire facies in co servitutem servi, tanquam mercenarius erit tecum. Arias Montanus. This is indisputably the original import of the words. See Parkhurst on the words ῥῦν and ρωμήσας.—This is fully examined in a Dissertation, published by the Author, on the Nature of Service, or Slavery, among the Hebrews and other Nations, from the earliest Ages until the Coming of Christ. Rivingtons. 1824.
vant in the more extended application of the term now used, but perhaps with reference to that bond service, or slavery, into which the unmerciful servant was about to be sold. The parable were otherwise inconsistent with itself; for it could not have been beneficial to the master, nor have discharged his debt, to have sold a slave who was already his own property. It was the custom of the Jews to seize debtors for bondmen, and was sanctioned by their law; but persons of their own nation could not be sold for more than six years, and not to heathens; nor was a Hebrew permitted to treat a servant of his own people as a bondservant, but with the more gentle usage of a hired servant. This was commanded that they might bear in mind that they were the servants, or slaves, of Jehovah alone, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and were not therefore permitted to use their brethren as bondmen.*

It has been, however, thought that it is not necessary to suppose the king in this parable to be a Jew rather than any eastern and heathen king.† It is a question of no importance; but it is more consistent with the style of our Lord's preaching, and especially of his parables, to make the party, opposed to the kingdom of heaven, to be of the Jewish nation. Hence the reproof became more severe to the perverse and proud-hearted Pharisee, and the more encouraging to his disciples. The custom, moreover,

* Leviticus xxv. 39—42. See the last note.
† See Whitby, and Valpy's Annotations.
of selling debtors, was common to the Jews as well as other eastern nations.

But however acceptable may be our real and hearty contrition for our offences against God, we are taught, by this parable, that it cannot constitute repentance, which is a total change of mind and disposition; and that the only mode by which we can insure our own pardon is, that we, "from our hearts, forgive every one his brother their trespasses." The servant in the parable was frankly forgiven all his debt; but that this forgiveness was not unconditional, is proved by the sequel.

"But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 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: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormenters, till he should pay all that was due unto him."

Jehovah asks by the prophet—"Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal?"* Such is the

* Ezek. xviii. 25.
import of this expressive parable. The king forgives his servant ten thousand talents. If they were talents of gold, they would amount to the enormous sum of seventy-two millions sterling: if they were talents of silver, the amount would be about two millions.* The king forgives his servant, as the servants of God are forgiven by their heavenly Father, upon prayer and penitence. But this pardon is obviously and justly conditional upon the servants' forgiving each other their comparatively trivial debts. But the servant no sooner retires from the presence of his benevolent and merciful lord, than he meets a fellow-servant, lays hands upon him, nay takes him by the throat;† and fiercely demands a


† The usual mode of dragging to justice was by the throat and cloak, obtorto collo. Plant. in Pœnulo, act iii. sc. 5. verse 45. So in the Hermotimo Luciani, he dragged him παραθείς αυτῷ ἄμβατον, "by throwing or gathering his cloak round his throat." Le Clerc, Doddridge.

The classical reader will naturally call to mind the conclusion of the 9th Satire of the first book of Horace, where the poet is released from the impudent fellow that accosted him on the Via Sacra, by meeting a creditor who drags him to prison,—the Poet gladly becoming a witness to get rid of him.

Casu venit obvius illi
Adversarius: et, Quo tu, turpissime? magna
Exclamat voce, et, Licet antestari? Ego vero
Oppono auriculam, rapit in jus: clamor utrinque:
Undique concursus. Sic me servavit Apollo.

On this curious picture of ancient laws and customs, the Scholiast makes the following remarks. "Licet antestari?" Tangens auriculam his verbis loquebatur; Licet antestari? Si
paltry debt of one hundred pence, or Roman denarii—about three pounds two shillings and sixpence. This petty sum, compared with two millions, or seventy-two millions, talents of silver or talents of gold, is equally inconsiderable. But though his fellow-servant falls down at his feet—an equal prostrate before an equal, a creature before a creature—and thus humbly beseeches him to have patience, he will not; but, relentless of his selfish and cruel purpose, he casts him into prison.

How justly does his gracious lord reproach him as a "wicked servant,"* and upbraid him with the

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* Doddridge, in his paraphrase, calls the unmerciful servant "a wicked slave," for which he subjoins in a note this reason. "The word ὀνάσις is not always a term of reproach, nor does it necessarily imply more than servant: (compare Matt. xxv. 21, 23,) yet in this connection, I thought it would well bear the version I have given it, which may best express the indignation with which his Lord is supposed to speak."—In the primary sense, however, ὀνάσις means "one in a servile state"—homo non liber, nec sui juris. See Parkhurst and Schleusner on the word. Parkhurst gives four senses of the word. 1. a slave,—2. a servant, as Christ took that form, Phil. ii. 7,—3. a servant of God, the reason assigned in the Levitical law why Hebrews were not to make slaves of each other,—4. a servant of God or Christ, as worshipping or serving him—and of sin, as enslaved to the practice of it. See note in p. 131. In the sense of "servant of God," is Matt. xxv. 21, 23.
compassion which had just been shown him who had been forgiven so large a debt. "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him."

The tormentors were the keepers of the prison, who in the East customarily added severe usage to criminals. The original word imports that they examined them by torture. But imprisonment in the East was, and still continues a much more severe punishment than in Europe, especially in our own happy country. State criminals especially,—and in this light the unmerciful servant who had offended his lord may be considered,—when condemned to imprisonment, are not only reduced to so scanty a diet as barely to support nature, but are afflicted with excruciating torments. They are frequently loaded with clogs or yokes of heavy wood, in which they can with ease preserve neither a sitting nor a recumbent posture. To this are added frequent scourgings, and sometimes racking. These torments quickly bring them to an untimely end.*

This striking parable comes so home to every

* Doddridge.—Macknight, however, thinks that the tormentors were those more specially appointed to inflict the rack, and other dreadful and excruciating punishments upon criminals. There is small discordance between the two interpretations. The last expositor makes an excellent remark, however, which I shall subjoin, on this punishment of the unmerciful servant;—"than which, he says, a stronger representation of God's displeasure against men of unmerciful, unforgiving, and revengeful dispositions cannot be set forth, or even conceived, by the utmost force
man's business and bosom,—it is so agreeable to the Divine attributes of mercy and justice, that conviction must seize every mind, and "the iron enter into his soul." Who that thinks upon God, and beholds the wonderful works of creation; for "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work; every beast of the forest is his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills;"—Who that observes the course of his Divine Providence which created and sustains the whole fabric of the universe—which holds the orbs of heaven upon nothing, and rolls them with his All-powerful Word—which created and sustains the whole animal creation from the mighty behemoth to the countless myriads of invisible insects that dwell in the rocks and caverns of the earth, and inhabit the waters and the air—which created the physical and intellectual constitutions of men, sustains their bodies, and exercises a moral government over the minds of men and of angels:—who, I say, that reflects upon all these stupendous acts of wonder, of mercy, and of glory—upon Him, who not only supports the empires of the earth, but sustains the whole universe of men, and of angels and rational intelligences which people innumerable worlds—who that thus thinks and meditates, can refrain from exclaiming in the language of the humble and devout Psalmist—"What is man, that thou art of imagination." Macknight's Harmony, vol. ii. p. 404. See also Schleusner and Parkhurst, on the words ἀτάνατος and ἀταναστας.

* Ps. xix. 1, L. 10.
mindful of him? and the Son of Man, that thou hast visited him?"

But when we pass from God's all-wise and wonderful Providence to his written Word of inspired Revelation;—when we see that he not only created, and still preserves us by silent laws, but that he vouchsafed to reveal his will to the sons of men;—that moreover he effected our salvation from sin, and from those fatal consequences or "wages of sin"—death and annihilation, which our progenitors had justly incurred, by no less a sacrifice than that of his only-begotten Son—that "whoso believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life;" and that this eternal Son of God did in his human nature* expiate the offence of man by suffering an agonizing and ignominious death upon the cross, whose dying words were a prayer for the forgiveness of his enemies;—can we reflect upon our own unforgiving tempers without fear and trembling? Do not the hard-hearted oppressor and the unforgiving man feel the force of the Divine truth of these words enter, like iron, into their souls:—"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."†

* Christ, though the Son of God, died as a man upon the cross, though that man was, in a manner we cannot understand, mysteriously united to the Godhead. But we must abandon all faith as Christians, if we do not receive this cardinal point of our holy religion.

† "The conclusion from this place is this: that God's pardons in this life are not absolute, but according to the petition
In these heavenly words, uniting the highest degree of justice with the utmost extension of mercy, did our blessed and beneficent Lord and Master conclude his exquisite parable of the unmerciful Servant, that, by so striking an apologue, he might illustrate the great Christian duty of forgiveness of injuries. That this spirit of charity is of the very first importance to our own final pardon and forgiveness at the throne of grace, no one, who reads such passages of Scripture as the conclusion of this fine parable, and the parable itself, and repeats that one petition of the Lord’s prayer whereby we pray our heavenly Father’s forgiveness in the same manner and degree as we forgive each other;—no one, in a word, who really and from his heart believes the Scriptural promises and threatenings to the righteous and the wicked, can possibly doubt that the un forgiving and unmerciful man forfeits all title, upon the principles of the Christian religion, to the pardon of his sins at the Day of Judgment; but that, like the unmerciful servant in the parable, he will be “delivered to the tormentors:” for “so shall his heavenly Father do also unto him, if he from his heart forgive not his brother his trespasses.”

These are the inevitable practical inferences from this beautiful apologue. Pious persons daily, and several times a day, pray that God will forgive them their debts and offences, as they forgive them that of the Lord’s Prayer, answerable to our dealings with others, and so conditional, and are no longer to be continued to us, than we perform the condition.” Hammond.
offend against them. But how do they smite their own hearts and consciences;—how, if they are unforgiving—and few are so charitable as they ought to be—how do they condemn their own lives and actions by the condition, the awful condition, which they bind upon themselves by those few and simple words! Alas, alas! were God as unmerciful to men, as men are cruel to each other, the world had been crumbled into nothing, ere it had been peopled with one family; for it is awful to think that the murder preceded the forgiveness of a brother.

Let the parable be taken in its most literal sense. To God we owe life, and every blessing of life. To God we owe our salvation, and the hopes of heaven and a happy immortality purchased by the blood of Christ. How can we, his creatures, who are so infinitely indebted to him, make in the most remote degree any return to God for these unspeakable gifts, unless we attempt to imitate, though at an immeasurable distance, those divine perfections, by showing love and kindness to our fellow-creatures and servants? God has given us all things, and has forgiven us frankly, like the lord in the parable, all our debts, offences, and sins. Why then, it might be asked by one who has never observed the passions of this lower world,—Why do we see the poor oppressed by the rich, instead of being aided, comforted, and supported in that humble sphere, in which, for wise purposes, it has pleased the Almighty, in the order of his Providence, to place them? Why— even in this unquestionably charita-
ble age and country—do we hear of the scanty goods of the poor man and the widow being sold to the uttermost farthing to gratify the avarice of some greedy creditor, some wicked fellow-servant, who does not stand in need of the money so wickedly acquired? How much more of happiness, and ultimately of worldly gain, would such a man secure by imitating the king in the parable; and, instead of selling all that a poor debtor possessed for payment of the debt, forgiving him the whole sum? Godliness, under all circumstancess, is better than riches, because it is the source of happiness; while riches, when improperly employed, which but too frequently occurs, engender nothing but misery. But the course of Providence, and the express promises of Scripture warrant us in believing that very frequently, and indeed commonly, the benevolent and compassionate man is rewarded in this world. At all events, he has a well-spring of sweet waters, which the world itself cannot make bitter, in the consciousness of benevolence extended to the wants of his fellow creatures. Nor has the old dispensation so completely passed away, but that the course of events in this world will approve the truth of those texts of the Hebrew Scriptures.—"He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.—Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth."*

* Prov. xix. 17. Psalm xli. 1, 2.
All other debts, trespasses, and offences are contemplated by this divine parable; for this is merely an instance to illustrate the general duty of mercy and forbearance: and we must forgive all the petty offences of our brethren; for all things in this state are of no value in comparison of that higher and purer existence which is reserved for us, if we shall obtain mercy and forgiveness at the awful tribunal of our eternal Judge.—This principle will be yet more beautifully illustrated in the following parable of the Good Samaritan.

SECTION II.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan, like many others of the remarkable sayings of our Lord, was occasioned by the malicious questioning of the Jews, particularly of the Scribes and Pharisees, who, in the person of the lawyer, are severely reproved for their unmerciful temper in the following parable.

* "Behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou

hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

The lawyer, in this parable, was doubtless a Pharisee. There has been some curious discussion among the learned,* whether there be any difference between

* The question is, whether there be any difference between the νομικός, the lawyer, and the νομοδιδασκάλος, the doctor of the law, as Gamaliel. It might be, that the latter had a school, over which he presided; or that the latter was conversant in the
the lawyer, and the doctor of the law, as Gamaliel, at whose feet St. Paul was brought up a Pharisee. Perhaps there was no distinction between them. But between them and the Scribes there appears to be this difference: the Scribes were the expounders of the written law of Moses only; and the Lawyers, of the oral law, or of the traditions. Our Lord, therefore, reproached them, on another occasion, that "they loaded men with burdens grievous to be borne,"* that is, with traditions. But, of course, the lawyers were also expounders of the Scriptures, though they usually expounded the oral law, or the traditions, as an office of greater dignity; while the Scribes, under them, expounded the Scriptures. In the dialogue, therefore, which gave rise to the parable of the Good Samaritan, the lawyer is referred to the written law in the Scriptures. "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" And his answer, in the words of the Mosaic law,† evinces his familiar acquaintance with the Hebrew Scriptures.

whole Talmud, the former only in the Mishneh, or more plain and literal exposition of traditions; or, more probably, no distinction prevailed between them. But the difference between them and the Scribes appears to be that which is mentioned in the text. The lawyers are therefore reproached that they loaded men with grievous burdens, i. e. of traditions, and would not touch them with one of their fingers. "Though," says our Lord, "you may absolve them readily from the precepts of the law of God, you will not move one of your fingers to take off the burden of your own traditions from them, or allow them to relax in any point relating to them." Luke xi. 45, 46. See Lightfoot, and Valpy's Annot.

* Luke xi. 46.  
† Deut. vi. 5. Lev. xix. 18.
Not satisfied, however, with the solution of his affected difficulty, he still pursues his tempting questioning. Jesus had compelled him to own the written law of God as the means of salvation, which in itself was sufficiently mortifying, if the profession of the lawyer was to expound the oral, or traditionary, as of more value than the law which was written. He therefore pursues his evil purpose of tempting our blessed Lord, that he might "entangle him in his talk," probably, as well as "justify himself," and "said unto Jesus. And who is my neighbour?"

Being foiled in his first attack, and thrown into some confusion when he thought to have confounded our Saviour, he was, says the Evangelist, "willing to justify himself." He therefore expected that, in answer to his second question, our Lord would have described his neighbour on the Jewish notion, which was generally entertained by those of his own religion; and then he might have "justified himself" by replying, that he had always conducted himself with charity towards those who were his neighbours.

The Jewish notion of their neighbour was confined to those of their own people; and death was not denounced against any one, by the Sanhedrim, for the murder of a Gentile. The utmost mercy which they thought due to those of other nations was, not to contrive the death of a Gentile dwelling in the land; but they did not consider themselves bound to deliver him out of the greatest danger. The answer of the lawyer was taken from the 18th verse of the 19th chapter of Leviticus, which he
interprets of the Jews. And though, in the 33d verse of the same chapter, it is declared that "if a stranger sojourned with them in their land, they should not vex him;" they evaded this by supposing this stranger to be a proselyte to their religion.*

* The Jews were forbidden to hate the Edomites and Egyptians, Deut. xxiii. 7.; but there is no general precept of universal kindness, but rather a strong line of separation with respect to other nations, in the Law. To some, the hatred of an enemy was authorized; to the seven nations of Canaan, Deut. vii. 1.; to the Midianites, Numb. xxxi. 2.; and Amalekites, Exod. xvii. 14. The Moabites and Ammonites were nearly in the same situation, Deut. xxiii. 3. From hence the Jews seem to have cherished and enlarged their aversion to other nations, till it became their peculiar distinction. This is the opinion of Le Clerc. But Grotius and others state the purpose of God, in relation to the feeling of the Hebrews towards the other nations, in a much more rational and consistent manner. God indeed gave no universal precept of charity in the Law; but he only commanded the Jews to hate and destroy some certain nations, and left the rest of the world to the general right of natural kindness: scattering in his Law expressions of favour towards them, Deut. x. 19, and not holding forth even idolatrous nations, as objects of punishment, till their measure of iniquity was completed, Gen. xv. 16. But the Jews, as they confined the import of the word neighbour to their own people, so they limited the expression of stranger to a proselyte, and extended their hatred to all who worshipped false gods.

Lightfoot shows how marked the distinction was between the neighbour and the Gentile. Thus it is taught in Aruch, in ידוב ג, "He excepts all Gentiles, when he saith, thy neighbour." Thus, if an Israelite kill a stranger inhabitant, he doth not die for it by the Sanhedrim; for the Law is, "If any lift up himself against his neighbour." Again; "the Gentiles dwelling in the land, we are not to contrive their death; but we are not bound to deliver them, as to help them out of the sea, &c. he is not thy neighbour." Maimon. in ידוב, c. 2. c. 4.
To reprove this uncharitable temper of the lawyer, and of the Jews in general, our Lord answers him by the exquisite parable of the Good Samaritan.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

The journey from Jerusalem to Jericho was frequent.


"Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti."

See Valpy's Annot. in loc. and on Matt. v. 43, where the opinions of the different expositors on this subject are collected and ably stated.

* "Jericho was the first city taken by Joshua from the Canaanites; who having quite destroyed it, did withal pronounce a severe curse on him that should rebuild it: 'Cursed be the man before the Lord, that rises up and builds this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.' Josh. vi. 26.—This curse was exactly fulfilled in the days of Ahab, king of Israel, on Hiel the Bethelite, as we read 1 Kings xvi. 34. After the city was rebuilt by Hiel, it was ennobled with a school of prophets, 2 Kings ii. 5. The situation of the place was pleasant, 2 Kings ii. 19. which might be that which tempted Hiel to venture upon rebuilding it, and which induced the prophets to set up a school there. The only misfortune was that 'the waters were nought,' and the ground thereupon barren, till the spring, from whence the waters came was healed by the Prophet Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 21. Ever since the waters have become exceeding wholesome and nourishing, so as to cause great fruitfulness in the ground adjoining. Josephus tells us that in his time the neighbouring country was furnished with curious gardens, and thick groves of palm-trees; and that it afforded great
quently travelled by the Jews, especially by those who were the ministers of religion. In the days of Christ Jericho was a large city. It had a royal palace, in which Herod ended his days;* an hippodrome, where all the principal noblemen were confined by that bloody tyrant, with orders to be slain after his death; and an amphitheatre, where his will was opened and read to the public. The road therefore from Jerusalem to Jericho was much frequented, and the intercourse between the cities, by all kinds of persons, was very great; and particularly by the courses of the priests ministering in the temple of balsam, which was the choicest commodity they had.—As for the city itself, it yielded to none in all Judea. It was adorned with a royal palace, wherein Herod the Great died, with an hippodromus, or place where the Jewish nobility learned to ride the great horse, and other arts of chivalry; as also an amphitheatre, with other magnificent buildings.—The distance of Jericho from Jerusalem is reckoned by Josephus 150 furlongs, or near 19 miles; the same author adding, that the whole country between them is all rock and desert, and so apt to be infested with thieves, which in all likelihood gave occasion to our blessed Lord to instance in this part of the country, when he says, 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem, and fell among thieves,' &c.” Luke x. 30. Wells's Geography of the Old and New Test. vol. ii. p. 200, 8vo. 1820.

The road was chiefly through a rocky and wild country, and infested with robberies; and the band of soldiers placed between Ælia (or Jerusalem) and Jericho, is supposed to have been partly on that account. But that hence it was named, as Jerom acquaints us, דָּבָד, the red or bloody way, may be reasonably doubted; for Adummim is mentioned as a place near Jericho, so early as in Joshua xv. 7. Lightfoot. Valpy's Annot.

* Joseph. Antiq. b. xvii. c. 6 & 8.
ple; for, according to the Rabbis, there were no less than twelve thousand priests at Jericho; and half a station, or five hundred, attended in every monthly course at Jerusalem. This, however, is supposed not to be correctly stated, but exaggerated for the aggrandisement of their church; yet it is certain that great numbers resided there. Many priests would be constantly travelling backward and forward between Jerusalem and Jericho. Hence the propriety of the priest and Levite passing this road, which lay chiefly through a wild country greatly infested with robbers. The lawyer would shortly be travelling this dangerous road, and might be subjected to the same violence; and if the Samaritans had passed him, as he would have passed any stranger, particularly a Samaritan, he must perish through neglect, like the poor traveller in the parable, but for the charitable care of the good Samaritan.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side."

The propriety, as a circumstance of the story, of the priest and Levite travelling this road, as well as the known danger of it from robbers, have been already pointed out. The original words, κατὰ συγκυριαν, therefore, which are rendered "by chance," express the concurrence of two things together as common and natural occurrences; and the passage would perhaps have been better expressed—"And at the same time it happened that a certain priest came
that way—and likewise a Levite." For these things did happen as the ordinary occurrences of every day.*

But the closeness of the application of this fine parable to the person addressed is a remarkable circumstance. He was a doctor of the law, a man whose duty would lead him frequently to travel the same road, and who would have acted towards the wounded and naked traveller, had he been a stranger, of whatever country, especially a Samaritan, in the same inhuman manner. The Levite, it may be supposed, did entertain some doubts whether he was a Jew or a Gentile; for he, "when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and (then) passed by on the other side."†

This circumstance very finely pourtrays not only the bigotry, in respect to their religion, but the general hard-heartedness of the Jews. He who was a chosen servant and minister of the true God, went and looked upon a naked and a dying man; and

* Chalcidius defines fortune to be, the concurrence of two causes falling together, &c.; but in Hippocrates it is used for an occasion of doing a thing. If taken thus, it will be the priests' going down on some business or occasion. See Hammond.

† "In other cases these hypocrites might have invented reasons to palliate their inhumanity; but here it was not in their power to do it. They could not excuse themselves by saying that this was a Samaritan, or a heathen who deserved no pity; they could not even excuse themselves by saying they did not know who he was; for though they took care to keep at a distance, they had looked on their brother lying stripped, wounded, and half dead; without being in the least moved with his distress."—Macknight's Harmony, vol. ii. p. 449.
though he was very probably of his own kindred and country, and not an unhappy stranger, as he was to the Samaritan—though he required every office of humanity, he coldly abandons him to his fate.

How different from this heartless bigotry, this cold inhumanity, to the neglect of the extremest sufferings of our fellow-creatures, was the doctrine of the blessed and Divine Being, who now reproved the people of God, who were certainly not "the children of our heavenly Father," according to the following precepts.

"Ye have heard," says our Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount, "that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

This truly divine doctrine is illustrated, in the parable, by the beautiful story of the Good Samaritan.

* Matthew v. 43—48.
"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

We find the inhabitants of Samaria, though a mixed and impure race of people in the time of our Saviour—for the ten tribes had been long before dispersed, and the present inhabitants were chiefly Cuthites*—yet we find this people possessed of truer notions, in some respects, of religion, and with juster expectations of the Messiah than the Jews, nay even than the disciples of our Lord.† For we read of the two sons of Zebedee, James, and John, the most beloved disciples of Jesus, desiring to sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, when Christ should come to his kingdom. This request plainly evinces that they entertained the

* Bishop Horsley says that the Samaritans were "a race of spurious Israelites sprung from the forbidden marriages of the Jews with heathen families."—Sermons, vol. ii. p. 244.

They were, however, generally of foreign extraction, being most of them descendants from the Cutheans, or Cuthites, whom Shalmanazer sent to Samaria, when he carried away the ten tribes into captivity. 2 Kings xviii. 9. Stackhouse Hist. of the Bible, 4to. vol. iii. 429.

† "The Samaritans at that time had truer notions of the Messiah's character and office—I will not say than any that were commonly to be found among the Jews—but I will say, than any one even of the Apostles had, before their minds were enlightened by the Holy Spirit, after our Lord's ascension."—Horsley's Sermons, vol. ii p. 256.
common notions of the Jews respecting the temporal kingdom of the Messiah; that he would re-establish Israel in more than her wonted splendour and power among the nations of the earth. Whereas the Samaritan woman, with whom our Lord conversed at the well, in reply to a beautiful exposition of the pure worship of God—that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth,—the woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things;"*—all things relative to the restoration of the true worship of God, which was the subject of their discourse.

† This faith of the woman is remarkable, as it is


† The Samaritans admitted only the five books of Moses, rejecting all the other parts of holy Scripture, as well the prophets as the hagiographa. The Sadducees agreeing with the Samaritans in rejecting all traditions, and in receiving no other Scriptures than the five books of Moses only, hath given an handle to the Jews, to load the Samaritans with the imputation of agreeing with them also in the denial of a future state, and the resurrection from the dead, whereas, in this article, the Samaritans are sounder than the Jews themselves, and so continue even to this day.—Prideaux’s Connect. vol. iii. p. 399. 8vo. 1815.

Bishop Horsley’s Sermons on this incident of our Saviour’s life are chiefly founded on the above fact, that the Samaritans received only the five books of Moses. The reasoning, however, if not the fact, is controverted, as will be seen by the following note of Mr. Townsend on the place.

"In Bishop Horsley’s beautiful illustration of this passage, in his twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, and twenty-sixth sermons, he has not taken into consideration the circumstance related at some length by Lightfoot, and proved with his usual learning,
supposed that the Samaritans received none of the Hebrew Scriptures as canonical, but the five books of Moses: and yet none of the apostles, not even St. Peter, had such just notions of the Messiah as were expressed by this woman. Out of these books therefore—if this supposition be just—had this woman been taught such true notions of her Saviour; and if she, who was not a strictly moral and religious character—for she lived in open adultery or concubinage—if she was thus instructed, we may reasonably suppose that the Samaritans in general had this expectation of the Messiah. Our Lord, moreover, honoured this city with his presence, and enlightened them with his divine instruction; for "he abode there two days. And, it is added, many more be-

that although the Samaritans received only as canonical books the Pentateuch of Moses, they held in great estimation the prophethical writings. Bishop Horsley's argument, therefore, that the Samaritan woman necessarily expected a Messiah from studying the books of Moses only, is not well founded." Archdeacon Blomfield, in his excellent dissertation on the traditional knowledge of a Redeemer (notes, p. 172—3,) has likewise made the same observation.

The Samaritan woman, he observes, uses the word Messias, which does not occur in Moses. But as Moses had clearly predicted Him, whom the prophets called Messiah, the Samaritans did not hesitate to use the prophethical designation of that person whom Moses had foretold. From the words of the woman, καὶ ἐν τῇ Μεσσιァς ἐχόμενοι, Dr. Blomfield concludes that her countrymen were expecting the speedy advent of the Messiah. Christ was first called Messiah, in the Song of Hannah. Vide Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 511; and Archdeacon Blomfield's Dissertation, note, p. 172—3. Townsend's Arrangement of the New Test. vol. i. p. 141.
lieved because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ."*

It may, I think, be inferred from this parable, though a fiction, that in acts of neighbourly kindness they were as superior to the Jews, as they had shown themselves to be in their notions of the Messiah. Instead, therefore, of imitating the heartless conduct of the priest and Levite, the Samaritan does not turn from the traveller like the priest, without deigning so much as to look at him; and unlike the yet more ruthless Levite, who looked on him, and then turned away, the Samaritan, "when he saw him, had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

The oil and wine are supposed to be part of the provisions which, as it was necessary and therefore customary for travellers to take them with them, he had furnished for his necessities upon the road. But it should likewise be mentioned, that oil and wine were the ancient medicaments applied to wounds, and used in surgical cases.†

The inn mentioned in the parable was not that which is understood in the western part of the world by that term, and is, indeed, expressed by a differ-

* Verses 41, 42.
† In vulnerum curatione lanae succidæ vicem implet, nunc ex vino et oleo, nunc ex posca. Cels. lib. v. c. 36. See Doddridge.
ent word in the Greek language.* The inn here mentioned was a kind of eastern khane, or caravanserai, where nothing was provided but rooms or shelter. The Samaritan, therefore, supplied from his own stores what was required by the wounded man on the road; and this custom, as we have already remarked, of carrying provisions was common to the East, as may be instanced by many passages of the Old Testament; and indeed, as we learn from modern travellers, it is as necessary now as in ancient times.†

* πανδοκεῖον. Vulgate, Stabulum rightly; for it is thus rendered in the Roman law; whilst καπνεῖον is Caupona. This last is a tavern, ubi bibitur: the Stabulum, a place for reception of travellers. Hebr. יָלָד. Grotius.

† In ancient times travellers used to carry their provisions along with them, because there were then no inns for the entertainment of strangers, but only houses for lodging them, such as Khanes or Caravanserais in the Eastern countries are at this day. These, as travellers tell us, consist of a capacious square, on all sides of which are a number of small rooms on a ground floor, used occasionally for chambers, warehouses, or stables. Above-stairs there is a colonnade, or gallery, on every side of which are the doors of a number of small rooms, wherein the merchants, as well strangers as natives, transact most of their business. In these caravanserais travellers can sometimes purchase straw and provender for their horses, mules, or other beasts, though generally speaking they supply them with nothing but rooms to lodge in. The πανδοκεῖον, or inn, mentioned afterwards in the parable, was of this kind; for the Samaritan, while he was there, furnished the wounded Jew with all things necessary out of his own stores, and only committed him to the innkeeper when he went away, with a sum of money, which he desired him to lay out in providing whatever was proper for the man, till his cure was completed. We have two examples in
"And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

The "two pence" were two Roman denarii, of the value of about fifteen pence of our money, and would in that country and in those times have gone much farther than so small a sum of money in modern times and modern countries. Indeed it was equivalent to the price of two days' labour, as we may learn by the parable of the labourers hired into the vineyard, each of whom had a penny a day.*

Scripture of the custom just now mentioned: one, Matt. xv. 32. where it is said, that the multitudes spent all their provision, having continued with Jesus in the desert mountain three days; another, Judges xix. 19. where the Levite, who travelled with his concubine, says to the old man that came to him, as he stood in the street of Gibeah, "There is no man that receiveth me to house; yet there is both straw and provender for our asses, and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servant; there is no want of any thing."

Dr. Shaw, Preface to his Travels, p. 14, mentions another sort of inn, called cormack. This, he says, denotes the place itself, whether covered or not, where the travellers or caravans halt, or break off their journey for a time, in order to refresh themselves and their beasts. Thus the malon, or inn, Gen. xlii. 27. and xliii. 21. where the sons of Jacob opened their sacks to give their asses provender, was no other than one of the like stations, viz. the place where they themselves rested, and unloaded their asses. In the parable of the Samaritan, it is the other sort of inn that is mentioned, as is plain from its having an innkeeper, which the cormack in the deserts of Arabia has not.—Macknight, Harm. vol. ii. p. 450.

* Matt. xx. 9.
The Good Samaritan

The Samaritan might be supposed to calculate, from his knowledge in surgery, that in two days the wounded traveller would be enabled to pursue his journey.

This provision for his future wants is a beautiful part of the portrait of this good Samaritan’s humanity. He not only succoured him in his immediate necessity; but he provided for him until he could pursue his journey to his home and to his friends.

The hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans was so great that, as it is related by some writers, if a Jew and a Samaritan met in a narrow way, they were exceedingly solicitous that they might pass without touching each other, which they mutually esteemed a pollution. But the good Samaritan in the parable not only touches the Jew, but dresses his wounds, sets him on his own beast, and, as his weakness would require, must support him as he rode. He must, moreover, have partly clothed him with some of his own garments, as he found him stripped of his clothing. All these circumstances, in addition to the pecuniary support at the inn, are beautiful illustrations of that temper of humanity which is the design of the parable to depict.*

* See Doddridge.—The hatred between the two nations began on the division of the ten tribes, and the idolatrous worship at Dan and Bethel. It increased on the opposition of the Samaritans (or Cutheans, 2 Kings xvii. 24. Jos. Ant. ix. 14.) to the building of the Temple, Ezra iv. 1, 4. Ezra, Zorobabel, and Joshua, say the Jewish writers, violently anathematized the Samaritans on this occasion. R. Tanhumah, fol. 17. Yet it was brought to the height on the erection of a temple on Mount Gé-
This beautiful parable is then applied by our Lord to the lawyer, of whom he first asks the following question:

"Which now of these, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy."

The lawyer thought that Jesus would have cited the Law of Moses, whereby, he supposed, he would have "justified himself;" which, it is said, was the object of his question, "Who is my neighbour?" But our Lord, with that instant penetration of men's thoughts and intentions, the display of which formed so remarkable a feature of his ministry, without referring to the Law of Moses, and yet speaking as a Jew, compels the lawyer to confess that circumstances may arise, which may make a Jew bear greater love to a Samaritan than to a priest or a Levite, who are the ministers of his own religion as well as his countrymen; and which may induce him

rizim by Manasseh, when driven from Jerusalem by Nehemiah, ch. xiii. 28, for his marriage with the daughter of Sanballat, a Samaritan. By the favour of Alexander the Great, a temple was erected; and many priests and others, who had made such marriages, joined in the support of it. It was an asylum for all who had violated the law in breaking the sabbath, eating forbidden meats, &c. Jos. Ant. xi. 3. Thus also Juchasin, fol. 14. col. 2. Instances of enmity in respect to religion are given in Josephus, Ant. xii. 3. xviii. 3. xx. 5, &c. Lightfoot, Har. Ev. Yet the Jews, by the traditions, might buy of them, as here, ver. 8. use their labour, say Amen to their benedictions, (Bera-coth, c. 8. hal. 8.) lodge in their towns, Luke ix. 52. but not receive any gift or kindness from them, (Buxt. Lex Talm. p. 1370, Whitby.) Valpy's Annot. on John iv. 8.
to account him a neighbour, though their religion be different, and their national animosity inveterate. The Jew is compelled to grant all this, and to answer the question in such a manner, as that, by his own confession, it was the duty of a Jew, under the like circumstances, to show similar kindness to a Samaritan, and not, like the priest and Levite, to turn away, and leave him to a cruel and lingering death, which, but for the Samaritan's humanity, must have been the inevitable lot of the wounded traveller.*

Having thus foiled the lawyer at his own weapons, —having compelled him to confess his own want of humanity, or that of his nation, and therefore of true religion,—

"Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

Such a law, as the Jews chose to interpret of the precepts of Moses respecting the duties of social beings, however remote their connexion from the want of national and other ties of endearment, was never intended by the Divine Lawgiver, Jehovah,

* Le Clerc. Grotius observes, that the duties of kinsmen, friends, and neighbours, are all reciprocal, or \( \tau \rho \nu \pi \rho \omicron \varsigma \tau \iota \) Mutuae sunt istiusmodi obligationes, non claudicant. Christ, therefore, with great prudence and address, representing the Jew as the suffering party, by the humanity of the Samaritan leads his opponent to confess that the kindness he praises should he returned by his own nation; par utrinque est naturae vinculum: and that the Law of the Hebrews, so far from abolishing, unites with the general obligation of mutual succour to all mankind. Grotius. This is fully explained in Sherlock, Serm. vi. part ii. vol. iv. Valpy's Annot.
the God of truth and of love; because it is contrary to the attributes of God, to neglect the sufferings of innocent beings. We are, moreover, taught by the perfect law of Christ, that we are to be "perfect even as, or according as, our Father which is in heaven is perfect,"—not in the degree, for this is impossible, but after the manner and character of the Divine perfection, of which Christ is our great exemplar, and we are to "follow his steps." Humanity is one of the great laws of our nature, which Christ came to fulfil. It was always the law of society; because society could not subsist without it. Hence the Jews, who held these unnatural opinions, were the most selfish and unsocial nation in the world; and as such, they were justly reproached by other nations, from whom, indeed, it was intended that they should be separated by their peculiar laws and institutions, but not by a neglect of the common feelings of humanity. We have, as the poet beautifully expresses it, "all one human heart."

This unsocial character was at once their glory and their just reproach. It was their glory; because they were made by God a separate nation and people, that they might preserve the true religion, and give birth to the Saviour of the world. It was their reproach; because they abused this privilege into the most selfish and unnatural hatred of all other nations, and especially of the Samaritans. They moreover sinned against God in wresting their Divine law from its obvious meaning and purpose, or rather in neglecting the written for their traditional law, which they made a pretence to neglect
the most positive law of the Decalogue, and the most important duties of life. Of this nature was the neglect of their aged or sick parents, whom by the fifth commandment they were bound to honour and support, under the pretence of corban, or a dedication of money for the service of the Temple: a practice which was severely reproved by our blessed Lord.* They pleaded the law of Moses for the neglect of the general duties of humanity and offices of love to their fellow-men; forgetting that all mankind are the creatures of God, that all are the children of our heavenly Father, who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."†

SECTION III.

THE RICH GLUTTON.‡

The short parable of the Rich Glutton owes its origin to one of those familiar incidents of our Lord's ministry, which he always converted into

* Mark vii. 11. † Matt. v. 45.
‡ "The frequent use of parables and emblems in the discourse and writings of the Oriental sages, and especially of the Jewish doctors, is so very well known, that a man must discover his ignorance who pretends to assert that our blessed Saviour attempted any innovation when he first began to instruct the people in a parabolic way, since several of his discourses of this kind, particularly that of the Rich Glutton, and of the Foolish Virgins, are acknowledged to be borrowed from the writings of their Rabbins." Stackhouse, vol. iii. p. 154. 4to edit. See Lightfoot's Harmony, fol. p. 30, and Whitby on Matt. xiii. 10.
some kind of instruction. He was requested to act as a temporal judge, and to divide an inheritance between two brothers. He refuses to arbitrate between men in such temporal matters, and proceeds to warn them of worldly and covetous dispositions, and to intimate that his kingdom is not of this world, by the following parable.

*" And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater: and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee: then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."†

† This beautiful parable of the Rich Glutton must have been familiar to the Jews; for in different forms it is frequent in the Rabbinical writings. The Rabbis apply it to the church; and in its primary sense, this parable of our Lord may be applied to the Jewish church, whose destruction is contemplated in every parable which Jesus spoke. Indeed, the great secret of the interpretation of the parables, which relate to the mysteries of the kingdom of God, or the progress of the Gospel Dispensa-
THE RICH GLUTTON.

We are taught by this parable that it is the highest madness to place all our happiness and dependance on worldly riches; "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Covetousness therefore consists not only in the acquisition of wealth by unjust means, but in that worldliness of disposition, likewise, which inclines a man to place all the value of life "in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Of this our Lord bids his disciples to "beware;" and it requires our special watchfulness, because men, who are regular in all the external decencies of life, and even of religion, are very commonly guilty of this sin.

The man, therefore, who thus places all his happiness in the enjoyment of the riches and the pleasures of this world, is compared to a certain rich man

tion, is to understand them in a double sense, as referring primarily to the church, and secondly to individuals. In this secondary sense they now furnish us with the most perfect lessons of practical religion. "When," say the Rabbis, "the church is in distress, let not any man then say, I will go into mine house, and will eat and drink, and peace be to thee, O my soul! For if any one shall so do, it is written of him, Behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die. But what follows? It was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged away from you till you die."—Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 437. This Rabbinical parable bears a strong resemblance to that delivered by our Lord; and the Jewish Church, like the rich glutton, was on the eve of dissolution, when she exulted in the insolence of imaginary health and prosperity.

On the sin of covetousness, reproved in this parable, the reader is referred to a learned note of Grotius on the place, which is too long for insertion.—Opera, tom. ii. p. 406. folio.
whose ground brought forth so plentifully, that his
only difficulty was to find "room to bestow his fruits." He resolves to pull down his barns, and to build
greater, wherein he may bestow all his fruits and his
goods. He revels, as it were, in the anticipation of
his future enjoyments. He looks forward to a life
of many years, in which he may repose in luxurious
indolence, and enjoy all the most exquisite pleasures
of the senses and hilarity of soul,—in which he "may
take his ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

The low and grovelling taste of this rich glutton
is, indeed, upon the calculations of reason, the in-
fatuation of "the spirit of the beast that goeth
downward," instead of the understanding "spirit
of the man that goeth upward."* For we all know
by experience, that nothing upon earth is so brief
and uncertain as the life of man. "Man, that is
born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.
He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down. He
fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."† And,

* "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even
one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other;
yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preemi-
nence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place;
all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the
spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that
goeth downward to the earth?" Ecclesiastes iii. 19—21.

But though men and beasts have by nature one fate as to this
world, men have by grace such prospects in another world, as
should at least restrain them from sinking the spirit of the
man into the spirit of the beast, while they are on earth. They
have, moreover, an understanding spirit which in this world exalts
them above the brutes.

† Job xiv. 2.
as an eloquent writer hath said—"Every man is born in vanity and sin; he comes into the world like morning mushrooms, soon thrusting up their heads into the air, and conversing with their kindred of the same production, and as soon they turn into dust and forgetfulness. A man is so vain, so unfixed, so perishing a creature, that he cannot long last in the scene of fancy; a man goes off, and is forgotten, like the dream of a distracted person."*

If, however, his reason is insufficient to warn him—if experience cannot make him serious and

* Jeremy Taylor's Holy Dying, chap. i. sect. 1. This introduction contains such eloquent and affecting appeals to the hearts of men, respecting their condition, that, although the practical writings of this inestimable divine are now widely circulated, I cannot refrain from adding two short extracts to the one quoted in the text, which touch upon those "feelings" of our nature "which lie too deep for tears."

"Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion which death fed on all night, when we lay in his lap, and slept in his outer chambers. The very spirits of a man prey upon the daily portion of bread and flesh, and every meal is a rescue from one death, and lays up for another; and while we think a thought we die; and the clock strikes, and reckons on our portion of eternity: we form our words with the breath of our nostrils, we have less to live upon for every word we speak.

"I have conversed with some men who rejoiced in the death or calamity of others, and accounted it as a judgment upon them for being on the other side, and against them in the contention; but within the revolution of a few months, the same men met with a more uneasy and unhandsome death: which when I saw, I wept, and was afraid; for I knew that it must be so with all men; for we also shall die, and end our quarrels and contentions by passing to a final sentence."
reflective,—Religion steps in, and, in the words of his Redeemer, prepares him for his fate. For unto every worldly and sensual man does God say—

"Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee:* then, whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

The nature of this work does not permit the indulgence of extended practical reflections. I shall only add, that of all enjoyments, the gratification of the senses is the most fleeting and the most unsatisfactory. Nothing can be a source of lasting satisfaction to a rational and a religious being, but the use of this world in the manner and for the purposes

* "Тην ψυχήν σου απατοῦσι από σου. 'They shall demand thy life from thee.' To preserve the literal meaning of the words, it may be supposed that thieves broke into this glutton's house, and robbed him of his life, together with his riches; or rather, according to an use of the plural number very familiar in the Hebrew language, these words may signify no more but that his life should be taken away, without determining whether angels, as executioners of the Divine decree, or men should take it." Macknight.—These plural expressions are to be taken impersonally. See Hammond on Luke xvi. 9.

"The Rabbins have a similar story of a man who had been feasting at the circumcision of a child, at which the father of the infant gave them old wine to drink, and said unto them, With this wine will I grow old in the joy of my son! The Angel of Death meets the guest at his return from the feast, and saith unto him, I am sad for the speeches of those who say, I will do this or that ere long, though they know not how quickly they may be called away by death. That man, with whom thou hast been feasting, and boasted amongst you, With this wine I will grow old in the joy of my son; behold the time draws nigh, that within thirty days he must be snatched away.'—Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 438.
which are pointed out to us equally by reason and revelation—namely, a state of probation and preparation for a higher and nobler sphere of existence.* To discipline the animal functions, to exalt and to purify the moral and intellectual faculties of our nature, are the only sources of real pleasure and lasting satisfaction which this state affords; and would men bare their bosoms, as they expose their faces, we should read this in the breast of every man. The man that is beset by the sensual sins of our animal nature, and whose soul is disturbed by the fiercer passions of the spirit, which frequently result from the unrestrained gratification of the appetites, will never know the nature of true enjoyment; he is acting a part for which he was not intended by his Maker; † and his pleasures bear no more resemblance to the calm enjoyment of a rational and religious mind, which is "rich toward God and lays up treasure in heaven," than is the brilliant flash of the thundercloud to be compared to the

* "Vita data est utenda, data est sine fœnore nobis Mutua." — Grotius.

† "The punishment of a guilty conscience I do not understand to be a fear of hell, or of any supervening penalty, unless the conscience be accidentally instructed into such fears by experience or revelation; but it is a 'malum in genere rationis,' a disease or evil of the reasonable faculty; that, as there is a rare content in the discourses of reason, there is a satisfaction, an acquiescence, like that of creatures in their proper place, and definite actions, and competent perfections; so, in prevaricating the natural law, there is a dissatisfaction, a disease, a removing out of the place, an unquietness of spirit, even where there is no monitor or observer." Jeremy Taylor, Preface to Life of Christ, p. xxix. Works, by Heber, vol. ii.
bright and gentle beams of a summer sun. The calm religious man is in the world, but not of the world; he looks to heaven as his home; he "keeps the noiseless tenor of his way;"* and he patiently receives the summons of death, which, though painful in itself, will, he knows, convey him into a world more congenial than this to him, whose study it hath been, not to heap up the riches of this world, but to be "rich toward God." But the sensual and worldly man looks to the future only as the scene of enjoyment of the things which he values—his "fruits and his goods."—"He saith unto his soul, Soul, thou hast much goods for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." If he thinks of another world, it is with fear and horror. He cannot there expect

"The past unsigh'd for, and the future sure."†

His past life has perhaps been rapine, at least grovelling selfishness, and low desires; and all his future enjoyment is uncertain. In this state of mind he receives his final, and dreadful summons:— "God saith unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

* "Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way." Gray.
† "He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsigh'd for, and the future sure."
Wordsworth.
This is indeed an awful lesson. But such removals of the sensual and the wicked, the profane and the irreligious, occur daily; for "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

SECTION IV.

THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST ROOMS AT FEASTS.

"And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room;* lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto

* The word πρωτοκλίσιαν, rendered "highest room," in this parable, expresses the highest place at the table: and at the time the English translation was made, "room" and "place" were synonymous terms. They are thus used in verse 9, where the Greek word is the same—"Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room." Δος τουτῳ τοπον και τοτε αρξῃ μετ' αισχυνης τον εξατον τοπον κατεχειν. The Genevan Bible expresses the eighth verse, "Set not thyself down in the chiefest place." Yet verse 7, "Chose out the chief rooms." Πρωτοκλίσια is used in both verses of the original. Thus Cardinal Wolsey "caused the guests to sit still, and kepe their romes."—Life by Cavendish, or Wordsworth's Biog. vol. i. p. 411. See Valpy's Annot. vol. ii. p. 286.
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thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

By this short and beautiful parable Christ rebuked the pride of the Pharisees, which was, on this occasion, manifested by their anxiety to take precedence of each other, by occupying the highest seats at the table of the feast, or wedding. He showed them to how many mortifications such vain and proud persons were subjected, and intimated at the conclusion, that by this temper they would be eventually thrust from the marriage-feast of the Lamb, the kingdom of the Messiah; upon which he more fully dilates in the next parable of the Great Supper, (the same in substance as the marriage-feast examined in a subsequent part of this work,)† which plainly predicts the excision of the Jews, and the election of the Gentiles into their places, the highest rooms of the feast.

This parable was, in its story, perfectly familiar to the Jews who heard it delivered. A similar parable is now extant in their Rabbinical writings, and appears to have been the foundation of the one in the Gospel. It is as follows:—"Three men were bidden to a feast, a prince, a wise man, and an humble man. The prince sat highest, next him the wise man, and the humble man lowest. The king observed it, and asked the prince, Why sittest thou

† Chap. VI. Sect. V.
highest? He said, Because I am a prince. To the wise man, Why sittest thou next? He said, Because I am a wise man. And to the humble man, Why sittest thou lowest? Because I am humble.

The king seated the humble man highest, the wise man still in his place, and the prince lowest.”

Their own scriptures, by the mouth of Solomon the wise king, thus reproves them after a similar manner:—“Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: for better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.”†

Of this passage we have the following exposition by one of the Rabbis:—“Go back from thy place two or three seats, and there sit, that they may say unto thee, Go up higher.”‡

This pharisaical pride was equally condemned by their written and traditionary law. “A man’s pride,” says Solomon in another place, “shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in

* The Rabbis and Pharisees were ambitious of the highest room in honour of their wisdom: for instance, King Janneus, say the Rabbins, invited Rabbi Simeon, with some nobles of Persia, to a banquet, who placed himself between the King and the Queen. Being asked the reason, he answered, In the book of Ben Sirach it is written, “Exalt Wisdom, and she shall exalt thee, and make thee to sit among princes.” Hieros. Beracoth. fol. 11. 2. Lightfoot’s Works, vol. ii. p. 446. See also vol. i. p. 247.

† Prov. xxv. 6, 7. Compare LXX. with verse 7. And see Grotius on the place of the parable.

‡ Lightfoot ut supra, vol. ii. p. 447. See Whitby on verse 7 of the parable.
spirit." Again, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide spoil with the proud."* "When men are cast down," says the afflicted Job, "then thou shalt say, there is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person."†

No plea, therefore, could be urged by these proud Pharisees, when they were thus authoritatively condemned by Him who had just before displayed his Divine power in healing the man with the dropsy,‡ and his Divine wisdom in reading the secret thoughts.§

* Prov. xxix. 23. xvi. 18, 19.
† Job xxii. 29. Ps. xviii. 27.
§ In the more ordinary collision of superior and inferior minds in this world, we are compelled to admit the truth of the philosophical maxim, "That knowledge is power." What then must have been the feelings of those with whom our Lord conversed? Omniscience, the unlimited possession of knowledge, is the universal attribute which all thinking minds attach to the Deity. And here was a Being, who constantly proved to his followers, that though he was "in the likeness of Man, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." On all fitting occasions he exercised this stupendous power of Omniscience. We can only conceive the feelings of those who witnessed and experienced this Divine knowledge by the casual expressions recorded by the Evangelists to have fallen from the individuals, and from the effects which they describe his wonderful knowledge to have produced. This astonishing perspicacity in discerning the inmost thoughts of the bosom, uniformly imposed silence on the malignant Pharisees. See Matt. xiii. 54—56. John iv. 29, 39. Luke ii. 4, 6, 7. He who can read these astonishing circumstances in the life of Christ, without being affected with wonder and devotion and with increased faith in the Divine foundation and structure of our holy religion, is indeed ignorant, unfeeling, and almost unbelieving.
of those wicked men, whom he now reproved with just severity; and whose destruction he predicted in these words:—"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." He therefore immediately proceeds, in the next parable of the Great Supper, to predict the downfall of those proud Pharisees, and their nation.

By no people was the proverb of Solomon more fully illustrated than by the Jews:—"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." In this people, the chosen of God, we see this diabolical vice displayed in the grossest and most revolting forms. At the coming of the Messiah it had arrived at its greatest height. Riches, and worldly power, and pre-eminence, were all that the rulers of the people, the lawyers, and the priests, aspired to; they thought of nothing but the aggrandizement of their church and nation, and of private rapine. This temper was even, as on this occasion, displayed at their feasts. When therefore the blessed Jesus claimed to be their Messiah, sprung, as they supposed, of poor parents,—though both Joseph his reputed father, and Mary his mother, were of high lineage, the house of David,—they rejected him with pride and indignation. They would acknowledge no Saviour, and no king, but him who should deliver Israel, by the power of the sword, from the yoke of the heathen. Such a people was ripe for that ruin and desolation which awaited them, and which happened not many years after the ascension of our Lord, in the destruction of their
city and temple, and in their dispersion over the face of the earth to this day. Pride was the herald of their destruction; a haughty spirit precipitated their fall.

The destruction of this people as a nation, though once so highly favoured of God, furnishes an awful admonition to Christians. We shall not be exalted at the day of Judgment, nor are we exalted even in this world, by pride, which, even here, more commonly causes an abasement than an exaltation. A great proportion of the misery, which has been experienced by rational beings, as far as has been revealed to us, since their creation, has resulted from pride. Pride expelled the rebellious angels from the glory of Heaven. Pride caused the fall of man in Paradise. Pride went before the destruction and excision of the Jews from the grace of God, which they had enjoyed in a manner, and to an extent never experienced by any other nation. And pride is still the source of numberless evils to the world. It makes "nation to war against nation; it clothes the neck of the war-horse in thunder." It causes and keeps up feuds and dispeace in society. Nor is the bosom of the individual which nurses pride, less tormented by this viper, than he spreads unhappiness around him. The proud man is subject to innumerable affronts and humiliations, to which the humbler man is invulnerable. Like him in the parable, he is frequently compelled, "with shame to take the lowest room or place." The Divine Founder of our holy religion, though in his Divine nature "equal with God," was the humblest man that ever trod
the earth: and therefore, both in this world and in the next, it will be found to be the Divine dispensation, that "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

SECTION V.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

"And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in
their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.”

The parable of the unjust Steward has perplexed some well-meaning Christians. It must be true, for it was spoken by the Lord of truth: but there are in it some passages, which, though they involve no contradiction, must nevertheless be allowed to be paradoxical. A paradox is an axiom, or a sentiment, which bears a meaning contrary to its appearance. It seems a contradiction, and yet is strictly consistent and true. Bishop Horsley, who, by his profound learning engrafted upon a most powerful mind, has removed so many difficulties both in critical and metaphysical theology, has with his usual ability distinguished between a paradox and a contradiction.

“There is a wide difference between a paradox and a contradiction. Both, indeed, consist of two

distinct propositions; and so far only they are alike: for, of two parts of a contradiction, the one or the other must necessarily be false,—of a paradox both are often true, and yet when proved to be true, may continue paradoxical.”*

This parable was addressed not only to the twelve, but to all who followed our Lord, and in the hearing of the Pharisees, as it is declared at the conclusion: and knowing that it was aimed at them, like many other guilty persons, they treated him who had thus reproved them with a severity which they felt to be just, with scorn, “and they derided him.”

This parable was, in the story, familiar to the Jews, and was therefore the more deeply felt by those to whom it was addressed. The following was the Hebrew parable, which is very similar to the one delivered by our Lord:—“The world is like a house built, the heavens the covering. The stars are the candles in the house. The fruits of the earth are as a spread table. The owner is God. Man is the steward of the house, into whose hands the Lord hath delivered all his riches. If he behave well, he will find favour; if ill, the Lord will remove him from his stewardship.”†

Our Lord’s parable is partly as follows:

“There was a certain rich man, which had a


“The scope of this parable seems to be this, that we are to look upon ourselves, not as lords of the good things of this life, so as to get and use them at our pleasure, but only as stewards, who must be faithful in the administration of them.” Whitby.
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steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of my stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him," and remitted a part of their debt, as detailed in the parable. "And," it is added, "the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

This parable applies, in the first instance, to the Jews, and especially to their spiritual rulers, the Scribes and Pharisees. They had been the stewards, the peculiar people, of God, who, in the person of his eternal and only-begotten Son, now demands an account of their stewardship. But they had not acted like the worldly-wise steward, in the parable which will be presently explained. They were not only dismissed from their stewardship, the peculiar favour of God as his chosen people; but they did not so conduct themselves, while they were in favour with God, in relation to their Lord's debtors, as to be re-

* Thus in the prophet Isaiah xxii. 19, Shebna, the treasurer over the house, is deprived of his station.—I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down." Grotius.

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ceived into their habitations. They became, and still continue, an outcast people, out of favour both with God and man.

But the parable applies to all the Christian world: for at the day of Judgment, how many will be rejected from their stewardship, because they have not acted in the wise manner with respect to the interests of another and a better state, which the unjust steward displayed in the parable. He had acted according to the wisdom of this world, and is so far only worthy of imitation by the children of light, as, in their conduct, so to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove, that they may be hereafter received into the everlasting habitations of the saints in light, when by death they are removed from their temporal stewardship. The unjust steward is thus proposed to our imitation, because "the children of this world, or of this life, are wiser in their generation—that is, more prudent in the conduct of their affairs for the attainment of their unworthy purposes—than the children of light," who have in view much nobler ends to incite them to prudence and watchfulness. The children of this world are wiser in what relates to this world, than the children of light in what relates to their own proper province, a future world of eternal happiness and glory.

* "Ye are," says the apostle to the Thessalonians,

* "The children of this world," τοῦ αἰώνος τούτου. The Jews usually name this life, this age or world; and the future, the world or age to come. Le Clerc.
"the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of night, nor of darkness."*

When we contemplate the objects of the religious man, the true Christian, whose faith gives him the most lively interest in a higher sphere of existence, and the mere man of the world, all whose views and interests never ascend

"Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call earth; and with low-thoughted care
Confined and pester'd in this pinfold here
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants;"†—

when we consider the aim and object of the one, who, in the enchanting language of the same delightful poet,

"by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity;"‡—

while worldly riches, and such distinctions as this frail and uncertain state can afford, are the sole objects of pursuit which engage the mind, and animate the hopes of the other; we may easily perceive why, by the blessed Jesus and his apostles, they are called the children of light who look up to a God of light,§ in whom is no darkness at all; and

* 1 Thess. v. 5.  † Comus, verses 5—10.
‡ Ib. v. 12—14.
§ We may, I think, without irreverence, apply these lines of
why they who look no farther than this world, and violate so many precepts of religion and virtue, to attain their "low-thoughted" ends, are called the children of darkness.

But it cannot be denied, that so far as the attain-ment of their ends, however unworthy, is respected, the children of this world are infinitely more wise than the children of light. Of this the prudent conduct of the unjust steward,* in the parable, is an eminent instance. Riches, a bountiful supply not only of the means of subsistence, but of luxury and prodigality in this life, were his sole aim and desire. As he believed not in the rewards and punishments of a future state, he had no principle to restrain him from the pursuit of wealth by any means which appeared to him most conducive to the end proposed. In the first place, "he wasted his master's goods"—that is, he plundered them, and applied them to his own use. But as his avarice and injustice could not long be concealed, but were reported to his lord, in consequence of which he is deprived of his stewardship, he resorts to an expedient, which, with his principles and under his

the sublime poet quoted in the text, to the Saviour, in relation to such as receive his blessed tidings of salvation:

"To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn world."

Comus, v. 15—18.

* Hammond has a learned note on the import of "unjust" in this parable, which is too long to insert, and difficult to abridge. It is, however, well worth the perusal of the curious reader. See his Exposition, p. 243. Works, vol. iii. folio.
circumstances, is admirable, and as such is commended by his lord. He calls together his lord's debtors, and remits a part of the debt of each man:* "for," he reasons within himself, "my previous rapine and injustice have deprived me of my lord's favour and of my stewardship. I will, therefore, make to myself friends elsewhere, that, when I am deprived of my present means of subsistence and of my habitation, I may find a home with others, and be 'received into their houses.'"

The parallel to the children of light is this:—We have all acted unjustly in our stewardship, which is our present life. Although death were not passed upon us for the transgression of Adam, our own frailties are such as would have put us in constant

* Macknight, in opposition to the Vulgate, Beza, Grotius, and others, who render τὸ γραμμα, "an agreement or contract, a book of accounts," &c. and in our version is "bill," thinks it an annual contract or lease. "In this light," he says, "the favour that was done to the tenants was substantial, and laid them under lasting obligations; whereas, according to the common interpretation, the steward could not propose to reap as much benefit from any requital the debtors would make him for the sums forgiven them as those sums were worth to himself, and therefore he might rather have exacted them, and put them into his own pocket." Harmony, vol. ii. p. 510, note.—In this interpretation he has the authority of Lightfoot on his side, who, though he understands τὸ γραμμα to be "a scroll of contract," says, "This parable seems to have relation to the custom of letting out grounds, which we find discoursed of (De mai, cap. 6.): where it is supposed a ground is let by its owner to some tenant, upon this condition, that he pay half, or one third or fourth part of the products of the ground, according as is agreed betwixt them as to the proportion and quantity." Lightfoot's Works, folio, vol. ii. p. 450.
peril of the forfeiture of our hopes of a happy immortality. But we know that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." But we are likewise assured, that "if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."*

But the "life" is in the world to come. This life therefore, and all its possessions, are well compared to a stewardship, of which we must give account. Whatsoever our possessions, whether of riches, of power, or of knowledge, having received them from our heavenly Father as his stewards who shall dispense his gifts for his glory; and as we know that we shall be rewarded or punished according to the faithful or unfaithful discharge of our stewardship; and as a similar sentence of removal from our stewardship has been passed upon us as upon the unjust steward in the parable; it is our wisdom so to conduct ourselves, and to act with such prudence and wisdom in our important trust, that we may ensure our happiness in that future state into which we shall be presently removed by death, the sentence passed upon all men. In this wise provision for the future, but with principles as much more pure and noble as our hopes are infinitely more exalted and sublime, we are taught to imitate the unjust steward whom his lord "commended, because he had done wisely: for the chil-

* Rom. v. 12, 17.
dren of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

"And I say unto you—continues our Lord in the parable—make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

"The mammon of unrighteousness" here means temporal riches as opposed to "the true riches," or rather "the true mammon" mentioned in a subsequent verse.* These riches, or this mammon, are false and uncertain, not as in themselves bad, but as temporal and fleeting. As, however, riches are so frequently acquired by bad men through unrighteous means, they are called "the mammon of unrighteousness." They are the instruments of covetousness, of which he bade his disciples beware on two memorable occasions—one, when he delivered the inimitable parable of the rich glutton, which is the subject of the preceding section; and the other, when he was addressed by the rich young man, who had kept all the commandments from his youth upwards, and had resisted every temptation save that of riches—inasmuch as he had not made a free distribution of his

* The word "riches" is substituted by our translators instead of "mammon," which was the word Christ intended, and which for that reason should find its place in the translation of this verse. Mammon coming from the Hebrew ממון, signifies whatever one is apt to confide in; and because men put their trust generally in external advantages, such as riches, authority, honour, power, knowledge, the word mammon is used to denote every thing of that kind, and particularly riches by way of eminence. Macknight's Harmony, vol. ii. p. 512, note. See Parkhurst on the word ממון.
ample wealth for the relief of the wants and distresses of the poor. On that occasion he made use of that hyperbolical figure, to depict the danger of great riches, which represents extreme difficulty as an impossibility. "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."*

But we are instructed by this parable to "make friends of, or out of, the mammon of unrighteousness."† We are to "make friends" by acts of charity

† Lightfoot has a very long note on the probable import of "the mammon of unrighteousness," which he seems inclined to interpret riches gotten by unrighteous means. He proves that μαμμωνα αθικας, "the mammon of unrighteousness," is the same in the Greek with בוסרות שקר, "the mammon of falsehood," in the Targumists. There is, therefore, he thinks, no reason why it should not be taken here in the very same sense. He supposes "the disciples," to whom our Lord addressed this parable, not the twelve apostles only, nor the seventy disciples only; but "all the publicans and sinners that came to hear him" in the foregoing chapter. (xv. 1.) "We may observe how Christ entertains them, converseth with them, and pleads for them, in the parable of the foregoing chapter. Which plea and apology for them against the Scribes and Pharisees being finished, he turns the discourse to them themselves, and under the parable of an unjust Steward, instructs them how they may make to themselves friends of the wealth they had unjustly gained, as he had done." According to the Rabbinical notions of restitution, "Those that live upon violence (or thieves) and usurers, if they make restitution, their restitution is not received." It being however necessary that restitution should be made, they might not retain in their hands any ill-gotten goods, but devote them to some good use. Accordingly those things that were restored were dedicated to public use, viz. "to the use of the Supreme Synagogue;" and so they made God their friend "of
and mercy, by the free distribution of our earthly riches, that we may find treasure in heaven; and that, by the habit of generosity and benevolence, we may have no temptation to desire a protracted extension of our temporal existence, but may be prepared for a higher and better state, and be "ready whenever our Lord may call us."—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

This text of our Lord explains this part of the parable, which teaches us to "make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when we fail,—that is, when we die,—they may receive us†—a form of expression meaning we may be received—into everlasting habitations."

The unjust steward, by wise management, insured for himself, after his dismissal from his stewardship, a reception into the houses of his lord's debtors. But Christians, by uniting prudence with religious and virtuous principles, shall be received into some of the many mansions of our Heavenly Father's house, which will be "everlasting habitations."


"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who shall commit to your trust the true (riches?) And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

This life is a state of trial and probation, and is by this parable very beautifully represented as a stewardship. And if we be faithful in the things of such comparative insignificance with the things of heaven, an immortality of happiness and glory, we shall have these inestimable blessings entrusted to us in a future state. For we shall, by the grace of God, be enabled to enjoy that state of glory with innocence, which, without completely changing our nature, were impossible, if we be unfaithful in the few and trivial things committed to us on earth. We learn indeed one very important truth by this part of the parable—that by the frame of our nature and constitution, we must acquire habits of holiness and virtue in this state of trial, that we may be enabled to enjoy that which is the appointed reward of the righteous, but can never, under any circumstances, from the nature of things, be the reward, or constitute any portion of happiness to the wicked. The grace of God will add to the righteousness of the righteous, but will not change the wickedness of impenitent sinners, all whose habits are vitiated, and make them equal with the just, with those who are

enthroned on sainted seats.” This were contrary to the attributes of the Divine wisdom and justice; for it would equally contradict those wise and mysterious laws, whereby we are so “fearfully and wonderfully made” as to be to ourselves as free agents the authors of happiness and misery, and those moral laws whereby every one is rewarded according to his works—“tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, but glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good.”* The wisdom and justice of God are inseparably united. He therefore, in another parable, that gained ten pounds had authority over ten cities; because he was faithful in a very little.†

In like manner injustice in little will cause injustice in much; and they who abuse the “unrighteous mammon,” the uncertain and valueless riches of this world, cannot expect to obtain the riches of heaven laid open to them. How could the avaricious, the cruel, the grovelling, the sensual, and the habitually sinful being of this bad world possibly enjoy the pure, the noble, the high-minded, and spiritual pleasures and employments, which will constitute the happiness of the sainted spirits of the just men made perfect in heaven? They have not, like those hallowed spirits, acquired the fitting dispositions to make them “meet” to be partakers of the “inheritance of the saints in light.” Such a corrupt being would rather be thrust down “ten thousand fathom deep” into the bottomless pit of Hell than dwell for

* Rom. ii. 9, 10. † Luke xix. 17.
ever in the society of such spirits as he had never known on earth, and had never thought of but with hatred and with scorn.

If then men "have not been faithful in that which is another man's—which means as stewards of the goods which God has committed to men upon earth, and will take away at their death—who shall give them that which is their own?" As men and Christians, we are endowed with immortal souls, with faculties capable of the glories of a future state, and which, if properly employed, vastly transcend the limited wants of this lower state. We are, moreover, blessed with the promises of Him, who "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," and by his death insured them to us as the inheritance of all true Christians. If, however, we cannot maintain our faith and moral rectitude in the things which are committed to us for so short a space of time, how can we be admitted to that high destiny, for which, had we been faithful, we were intended?* If we are the slaves of

* Dr. Macknight, whose expositions, and those of many others referred to in these notes, I had not read until after the materials of this work were collected, thus explains the 12th verse of the parable. "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?—Here, as in many of our Lord's discourses, the expression is so simple, and the sense so profound, that we need not wonder at its being overlooked. The translation has the word 'man' supplied without reason; for it is not man, but God who is intended, to whom the riches and other advantages in our possession do properly belong, who has committed them to us only as stewards, to be laid out for the good of his
vice and covetousness, of sin and Satan, we cannot be the servants of God: for such characters have been through their "frail and feverish being" always

"Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives
After this mortal change to her true servants."

Such services being in all respects inconsistent with each other, the parable concludes with this most melancholy but inevitable truth:—

"No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

family, and who may every moment call us to give an account of our management. The words, 'that which is your own,' do not signify that which is already our own, as Dr. Clarke observes, but that which is to be so; that which, when it is conferred upon us, shall be wholly in our power, and perpetually in our possession; shall be so fully our own, that we shall never be called to account for the management of it. Our Lord's meaning therefore was, Since you have dared to be unfaithful in that which is only a trust committed to you by God for a short time, and of which you knew you were to give him an account, it is evident that you are not fit to be entrusted by him with the riches of heaven, those being treasures, which, if he bestowed them on you, would be so fully your own, that you should have them perpetually in your possession, and never be called to an account for your management of them." Harmony, vol. ii. p. 512.
To reprove the covetousness and hypocrisy of the Pharisees, our blessed Lord delivered the two parables of the unjust Steward, and the Rich man and Lazarus. By the first, the folly of covetousness is admirably exhibited in the instance of a man of their own character, who knew that he would be discharged from a lucrative stewardship, and should be reduced to want and misery if he did not provide a future habitation and the means of subsistence. He effected this by making friends while he had power, and for the wisdom of his policy he was commended by his lord. Thus the Pharisees professed, in opposition to the sect of Sadducees which denied the resurrection and a future state, to believe in both those articles of faith—that men would be rewarded and punished according to their works. They were nevertheless at no pains, by the regulation of their lives, to insure their future happiness, but, among other vices, were covetous and rapacious. They did not, as Jesus exhorted his disciples, "make to themselves friends out of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when they failed, they might be received into everlasting habitations."

"The Pharisees, who, it is added, were covetous, heard all these things; and derided him." After
reproving them for their hypocrisy, our blessed Lord next sets forth the wickedness, as he had just exposed the folly of enjoying the luxuries of life, and neglecting the poor and the sick, and the future punishment of such characters, by the most affecting parable of the Rich man and Lazarus.*

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have

five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

It has been disputed whether this affecting story be a real history, or a parable. That it was a real history has been contended by some of the ancients, who had very incorrect notions of the nature of the soul, which they imagined, in a state of separation, to retain some image or similitude of the body.* For facts, which can be proved by the proper evidence, the ancient fathers are always to be implicitly relied on, because all of them put in peril, and most of them laid down their lives in attestation of their honesty and truth. But in science, both physical and metaphysical, they were very defective. As, therefore, modern science has detected the error upon which they built their hypothesis, that this is a real history; for the soul is an immaterial sub-

* Irenæus, lib. iii. c. 62, and Tertullian, lib. de Anima, c. vii. 9, owned the whole as a history, and concluded hence, the soul to retain, in some slight degree, the effigies or “characterem corporis.” According to Tertullian, the soul retained “effigiem animæ et corporales lineas”—the shape and corporeal lineaments. Irenæus proves, or attempts to prove, from this instance, that souls, when they have put off the body, do yet “characterem corporum custodire”—preserve the shape or character of the body to which they were united.—See Whitby.
stance, and, when unconnected with the body, invisible; their notion is at once to be rejected. The story of the rich man and Lazarus is as much a parable as any of the other parables of our Lord; and as such we will proceed to consider it.*

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple† and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores."

A more pitiable representation of human misery could hardly be drawn by words and images, than the situation of Lazarus—whose very name imports poverty and helplessness‡—lying at the gate of the

* The following parable is found in the Gemara of Babylon ad cod. Beracoth:—"A king made a great feast, and invited all the strangers, and there came one poor man, and stood at his gates, and said unto them, Give me one bit, or portion; and they considered him not. And he said, My Lord the King, of all the great feast thou hast made, is it hard in thine eyes to give me one bit, or fragment, among them?" The title of this passage is "A parable of a king of flesh and blood."—See Lightfoot, Hammond, Whitby, and Sheringham, in the preface to his Joma.

† By purple, should rather be understood crimson. It was not the Tyrian purple, but brought from another country. Ezek. xxvii. 7. Grotius, vol. ii. p. 424, fol. 1679.

‡ Lazarus is only a feigned name, the same as Eleazer, which is apposite enough, and signifies help in God, or as Ani Achad, a poor man, in the Gemara (see preceding note) אָבָרָבָא, one who hath God only for his help. Vide Lightfoot, and Whitby. Or it may be derived from עָבָר, lo azer, an helpless person. So Lud. Capellus. See Doddridge, who thinks
rich man, naked and full of sores, and so miserably destitute of food as to desire the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. By the rich man and his menials he was utterly disregarded; and in this abject state of misery from famine and disease, the very dogs testified more pity and compassion than his fellow-creatures, by whom his “sores were neither closed, nor bound up, nor mollified with ointment:”* but “the dogs came and licked his sores.”

While this shocking object lay at his gate, the rich man, instead of nakedness and sores, had his body “clothed in purple and fine linen;” and instead of the few crumbs, which might be scantily dealt this etymology more natural than the above, which is more generally followed. But in fact they amount to the same thing; for God is the sole helper to a helpless person.

Lightfoot thinks moreover that something more may be aimed at; and that Abraham and Eleazer, his servant, (Gen. xv.) may be hinted—one of whom was born at Damascus, a Gentile by birth, and some time, in posse, the heir of Abraham; but shut out of the inheritance by the birth of Isaac; yet restored here into Abraham’s bosom. This may hint the calling of the Gentiles into the faith of Abraham.

The Gemarists make Eleazer to accompany his master even into the cave of Macpelah. “R. Baanah painted the sepulchres: when he came to Abraham’s cave, he found Eleazer standing at the mouth of it. He saith unto him, What is Abraham doing?” &c. &c.

Both a mysterious and a moral meaning was contained in almost all the parables, which are prophecies of the future events of the Church. This fact makes this conjecture of the learned Lightfoot very probable. See Lightfoot’s Works, vol. ii. p. 454. fol.

* Isaiah i. 6.
out to the famished beggar, "he fared sumptuously every day." The contrast is finely drawn, and strongly depicts the sinful selfishness and inhumanity of the rich man. His sin, however, does not appear to have consisted in any rapacious modes of acquiring wealth. He might have become rich by just and lawful ways. But his sin consisted rather in the total and heartless insensibility and neglect of a fellow-creature, made in the same form, and endowed with the same faculties as himself, and framed by the same God, but who was, by a wise Providence, permitted, during his brief pilgrimage on earth, to be afflicted with poverty and hunger, disease and nakedness.

But if God visit his creatures with affliction, he will abundantly reward their patience and resignation to his will: and if he bless the rich with wealth, he will call them to a severe account for their unholy and uncharitable use of that which the bountiful Giver intended for a blessing to the possessor and all who came within his sphere. So was it in the case of the rich man and Lazarus in the parable, which thus proceeds:—

"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

The images here used to denote the death and intermediate states of the rich man and Lazarus are perfectly agreeable to the traditions of the Jews. They held that good angels conducted the souls of
the righteous to Paradise. The same opinion is to be found in the writings of the learned Greeks. The Jews had three modes of expression for the state of the good. They were conveyed to Paradise, or the Garden of Eden in Paradise. “No man,” says one of their Targums, “hath power to enter the Garden of Eden but the just, whose souls are carried thither by the hands of angels.” They add moreover, that when evil men die, “the evil angels come and say, there is no peace to the wicked.” Their second expression was, that they were conveyed under the throne of glory; and the third, as in this parable, into Abraham’s bosom. Thus they said of one that had died—“This day he sits in Abraham’s bosom.” And Josephus* says—“The good are gathered to the region of the Patriarchs; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob receive their souls.”†

* De Maccab. p. 1097, 1102.
† The Jewish Schools dispose of the souls of Jews under a three-fold phrase, I can hardly say, under a threefold state.
  I. “In the Garden of Eden,” or Paradise.
  II. “Under the throne of Glory.” Under different phrases the same thing is expressed. “The Garden of Eden” was not, by the Hebrews, understood of an earthly, but a heavenly paradise. That in Rev. vi. 9, of “souls crying under the altar,” comes pretty near this phrase, of being placed “under the throne of glory.” For the Jews conceived of the Altar as the throne of Divine Majesty.
  III. “In Abraham’s bosom.” The bosom of Abraham is the resting-place of all them that died in perfect state of grace before Christ’s time, heaven before being shut from men.” Thus of R. Judah, when he died, they said, “This day he sits in Abraham’s bosom.” By this expression it was understood, that he was in the very embraces of Abraham (as they were
Hell, or Hades, is the invisible place of departed spirits, which, according to a notion common to the Jews and other nations, was divided into two sepa-

wont to sit at table, one to lie in the other's bosom) in the exquisite delights and perfect felicities of Paradise." "If," says Lightfoot, "our Saviour had been the first author of this phrase, then might it have been tolerable to have looked for the meaning of it amongst Christian expositors; but seeing it is a scheme of speech so familiar amongst the Jews, and our Saviour spoke no other than in the known and vulgar dialect of that nation, the meaning must be fetched from thence, and not from any Greek or Roman Lexicon."—Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 454-457, folio.

The same notions, however, prevailed in the Heathen world. What the Hebrews called Eden and Paradise, the Greeks called the Elysian fields. The situation of Lazarus, however, was the place of the highest honour even in Paradise. Thus St. John whom Jesus loved, "was lying on his bosom," (John xiii. 23.) And thus the Son of God is said to be "in the bosom of the Father,"—εἰς τὸν κολπὸν τοῦ Πατρὸς. Vide Grotius in loc. Opera, tom. ii. p. 424, folio.—See Whitby in loc.

"This place of separation (says the eloquent Jeremy Taylor) was called 'Paradise' by the Jews, and by Christ, and, after Christ's ascension, by St. John, because it signifies a place of pleasure and rest; and therefore, by the same analogy, the word may be still used in all the periods of the world, though the circumstances, or though the state of things be changed. It is generally supposed that this had a proper name, and in the Old Testament was called 'Abraham's bosom,' that is, the region where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did dwell, till the coming of Christ. But I suppose myself to have great reason to dissent from this common opinion; for this word of 'Abra-

ham's bosom,' being but once used in both the Testaments, and then particularly applied to the person of Lazarus, must needs signify the eminence and privilege of joy that Lazarus had; for all that were in the blessed state of separation, were not in 'Abraham's bosom,' but only the best and most excellent per-
rate compartments. In one of these, it was the opinion of the Jews, the good waited in happiness, and the wicked in torment, until the completion of their doom at the resurrection. But it is expressed by our Lord in the parable, that the rich man was "in torments," which is intended to mark this state as being neither the ἱλικον Schoel of the Hebrews, nor the ἀδην Hades of the Greeks, which words of themselves denote the grave as respects the body, and the invisible place of departed spirits as respects the soul.

But availing himself of the licence of parable, our Lord anticipates the state of the righteous and the wicked after the resurrection. He represents this state, however, according to the then received notions of the Jews. Though he speaks in a parable, he prophetically declares to the impenitent Pharisees sons; but they were μετὰ τοῦ Ἀβραάμ, 'with Abraham;' and the analogy of the phrase to the manner of the Jews' feasting, where the best guest did lie in the bosom of the master, that is, had the best place, makes it most reasonable to believe that 'Abraham's bosom' does not signify the general state of separation, even of the blessed, but the choicest place in that state, a greater degree of blessedness. But because he is the father of the faithful, therefore, to be with Abraham, or to sit down with Abraham, in the time of the Old Testament, did signify the same thing, as to be in Paradise; but to be in 'Abraham's bosom' signifies a greater eminence of place and comfort, which is indulged to the most excellent and the most afflicted." Funeral Sermon on Sir George Dalston. Works by Heber, vol. vi. p. 550. On the ἱλικον of the Hebrews, and ἀδην of the Greeks, see Dr. Russell's Connection of Sacred and Profane History, vol. i. p. 317. et seq. and the Authors therein quoted and referred to.
what will be the final doom, at the resurrection or the day of Judgment, of the covetous who do not repent their evil doings and change their evil dispositions, while the just and righteous men, however oppressed and afflicted in this state, will be carried by angels, as the beggar in the parable, into Abraham's bosom, into a state of happiness and glory.*

The most striking feature of the parable itself is the changed condition of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man "lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." The last scene of his consciousness exhibited Lazarus, lying naked and full of sores at his gate, and glad of the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, at which he feasted sumptuously every day. Nor had this luxurious epicure the poor excuse of many rich people, who never seek out the wretched, and are therefore ignorant of their distress. But this man, as is plain from his recognition of Lazarus, though so changed in outward circumstances, must have been familiar with the figure of the loathsome object who lay at his gate.—Now Lazarus is represented at a feast; for such is the import of being in Abraham's bosom. At feasts of the ancients, they lay in a recumbent posture—the head of one being in or near the bosom of the other: and to show the favour of Lazarus, he reclined next to Abraham, who of course was at the head of the table. Thus St. John is said in the Gospel to have lain on the bosom of Jesus. While the poor beggar

* See Whitby's Comm. vol. i. p. 360, 4to.
is thus placed in this distinguished situation of honour at the feast with Abraham, the rich man is tormented in hell, and would derive more refreshment from a drop of water than Lazarus, when on earth, by the crumbs and fragments of his sumptuous table.

"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

The pride, the pomp, and the luxury of the rich man, who was clothed in purple, or crimson, and fine linen,—gratified every appetite and fared sumptuously every day,—and, when he died, would be buried with the splendour of rank and riches,—all these circumstances are finely contrasted with the state of the beggar, who lay naked, and hungry, and full of sores at the rich man's gate, without a garment to cover his nakedness and protect his lacerated body from the elements, and conceal his abject state of wretchedness from the contempt and the scorn of men. But he, who in this state had gladly eaten the crumbs of the rich man's table, was not indeed, when he died, buried with pomp and splendour—perhaps had no burial whatever; but the angels carried his soul into Abraham's bosom, into the invisible region, and the most blissful part of that region, where departed spirits are detained. Here he is espied, and immediately recognized by the rich man, placed at a heavenly feast, and in a seat of honour next to their father Abraham. He must have called to mind with the bitterest anguish how many luxurious feasts
he had enjoyed when this poor beggar lay at his gate, and begged the fragments of his table. He therefore cries to Abraham to have mercy upon him, and to send Lazarus, now so highly honoured, to “dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool his tongue;” for though he sympathized neither with the nakedness, the hunger, nor the sores of the afflicted Lazarus at his gate, he now felt “tormented in the flame.”

All this is according to the mode of expression* common to the Jews, and to be found in their books. Their own traditions were mingled with those of the Greeks; and, as some think, they adopted the notions of the Greeks after the conquest and government of Asia by Alexander and his successors.†

The meaning, however, of the whole is very obvious from the reply of Abraham:—

“But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in

* Lightfoot has translated several parables from the Talmuds of the discourses of the dead among each other, and with the living. The following bears such resemblance to the parable in the text, that it could hardly be accidental. “There was a good man and a wicked man that died. As for the good man, ‘he had no funeral rites solemnized;’ but the wicked man had. Afterward, there was one saw in his dream, the good man walking in gardens, and hard by pleasant springs: but the wicked man ‘with his tongue trickling drop by drop, at the bank of a river, endeavouring to touch the water, but he could not.’” Lightfoot’s Works, vol. ii. p. 458. fol.

† The Jews, after the empires of the Seleucidae and Lagidae, the successors of Alexander, prevailed in Asia and in Egypt, seem not only to have borrowed modes of speaking from the Greeks, but, in fact, ideas of the state of the dead. Le Clerc. Valpy’s Annot. vol. ii. p. 307.
thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

"To receive good things," among the Hebrews, was an equivalent expression to a life of secular felicity.* The rich man is reminded of the contrast of their situations in life, which are now reversed. The reflection should come home to the bosoms of those who indulge in all the luxuries which this world can produce, who have full tables, and mirth, and jollity, and every sensual gratification; while the wants and miseries of their poorer brethren are totally disregarded. But it were well for such persons to consider for what purpose, and by what power their wealth was dispensed to them; that the same Divine and bountiful Providence, which so ordered things that they should be born heirs to such an estate, or placed in such circumstances as to acquire wealth,—could as easily have set them, with myriads of their fellow creatures, in the lowest ranks of society, surrounded with poverty, penury, disease, and every species of human misery, like the poor beggar at the rich man's gate. Such reflections indeed are unavoidable; and every man who is en-

* The phrase of "receiving thy good things" seems to be agreeable to the Hebrew style, which useth "receiving this world" for an uninterrupted course of secular felicity, when all things succeed according to a man's will in this world, according to an ancient saying of theirs—"Whosoever shall pass through forty days without chastisements, hath received in this world, a full abundant reward" for all the good he hath done. Hammond's Works, vol. iii. p. 245. folio.
dowed with understanding, though he profess not to be religious, must perceive that such might have been his lot; and that, if it so please God, his wealth may be taken away from him, as by the will of God it was given him. At all events he must part with it, when the doom of death, which has passed on all men, shall be executed on him.

But to them who profess religion—and many such are but too regardless of the necessary and important duties of charity and humanity—no arguments will be required to prove that "the lot (of riches) is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."* The happiness and security of society require different degrees of wealth and of rank. But God, who ordained men to be social beings, can ordain the higher degrees to whomsoever he pleases.

Riches, however, may be, and were given that they may be enjoyed. But no man is entitled to consider his fortune entirely his own. His fellow-creatures in distress have upon him a claim, which cries up to heaven against all such as habitually shut their hands and their hearts against the cry and misery of the poor, and the famished, and the sick, and the destitute. In a future state the distinctions of earth will be done away, and a new order of things will supply their place. The proud will be humbled—the meek will be exalted—and those, who have lavished all the good things of this world upon their own vanity and sensuality, will be told, with the rich man in the parable,—"Remember that

* Prov. xvi. 33.
thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise, Lazarus—and such distressed beings—evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence."

This division between the separate compartments of the place of departed spirits was, as we have already observed, agreeable to the notions of the Hebrews and the Greeks, and was perhaps borrowed by the Jews from their polished heathen conquerors. The notion of the ancient Greeks was, that Hades was divided into two separate states for the reception of the good and the bad. They were denominated by the Greeks Elysium and Tartarus, but by the Hebrews Paradise and Hell. The place of the wicked is in the New Testament called also Gehenna, and sometimes Tartarus; and Hades is also applied indifferently to either compartment, and to the grave. Between these two compartments flowed, according to the Greeks, the river Cocytus or Acheron, which is here called a great gulph.*

* It is well known from the poets that "Aδης in the Greek, and Inferi among the Latins, comprehend the seat both of the blessed and the damned, denoting in general the state of the dead; be they according to the quality of their persons allotted either to joys or punishments; on this hand, Elysium for the good; on that hand, Tartarus for the wicked, the river Cocytus, or Acheron, or "some great gulph fixed," betwixt them. The Jews seem not to have been very distant from this apprehension
These images, borrowed from a fabulous and fanciful mythology, at once prove this to be a parable, and evince the absurdity, and almost blasphemy, of supposing that our Lord would represent such things as realities. The images themselves, which our Saviour condescended to use, are in themselves indifferent, and were employed, as was his custom, because they were familiar, for the illustration of truth.

The true meaning of the great gulph fixed between the two compartments of Hades, is the total separation of the righteous from the wicked at the day of Judgment, when, as our Lord himself hath told us, he will say to the wicked—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." But to the righteous he

of things.—"God hath set the one against the other. (Eccles. vii. 14.), that is, יִֽהְדָּה הָאָדָמָה, Hell and Paradise. How far are they distant? an hand-breadth. R. Johanan saith, a wall is between." But the Rabbins say: "They are so even with one another, that you may see out of one into the other."—That of "seeing out of one into the other," agrees with the passage before us; nor is it very dissonant that it is said, "they are so even with one another ;" that is, they are so even, that they have a plain view one from the other, nothing being interposed to hinder it, and yet so great a gulph between, that it is impossible to pass the one to the other. That is worth noting, Revel. xiv. 10. "Shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."—Lightfoot's Works, vol. i. p. 458. fol.

The learned reader is referred to some very ingenious and learned notes of Grotius on the opinions of the ancient Greeks and Romans on this subject. Oper. tom. ii. v. 425-7. not. in ver. 23 et 26. fol. Amst. 1679.
will say—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit
the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning
of the world."*

A new request is made to Abraham by the tor-
mented rich man.

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that
thou wouldst send him to my father's house: for I
have five brethren; that he may testify unto them,
lest they also come into this place of torment.
Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the
prophets;† let them hear them. And he said, Nay,
father Abraham: but if one went unto them from
the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him,
If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither
will they be persuaded, though one rose from the
dead."

There is something very affecting and very awful
in this request of the tormented sinner, and the

* Matt. xxv. 41, 34.
+ The historical books also are comprehended under the title
of the prophets according to the common acceptation of the Jews,
and the reading in the synagogues. "All the books of the pro-
phets are eight, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, the Kings, Jeremy,
Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the Twelve." Gloss. in Bathra, fol. 13, 2.
So the Gemara also reckons them. Ibid. fol. 14, 2.

But are the Hagiographa excluded, when mention is made only
of the Law and the Prophets? The Hagiographa were not read
in the synagogues, but they were far from being rejected by the
people, but accounted Divine writings. Our Saviour, there-
fore, makes no mention of them, not because he lightly esteems
them, but because Moses and the prophets were heard by every
one, every sabbath day, and so were not the Hagiographa.
answer of Abraham. The despair of the sinner as to himself, which urges him to save his brethren, must affect men deeply who are conscious that they are sinners. It is the most abandoned sinner only,—a demoniac rather than a man,—who wishes his friends to be involved in his own misery. The reply of Abraham is awful in its truth. The two opposite sects of the Jews, both of whom probably listened to this parable, were melancholy illustrations of the profound truth of the patriarch's reply to the sinner, who now reaped the bitter harvest of worldliness and practical infidelity.

The Sadducees had Moses and the prophets. They all received the Pentateuch, and some perhaps believed in the prophets: but either Moses or the prophets, we may, I think, collect from this reply, would suffice. This sect, however, did not believe in a future state of rewards and punishments. They denied that there was any resurrection of the body, or that angels or spirits existed. From the writings of Moses alone, it has been contended, a future state cannot be shown. But by many, and almost all the later prophets, David, Solomon,* Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, the doctrine of a future state may be at least inferred, if not demonstrated. If

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* The writings of David and Solomon were among the Hagiographa, and were not, therefore, read in the synagogue. But as they were esteemed Divine writings, and are unquestionably prophetic, especially the Psalms of David, who is cited as a prophet by Christ, they were read by the Pharisees, and by the Jews in general. Of the Resurrection David prophesies more clearly than any of the other prophets. See preceding note.
The Sadducees would not receive these inspired documents, no future miracle would convince them of error.

The infidelity of the Pharisees, who are principally indicated by this parable, proceeded from different causes. They had Moses and the prophets, and they professed to believe in a future state,—in the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul. But they were not persuaded to repent. They sinned from the perverseness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts. They knew their duty: but,—as is evinced by the parable of the rich man whom with his five brethren we must suppose to belong to this sect,—they loved the good things of this world; and it was this covetousness which, in the present parable, our blessed Lord so severely reproves. They rejected their Messiah with open eyes: for he told them, on one memorable occasion publicly in the Temple, that they "both knew him, and whence he was."* But lest the Jewish Hierarchy and their pre-eminence should be overthrown or superseded, their blinded and perverse minds would believe nothing; or rather, they forcibly shut their eyes against the light. "The heart of this people was fat, their ears were heavy, and their eyes were shut; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." †† Their infide-

* John vii. 28.  
† Isaiah vi. 10. John xii. 40.  
†† The comparison of these texts, or rather of the whole of the sixth chapter of Isaiah with John xii. 40, 41, is one of the most perfect and satisfactory proofs, afforded by the Scriptures
lity was voluntary, and their punishment was just in its severity.

Moses and the prophets had foretold the coming of the Messiah, his humiliation, his death, and his resurrection. But as the latter circumstances were perhaps not so clearly predicted, or rather because the prejudices of the whole people ran in a current so violently against them, Jesus plainly told his disciples that he must be "killed, and raised again the third day." Had the minds of the Pharisees been as disposed to believe as the disciples, the same would have been revealed to them. But their worldly and wicked passions, their avarice and ambition, lust of wealth and of power, were the very means by which it pleased God to bring all these mighty things to pass. Our Lord therefore, who read their hearts, tells them, that "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

This was abundantly evinced in the resurrection of Jesus; and to this stupendous miracle the parable alludes. Not only were the Pharisees reproved for their covetousness; but their infidelity of his own resurrection is plainly indicated, and indeed was the obvious design of the parable.* The same inside-

which are so pregnant of proofs, of the divinity of our Redeemer—whose glory was seen by the prophet, which is attested by an inspired apostle. "These things, said Esaias, when he saw his (Christ's) glory, and spoke of him."

* The main scope and design of the parable seems this, to hint the destruction of the unbelieving Jews, who, though they had Moses and the prophets, did not believe them, nay would
lity and impenitence were evinced by the Pharisees when the real Lazarus was raised from the dead. On that memorable occasion we read that “many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.” But the conduct of the Pharisees exhibited a very different spirit. They could not deny the miracles which were attested by the evidence of their senses, and the senses of all men. Their infidelity was moral—it was “the madness of the heart.”—“Then,” says the Evangelist, “gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.” But though Caiaphas, the High Priest, through the Spirit, told them who he was, and that “it was expedient for them, that one man should die for the people,” they rushed headlong to destruction—they resolved on the death not believe though one (even Jesus) arose from the dead. For that conclusion of the parable abundantly evidenceth what is aimed at. “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 454, folio.

The Jews stood on a different ground from the Gentiles, who, it is said, as Tyre and Sidon, would have been awakened from their gross ignorance, and have repented, on seeing the miracles of Christ. The Jews had so perfect a knowledge of their duty, and such strong obligations to practise it in their own Law, and in their prophets sent from God, to which, notwithstanding, they lived in total disobedience, that it was evident their obstinacy arose from perverseness of mind, over which no farther miracles would prevail. Valpy’s Annot. vol. ii. p. 309. Grotius has a long note to the above effect in which Lactantius and Salvian are quoted. Oper. tom. ii. p. 427, folio.

* John xi. 45. † Verse 47. ‡ Verse 50.
of Him whom they should have adored as their God and their Messiah. His blood has been, as it was invoked, upon them and their posterity from that fatal hour.

Nor did the death and resurrection of Jesus produce a more salutary effect upon the hearts of this benighted sect. The devil urges them on to their own ruin; to complete which, and to fortify the external evidences of our salvation, we read that "the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 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. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."*

But the sepulchre is burst—the stone is rolled back by the angel of the Lord—the watch is frightened away. Yet the chief priests, who were most probably of the Pharisees, and are always mentioned as in league with that wicked sect, bribed the soldiers with large sums of money to circulate the report that "his disciples came by night, and stole him away."†

To the Pharisees, and not as some have thought

to the Sadducees, was this parable expressly addressed.* They believed a future state: and their principal errors were those of practice, avarice and luxury, joined with a haughty persuasion of their own righteousness, and a contempt of repentance. To these haughty and worldly sinners the parable especially applies: upon them it was fulfilled, in the most strict sense of the words, that "they would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

But Christians, who live in the latter ages of the world, the enlightened ages of religion—who have before them the fearful examples of pharisaical hypocrisy and covetousness, and the apostasy of the great mass of the Jewish people—Christians have not only Moses and the prophets, but they have Christ and the apostles, the Law and the Gospel, holy men and martyrs to the faith as it is in Jesus, to urge them forward in the race they are to run, to add wings to their feet and energy to their exertions. Nor is there wanting to them that which the tormented sinner desired for the admonition of his brethren. They have "one risen from the dead." If all these things will not persuade them to repentance; if the mandates of the Law, the blessings of the Gospel, the voice of angels, the word of prophecy, the tongues of holy and inspired men, the faith and integrity of the sainted martyrs, the voice of conscience, the word of God;—if these mighty incentives will not move them to repentance; if they

hear not Moses and the prophets, nor give heed to the resurrection of Jesus, neither will they be persuaded though new miracles were wrought, and thousands arose from their graves to reprove them for their sins, and to exhort them to repentance.
CHAPTER IV.

PARABLES ON THE EFFICACY OF REPENTANCE.

SECTION I.

THE LOST SHEEP.

The three parables which are the subject of the present chapter, are contained in one chapter, the 15th, of the Gospel of St. Luke, and form a beautiful series on the efficacy of repentance. The first of these parables, the Lost Sheep, which is the subject of the present section, is also recorded by St. Matthew* to have been delivered on a different occasion, which I shall notice in connexion with the present parable recorded by St. Luke.

Born and educated in Christian countries, where our holy religion has been for so many centuries established, we are enabled to form but a very feeble conception of the effect of our Lord's discourses, whether delivered plainly or in parable, upon his hearers. He saw into their thoughts, and made their hearts burn within them, when he over-

* Matt. xviii. 12.
threw the sophistry, or abashed the wickedness, by a simple question or a short and striking parable, of those who came to him for the purpose of tempting him; while he encouraged the humble, and comforted the sinner.

Of this character were the three parables, of which the Lost Sheep is the first. In the preceding chapter he had delivered the beautiful parable of the Great Supper,* which prefigured to the Jews, in the most striking manner, their exclusion from the kingdom of God; while the Gentiles of all descriptions,—the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, and they who wandered in the highways and hedges,—were invited to come in, and partake of the supper, which had been prepared for the other guests who had despised the feast which their Lord had prepared for them. By the similitudes of a man building a tower who first counts the cost, and of a king going to war who consults as to the power of his forces, our Lord beautifully illustrates the necessity of his disciples to make their previous account of sufferings and temptations before they enter upon their Christian warfare. For "salt," he adds, "is good,"—a Christian life is of inestimable value: "but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?" As the unsavoury salt "is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill,"

* The parable of the Great Supper bears such a resemblance to that of the Marriage Feast, delivered on a different occasion, that I shall not make a separate exposition of them, but shall include the Great Supper in that of the Marriage Feast in the Fifth Section of the Sixth Chapter.
but is "cast out;" so the unsavoury and unprofitable Christian can promote neither the salvation and happiness of himself, nor of others. "He that hath ears," which are open to hear instruction, "let him hear;" and weigh the grave import of these discourses.

Thus excited, we read that, with their respective marks of docility and love of truth, and of scorn and contempt of the Divine Teacher,—

"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Scribes and Pharisees—who likewise came for the same purpose, though with a different temper—murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." But the ears of the publicans and sinners were open to the Divine call. "They heard instruction, and were wise, and refused it not."* 

The publicans were the tax-gatherers, or farmers of the public revenue; and as they were heathens, and often rapacious and exacting, they were esteemed infamous by the Jews. They were held in no esteem by the Heathens themselves. To associate with such persons was therefore, in the eyes of the Pharisees, in the highest degree abominable.

But to "receive sinners and to eat with them," was, if possible, a more offensive act than even to associate with publicans. The sinners were those Jews who, for their unlawful calling and modes of life, were esteemed by their countrymen as profane as the Gentiles. The Gentiles were likewise called

* Prov. viii. 33.
THE LOST SHEEP.

sinners: but these were gross sinners of the lower orders of the Jewish people, and were considered by the Pharisees as out of the power of conversion. It has therefore been thought that Christ, knowing the contempt with which the Pharisees regarded and acted against those whom they then named sinners, and observing how strongly the strict observers of the Law would show the same aversion to the Gentiles, when the Gospel was in due time preached to them,* gave these three parables as a justification of his and the apostles' conduct respecting these different sets of persons, equally included in the name of sinners.†‡

"And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep that was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."§

In the number, one hundred, there is no mystical meaning, nor in ninety and nine, as was thought by some of the learned Jews,‖—a superstition from

* Acts xi. 3. † Matt. xviii. 17. Gal. ii. 15.
‡ Vide Grotius and Whitby on verses 1, 2.
‖ This was a favourite way of numbering and dividing among
which Christians have not always been exempt. But the meaning is, that God takes not less care of sinners than of the just; that he is always ready to receive them when they repent, and rejoices in their recovery and conversion; and that his care, like that of a good shepherd, extends to the whole of his flock.

As, according to St. Matthew, the good shepherd went into the mountains in quest of the lost sheep; and as, when found, he brings it home rejoicing, and invites his neighbours to rejoice with him; so did our blessed Lord, and his apostles, first preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and introduced many myriads into the divine sheepfold; and afterwards the apostles went from the mountains of Israel to the mountains of the Gentiles, “preaching the Gospel to every creature under heaven—became all things to all men that they might save some.”* and when they had converted them, like the good shepherd in the parable, they called together their neighbours in Christ, and fellow-labourers in the Gospel, to rejoice with them at the conversion of penitent sinners—that they had “found the sheep which were lost.”

If such were, and if such are the feelings of good men upon earth, the holy apostles, at the conversion of sinners, we may have some faint conception of the Jews. Lightfoot gives the following instance:—“Of those hundred cries that a woman in travail uttereth, ninety and nine of them are to death, and only one of them to life.” Works, vol. ii. p. 448, fol.

* Col. i. 23. 1 Cor. ix. 22.
the divine joy of the angels of heaven, and of the serene love of that great and pure Being, whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity, but who must take pleasure—to speak humanly, and so he condescends to express himself in the Scriptures—in the goodness, and therefore the happiness, of the beings whom he hath made. "I say unto you," says our Lord in the parable, "that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

The term "just"* applies in the first place, and was so intended by our Lord, to the persons whom

* Here we are to consider the distinction commonly used in the Jewish schools. All the good, and those that were to be saved at last, they called just persons. Hence such passages as the following frequently occur in the Rabbinical books:—"Paradise is for the just. Good things are laid up for the just."

The Gemarists (who, as Lightfoot shows, made a superstitious distinction between the crooked and the straight Tsadi, in reference to the just,) divided the just into those that are just and no more, and those that are perfectly just. Under the first rank they placed those that were not always upright, but having lived a wicked and irreligious life, have at length betaken themselves to repentance and reformation. These they call penitents. Under the latter rank are they placed who have been always upright, and never declined from the right way. These they call perfectly just, and just from their first original; as also holy, or good men, and men of good works. Such an one did he account himself, and probably was so esteemed by others, that saith, "These all have I kept from my youth." Matt. xix. 20.

Lightfoot has a long note on this subject, and gives many instances of the interpretation of "the just" by the Rabbins in the Talmuds. He remarks a singular coincidence between the Jew-
he was addressing—those Jews who placed all justice and merit in works, and with whom the *perfectly just* and *men of works* were convertible terms. This parable, like many others, strikes at the root of Judaism; and the Pharisees, who were learned in the traditions, would and did comprehend the purport of our Lord’s discourses. They would appre-

ish phrase of “perfectly just persons,” and the text of the apostle to the Hebrews xii. 23,—“the spirits of just men made perfect.” He understands the apostle to speak of just persons who are still in this life, and to show that the souls or spirits of believers are made perfectly righteous by faith, which was contrary to what the Jews held, that men were complete in their righteousness by works, even bodily works.—Much light has been and may yet be thrown upon the New Testament by the Rabbinical writings, especially upon the writings of St. Paul, who was one of the most learned Jews of his time, and strictly brought up in the sect of the Pharisees, who rested all their faith on the traditions afterwards collected into their Talmuds. *Vide* Buxtorfi Synagoga Judaica, p. 53, 60. Basil. 1661. These traditions were uniformly condemned by Christ, and were perfectly adverse to his pure and holy religion. “Jus Talmudicum, says Buxtorf, Christi verbis adversatur et repugnat.” *ib.* p. 354. The Talmuds will explain the object of many of Christ’s discourses, and particularly the parables, many of which we yet find in these writings, as has already been shown, and we shall yet have occasion to show in the progress of this work. In this parable Christ opposed the notions of the Jews respecting their perfectly just persons. “Judge,” says Lightfoot, “whether Christ spoke simply or directly of any such persons (if there really were any such) that could need no repentance; or whether he did not at that time utter himself according to the common conceptions that nation had about some perfectly just persons, which he himself opposed.” Lightfoot’s Works, vol. ii. p. 448. folio.
ciate the striking contrast between the proud and perfectly just Jew with the penitent disciple of Jesus of Nazareth.

As Christians, however, this text is equally applicable to us. Not only is the penitent and humble sinner more acceptable than the proud man of works, who confides in a merit which not the highest created being can claim in the sight of his Maker; but the sinner who is perfectly converted, is in one sense more acceptable than the just and righteous man whose works are but the fruit of his faith. A just and good man may fall into sin and error, for which he will repent. He will, with a contrite heart, pray for pardon and mercy of God through the merits of his Redeemer. But this is not the repentance here intended, and is expressed by a different word. This repentance, μετανόησις, is an entire change of mind and character, which is the import of the original word. A just and pious man, who sins, does but fall from his established character of piety and love of God, and does not require that entire change of character, of the whole man, which is necessary to bring back the lost sheep, and the unreflecting prodigal. This must be effected by that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance not to be repented of"—which makes the infidel a firm and consistent believer, and the vicious profligate, and the selfish and worldly-minded man, pious and heavenly-minded. Happy, thrice happy, is that sinner who thus repenteth; for over him, hath his Saviour declared, "joy shall be in heaven more
than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."*

The parable of St. Matthew, which I have noticed, was delivered on a different occasion. The parable is the same; and the application of it to the whole human race, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and as such saved by repentance and faith, differs not from this general application of the same parable now delivered; but it differs from the immediate application, and in the circumstances which occasioned it. Our Lord had been warning his disciples to be humble and innocent as a little child which he called to him, and declared that "whoso should receive one such little child in his name received him. But whoso should offend one of these little ones

* There being none so just as to need no repentance, the Fathers, as Ambrose, Hilary, and Chrysostom, held that by those just persons were to be understood the angels in heaven; and by the sinner the race of mankind restored by Christ. But the best critics distinguish between that repentance, or ἀμετανοῶνας: the entire change of the course of life requisite to a sinner, and that repentant sorrow for lapses and failings, to which every good man must be incident, yet is not to be said, in the strong "sense of this entire change, to need repentance." The superior joy that is expressed in heaven is taken after the manner of human affections, where the greater hazard and danger produce the greater joy at the preservation from it.

Whitby thinks that the ninety and nine just persons represent the Jewish nation, the Scribes and Pharisees, who trusted in their own righteousness—and the sinner the Gentile world. This is the unquestionable import of the Prodigal Son, and for the reasons of the preceding note, of this likewise. Compare Grotius, Whitby, and Doddridge. See also Valpy's Annot. in loco, Hammond in loco.
which believed in him, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."*  

He then denounces wrath on those by whom offences come, and warns them to avoid every temptation, and every species of sin. And to show his universal care of all men, he reverts to the child before him—"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones (as not regarding whether ye offend them or not); for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven."†  The angels, who are ministering spirits, stand always in the presence of God, ready to receive his commands concerning them.‡  

The meaning of the word "to offend"—literally "to scandalize"—is to cause a person, or to cause one's-self to fall from faith in Christ. What, therefore, could be a greater sin than to pervert the

* Matt. xviii. 5, 6.  
† Matt. xviii. 10.  
‡ The angels are ministering spirits for little children—for the lowest and least of Christ's sheepfold, as much as for the full-grown men and more advanced Christians. This text does not mean that every child has a guardian angel.  "Christ saith not 'their angel,' but 'their angels behold the face of God.' Nor says he that their angels belong to all, but only to these little ones, nor that they always do attend upon their persons, but that they stand 'before the face of God,' ready to receive his commands, either to help them in their exigencies, or to punish them who injure them. Hence then it follows, not that they have always an angel present with them, but only that the angels in general are 'ministering spirits to them.' Ps. xxxiv. 8. Heb. i. 14." Whitby.
infant faith of a little child; for, as our Lord adds at the end of the parable of the Lost Sheep delivered on this occasion,—"It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish, or be lost," ἀπόλυται, like the strayed sheep in the parable. "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost."*

Our Lord, therefore, intends to teach his disciples by the parable, as delivered on this occasion, that if a man will spare no labour to seek one sheep out of a hundred which is lost, the redemption through the coming of the Son of man will extend to the lowest and least of the children of men; and whosoever causes a little child to err, or fall from faith in Christ Jesus, is guilty of the most enormous sin.—"It were better that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. For the Son of man came to save that which was lost; and it is not the will of our heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish, or be lost."

SECTION II.

THE LOST PIECE OF MONEY.

†"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it.

* Ver. 14 and 11.
† There is a parable not much unlike this in Midras Schir, 1. R. Phineas ben Jair expoundeth. "If thou seek wisdom as silver, that is, If thou seek the things of the law as hidden
And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

The piece of silver, in this parable, is the emblem of the joy of God at the recovery of a lost soul. The import of this parable is the same as that of the last. But to be assured by the Divine Redeemer that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," should surely incite all sinners to that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance not to be repented of."

This text has excited much controversy whether the angels and blessed spirits are acquainted with the conversion of a sinner. It is contended by the Romish Church, very erroneously, that as the blessed spirits are declared to be "as the angels of heaven" in a state of glory, they are already equal in knowledge; and hence they pray for the interposition both of saints and angels. But the reply to this argument is very easy. The saints are declared to be equal to the angels as to immortality; that "they neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more;" and that they are

treasures.—A parable. It is like a man who if he lose a stone or ornament in his house, he lighteth some candles, some torches, till he find it. If it be thus for the things of this world, how much more may it be for the things of the world to come." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 449, folio.

the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."* They are not now equal to the angels, but will be so at the resurrection. The spirits of the departed are not yet in a state of glory, nor will they be blessed spirits, that is, in a state of beatitude, until they become "the children of the resurrection." This is an error common to the Romish Church, and all the Calvinistic divines, with many, and perhaps most, if not all the non-conformists. Yet no doctrine of scripture is more plainly to be inferred than that there is some intermediate state between death and the resurrection. The apostle to the Hebrews expressly affirms that the saints will not enter upon their final state of glory without the rest of the Christian world, when the number of the elect shall be completed. After having distinguished all the saints from Abel to the Hebrew prophets,—"These all," he concludes, "having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."†

But in this text the Saints are not named, and the controversy is out of place. In order, however, to oppose the notions of the Romish Church respecting angels, to whom as well as to saints that Church pays an undue reverence, Whitby seems to push the

† Heb. xi. 39, 40.—The reader is referred to the preceding parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus for some remarks on the notions of the Jews and Heathens, as well as Christians, respecting the intermediate state.
argument too far the other way. He thinks that the angels do not participate in the joy at the conversion of sinners; for that the text affirms, not that the joy here mentioned is the joy of angels, but only that it is the joy of God, \( \epsilon\nu\omicron\omicron\tau\iota\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\upsilon\), before or in the presence of the angels, which stand continuously before his face.

That it is the joy of God "in the presence of the angels," is indisputable from the words of the text; but that these angels and sons of God, who "shouted for joy when the corner-stones of the earth were laid"—who are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"*—that these blessed spirits should not be allowed to participate in the joy manifested by the Divine presence in Heaven, where these spirits are expressly declared to be present,—seems indeed to be an argument rather for victory than for truth.

"As," says this learned expositor, "an earthly king may rejoice before his court, and they know not the special motive of his joy, so may the King of Heaven rejoice before the angels of his presence, and they know not the reason of that joy, much less the particular convert that gave occasion to it."†

† Whitby, vol. i. p. 356, 4to. The conclusion of this exposition is very just. "In a word, it is confessedly God who is compared to the Shepherd seeking his lost sheep, and to the Father rejoicing for the return of his prodigal son; and therefore the similitude requires, that the joy conceived when a lost sheep is found, or a prodigal son comes home, should be ascribed to him. Note also, that this consideration should inflame the zeal, and quicken the industry of the spiritual shepherd for the
The knowledge, or the distinction, of the particular convert is perhaps to our notions somewhat undignified. Yet it is said that the joy is over "one sinner." But that the knowledge of the repentance of a sinner upon earth is intended by the words to be communicated to the angels in whose presence is the Divine joy, seems the most rational and consistent interpretation. With this communication to the angelic spirits the analogy of the earthly king rejoicing with all his court is beautiful, and as true as the analogy of earthly and heavenly things can be made.

The conversion of sinners, we learn from this and the foregoing parable, is indeed a mighty object of the Christian Scheme, since the repentance of one sinner is declared to create joy in the presence of the angels of God who stand before Him, who is all joy and peace and love:—it is a work so highly acceptable to God, that, for this purpose, he sent into the world the great Shepherd of the sheep. It becomes the spiritual pastors or shepherds to be zealous and industrious in the great work of their calling. But, alas! in this infidel, irreligious, and schismatic age, when few entertain any reverence for the word and the ministers of God, nor are impressed with any adequate sentiments of the high message they bear, and the sacred and important office with which they are invested—when every one presumes to think himself a competent judge in sacred things, to reject them altogether, or to re-

conversion of sinners, as knowing this is a work so highly acceptable to the God of heaven, and that for which he sent the great Shepherd of sheep into the world."
ceive them in the spirit of fanaticism—in such a state of things how weak is the power of the clergy, however zealous,—how crippled their best energies to do the great work of their calling, to “command—in the name of the High God whose especial ministers and servants they are—every man everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world by that man—Jesus Christ—whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”*

SECTION III.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

The last parable of the series, contained in one chapter of the Evangelist, on the efficacy of repentance to the Jews as a body, and to every individual Christian, that they may reap the full benefits of the Dispensation of the Messiah, is that most beautiful and affecting parable of the Prodigal Son. This parable has been discussed more frequently perhaps than any of the other parables of our blessed Lord; and if it be fully opened and expounded, none is more instructive, more wide and diffusive in its application to the whole Christian economy, nor more affecting as it respects the happiness of individuals. It contemplates the vast scheme of man’s redemption

from the calling of the Hebrews to their rejection and the calling of the Gentiles,—until, in process of time, the Jews will be converted from their apostasy, and will again become the means of diffusing the truth among the yet unconverted heathens, as those of that nation who first received Christ, were the instruments under God of converting the Gentiles after the death and resurrection of their Divine Master. The parable does not indeed express all this; for it is not only "a dark saying," which, whether enigmatic or prophetic, veils the truth under figures and symbols; but, like other passages of Scripture, it may contemplate something more than it expresses, which can be discovered only by other Scriptures; for Scripture is its own interpreter.—The parable is as follows:—

"A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise
and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have
is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." *

† The elder son in this parable represents the Jew, and the younger son the Gentile. He demands of


† "It is no new thing," says the learned Lightfoot, "so to apply this parable, as if the elder son denoted the Jew, and the younger the Gentile. And indeed the elder son doth suit well enough with the Jew in this, that he boasts so much of his obedience,—' I have not transgressed at any time thy commandment;';—as also that he is so much against the entertainment of his brother, now a penitent. Nothing can be more grievous to the Jews than the reception of the Gentiles."—Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 450, fol.—See note to the first Section of this Chapter, p. 221.

The amiable Dr. Doddridge allows that this might be comprehended in our Lord's design, but thinks that he had something more in his intention; and that it was his purpose to expose the falsehood of the Pharisaical principles,—their guilt and their hypocrisy,—and to condemn them on those very principles. For had they been so eminently good as they themselves pretended to be, yet it was unworthy their character to take offence at the kind treatment of a sincere penitent. See his Family Expositor, vol ii. p. 161.

But this interpretation of Calvin and his followers is perfectly reconcileable with the more generally received opinions of Grotius, Lightfoot, Whitby, and others, that the parable contemplates, in the first place, the Jew and the Gentile. Thus the particular reference to the Pharisees, and now practically to Christians, is rather comprehended in the general effect of the Christian dispensation, which received the Gentile to the rejection of the Jew, than the contrary; because the greater must contain the lesser. If indeed the whole of the parables be in the first place understood as unfolding "the mysteries of the kingdom of God"—that is, the progress of the Gospel, all the practical inferences in relation to individuals, whether Jews or Christians, will necessarily follow. To connect them into a series of prophetic revelations, appropriate to the different pe-
his father "the portion of goods which falleth to
him" as a younger son. "And (it is added) not
many days after the younger son gathered all toge-
ther, and took his journey into a far country, and
there wasted his substance in riotous living."

*It was a custom among the mercantile nations
of the East, that at a proper age, if they demanded
it, the sons had their portion of their father's patri-
mony allotted to them for the purposes of commerce.
This custom might not prevail with the Jews: but
it might be, and most probably was frequent and
common among the neighbouring Syrophœnicians,
and would be familiar to many, and perhaps all who
heard the parable—especially the inhabitants of Ga-
lilee, among whom our Lord had passed the greatest
portion of his life. But instead of employing his

periods of our Lord's ministry, and to show that they gradually
unfolded the Gospel dispensation, is the object of the present
work. The practical application of these exquisite compo-
sitions is so far from being lost by this mode of discussion, that
it rather acquires by it an accession of force and of beauty.
Their application to two purposes, so distinct from each other as
prophecy and practical religion, affords fresh proof, if any were
wanted, of the inspiration of the Evangelists, while it furnishes
us with matter for the increase of our faith, and nourishment for
our most ardent piety and devout admiration.

* "Usurpari solet in iis locis in quibus vigent mercimonia et
artes questuosæ, ut filiiis cum venerint ad plenam pubertatem,
si id deprecant, parentes assignent aliquam patrimonii sui par-
tem, ex qua filii quæstum faciant, quæ pars post parentum
tem mortem in hereditatem imputatur. Similem morem si non
apud Judæos, certè apud Judæorum vicinos Syrophœnices
viguisse Christi temporibus credibile est, cùm solet à rebus
usitatis exempla et comparaciones ducere." Grotii Opera,
tom. ii. p. 419. fol.
portion in the proposed mode of commerce, the Prodigal wasted his substance with riotous living in the far country whither he had travelled.*

The spiritual inheritance, which the Gentiles had derived from Noah and his descendants, they wasted and lost sight of in their idolatries, and those sensual excesses which are enumerated by the Apostle as accompanying those "abominable idolatries."† These base practices were used by all heathen idolaters, and especially by the Egyptians, in imitation of whom Aaron moulded the golden calf before which the Israelites danced naked.‡ They were clearly against the light of natural reason, not perhaps without some glimmering of early tradition: for St. Paul says expressly that "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead. So that," he adds, "they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; but be-

* To apply this figuratively, the Prodigal was, as St. Paul represents the Gentiles, "far off from God." Eph. ii. 13. Thus the Psalmist,—"Lo, they that are far off from thee shall perish." Ps. lxxxiii. 27. Vide Grotius and Whitby.
† 1 Peter iv. 3.
‡ These indecent rites were instituted by Ham, the first idolater after the Flood, and were established in Egypt either by him or his son Mizraim, the Osiris of the Egyptians. From Egypt they were transplanted into Greece, and practised at the Eleusinian mysteries, in honour of Ceres, the Egyptian Isis. And at Rome they were notorious in the infamous processions of Bacchus. See Bishop Cumberland's Sanconiatheo, Maurice's Indian Antiquities, &c.
came vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”*† They offended against

* Rom. i. 20, 21.
† This text is commonly referred to in support of the opinion of those who contend that the knowledge of God may be elicited by the power of the natural faculties. The author does not believe that the unaieded faculties of the human mind could ever discover even the existence of God; though he is aware that such formidable names as Clarke and Warburton are opposed to this opinion. At the same time he thinks that there are truths, of which the existence of God is the first, which may be properly classed under the head of natural religion; but none could have been discovered without a revelation at some period of the history of man. An eminent commentator on these words of the Apostle says—“ Doubtless the Apostle speaks here of that knowledge of God, which, by the light of nature, was in the heart of the Gentiles, and so was manifest in and to them, even from the time of the creation of the world, by his works, because the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work.” Psalm xix. 1.” Whitby.—But that this truth was not “ in the heart of the Gentiles by the light of nature;” and that this text does not necessarily affirm this, the author submits the following interpretation of this passage.—The first chapter of Genesis unfolds to us the history of the works of creation by God in six days. We are moreover informed that the sabbath was appointed as a memorial of this mighty work, which our first parents were commanded to keep holy, “ because that in it God had rested from all his work which he created and made.”—Gen. ii. 3. The fourth commandment refers to it as a known institution by the word “Remember.” This revelation, however obscured by corruptions on the dispersion of mankind, would never be wholly erased from their minds. Some glimmering of early tradition, a “darkness visible,” kept it alive “ in the heart of the Gentiles,” and not “ the light of nature.” Hence the works of God became for ever the signs of his “ eternal power and Godhead” by his own appointment. See some admirable remarks on the subject of
natural reason, natural religion, and so much of revelation as from the earliest ages was obscurely handed down to them by tradition.

The parable therefore continues by showing "the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks† that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hun-

Natural Religion in Bishop Gleig's Directions for the Study of Theology. London, 1827.

* Rom. i. 18.

† These were the fruit of the Carob-tree, or Caretaria. The word Καρπατία in the original is rendered in the Syriac translation Ṣebra Carruba. Grotius says to the same effect—Eum enim fructum Orientis populi Ṣebra vocant, unde Actuarius fecit Καρπουέα Carruva.—tom. 2, p. 419. fol.—Some think it the Egyptian fig; and others (Pliny lib. iii. c. 8.) say that it never grew in Egypt, but is frequent in Syria. See a long note in Hammond.

I cannot omit a remark of Macknight. "His abstaining from the husks was owing to their being the food of beasts, and not to his wanting permission to eat them; for this debauched youth cannot be supposed to possess such a principle of honesty, that he would rather die with famine, than without his master's leave take so small a matter as a husk, which the herd seems to have had in plenty." Harm. vol. ii. p. 504.
I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

The famine and subsequent distress do, in a practical point of view, affectingly depict the physical and moral misery which waits upon those who are the abject slaves of vice and sensuality.* Stripped alike of worldly means and moral rectitude, to whom can they turn in their distress? For it is the just judgment of Divine Providence that the hearts of men are shut against them; and, as in the parable, "no man gives unto them." But if they arise and go to their heavenly Father, and confess their sins, he will abundantly pardon: he will satisfy their hunger—he will reward their humility; for "he feedeth the hungry with good things, and he exalteth the humble and meek."

In a spiritual sense, as unfolding the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and foreshowing the effect which the preaching of the Gospel will produce, this part of the parable applies to the state of the Gentiles when they "sat in darkness and the shadow of death," and before they were visited by "the day-

* Theophylact remarks on this part of the parable, that he who estrangeth himself from God, loseth all those seeds of virtue and goodness which nature or revelation hath implanted in him. Such appears to have been the state of the prodigal until "he came to himself"—such is the state of the infidel and the profligate in all ages—and such was the state of a great portion of the heathen world, before they "came to themselves."
spring from on high,” the beams of the Sun of Righteousness “with healing in his wings.” The blinded Gentiles had for ages been addicted to all those abominable rites of heathen idolatry which are justly designated “whoredoms and adulteries” in the Scriptures. The propriety of these designations is observable in two senses. They had abandoned the worship of the true God, of whose church they had for many ages ceased to be members: and the connection between Christ, the Jehovah of the Hebrews, and his Church, is typified in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament by a marriage, which St. Paul for this reason calls “a great mystery.”* These designations were likewise applicable to them, because they practised every species of lewdness and indecency before their senseless idols. But they could not escape the knowledge of Him whose eyes are indeed too pure to behold iniquity—that is, he will not let it pass without punishment—but from whom our most secret thoughts and actions, be they righteous or wicked, pure or impure, cannot be concealed: for “the darkness and the light are both alike to him.”

All therefore, who march under the banners of Satan—all who wallow in the pest-house of sin and sensuality—all who forget God, and dishonour his name, can find no peace, can know no pleasure, can taste no happiness; but famine of the word of God, and restless misery will pursue them, until they go to their heavenly Father, and confess their sins:—

* Eph. v. 32.
"Father, we have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and are no more worthy to be called thy sons."

The Gentiles, who are thus represented by the Prodigal, came in to Christ with the utmost alacrity on the preaching of the Apostles. The parable therefore goes on to show the blessedness of their conversion.

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

The robe, the ring, and the shoes, as well as the subsequent feast with music and dancing, are all proper circumstances of the story, and suitable to the manners of the East.* Of most of these we find

* Grotius applies all these minute circumstances allegorically to the dispensation of Christianity. The kiss he considers the token of God's reconciliation, and plenary pardon of sin—"Osculum haud dubie signum reconciliationis." The robe signifies innocence and purity of life. Thus in the Apocalypse the saints are arrayed in white robes: Rev. vi. 11. vii. 12. xix. 8. And Zion is invited by the prophet to "put on her beautiful garments." Isaiah lii. 1. The ring is a sign of the gift of the Spirit which
examples in the Bible. When Pharaoh makes Joseph ruler of Egypt, he invests him with his office by a similar ceremony. "Pharaoh took off his ring from off his hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck."* St. James likewise designates a rich man by a gold ring. "If there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment:"†—here the gold ring and goodly apparel of the one are set in contrast to the poverty and vile raiment of the other.

The term "dead,"‡ as applied to wicked men, is common in the Scriptures. St. Paul calls them "dead in trespasses and sins."§ Indeed it was a proverbial expression of the Hebrews and other Eastern nations. The Jews have a proverb—"Ill men while they live are said to be dead." The ancient Arabs thus express the same sentiment:— "Not he that is at rest is dead, but the living dead man is truly dead." And thus Pythagoras, when any one had forsaken his school and the rules of his philosophy, placed a cenotaph, an empty tomb or coffin, in his place, to import that he was morally dead. Hence, in the New Testament, a reformation, or recovery to a good life, is called a rising

seals us: 2 Cor. i. 22. Seals were anciently attached to rings. The shoes answer to that expression of the apostle to the Ephesians—"having your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." vi. 15. Grotius, tom. ii. p. 420, fol.

* Gen. xli. 42. † James ii. 2. ‡ See Hammond and Grotius. § Eph. ii. 1.
from the dead. Thus the Apostle to the Ephesians—"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."*

These, however, are but circumstances, and peculiar figurative modes of expression, which, while they elucidate the meaning and import of the parable, mark the manners of the East, and the beauty of the composition. Pleasure is thus mingled with instruction, and such pleasure as is innocent and pure, and, I hope, not useless.

But let us contemplate the converted Gentiles, in the figure of the profligate and penitent son, returning to the holy and reasonable service of their heavenly Father—abandoning the lewd idolatries of the heathen—and declaring their unworthiness of being sons, but humbly praying to be his servants. But God, who saw them afar off, as the father in the parable—knowing their hearts, and penetrating their thoughts and intentions—receives them, as it were, with open arms, and into his bosom. When they confess their sins,—"Father, we have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and are no more worthy to be called thy sons"—they are filled with spiritual food; they are adorned with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; their "feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;" and by these known results of true religion, they feel that they are endowed with "the glorious liberty of the sons of God;" and that "they have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but

that they have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."*

The Apostle to the Ephesians thus clearly explicates the spiritual and prophetic import of this part of the parable. "Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. He came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." †

To all, both Jews and Gentiles, who confessed and repented of their sins, and came to Christ, was the

* Rom. viii. 15—17.
† "The Gentiles are represented as the younger son, going into a far country, as being far from God, and squandering their goods by riotous living, as depraving that knowledge they had of the true God from tradition and his marvellous works,§ by gross idolatry, on which account the Jews represented them as born of harlots, and serving them " which by nature were no Gods, by holding the truth in unrighteousness," and giving up themselves to all uncleanness, Eph. iv. 19. yea, labouring under a famine of the word of God, and of his saving truth, and giving up themselves to the meanest services, such as that of keeping of hogs was deemed by the Jews and Egyptians, who suffered not such to come into their temples and sacred houses; they having now, through Christ, access unto the Father, being adorned with the wedding garment of faith, and the robe of righteousness, fed with the banquet of the true paschal Lamb, and admitted to wear their Father's ring, as a testimony that they were now his genuine sons." Whitby, vol. i. p. 356. 4to.
‡ Eph. ii. 13, 17.

§ This opinion differs from that of this commentator mentioned and controverted in a preceding note of this Chapter. (p. 237) on Rom. i. 20, 21.
Gospel freely imparted. Jesus was preached to the Gentiles which were afar off, and to the Jews which were nigh. To all penitent sinners was the banner of the cross unfolded. To all penitent sinners, to all wandering and profligate children of their heavenly Father, are the same terms of mercy propounded; the same banner is unfolded; the same Saviour is yet preached, and will be preached to the end of the world. "For," adds the Apostle, "he is our peace. He reconciles all, both Jews and Gentiles, unto God in one body by the cross. For through him we all have access by one spirit unto the Father. Now, therefore, ye—who arise and go to your heavenly Father, and confess your unworthiness,—are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."*

But this was the great stumbling-block to the more numerous portion of the Jews, who to this day are not "reconciled unto God in one body by the cross." This apostate people are well represented by the elder brother in the parable.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what those things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these

* Verses 15—19.
many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.”

The elder brother is a sad and true picture of the Jew. The Scribes and Pharisees, while they nursed in their bosoms the deadly sins of pride, and envy, and malice, and covetousness, were constantly murmuring at the merciful temper of Jesus to publicans and sinners of the Gentiles, who had been indeed idolaters, but were now penitent and faithful believers. That these Gentiles should, under any circumstances, be admitted to equal privileges with themselves, uncircumcised and without obedience to the law of Moses, was a change which, under the hypocritical pretence of religion and the honour of God, they could not endure. They argued as the elder son in the parable. But though, as the first chosen of God, salvation was offered to them, they spurned it from them. They crucified the Lord of life, and yet suffer under the judgment of excision from the church, and from the grace of God; while we Gentiles, who were dead, are made alive again by the light of the Gospel. To us, who had been lost and are now found, is the dayspring
from on high arisen, and life and immortality are brought to light.

A time nevertheless will come, when they who were nigh to God, will be brought back into the divine fold—when they, who were with God, will be with God again—and like the Apostles and converted Jews, who spread the first tidings of salvation through the Gentile world, will themselves be converted, and be the instruments, in the hand of God, of converting the numerous Gentile nations which are yet in darkness and the shadow of death.

"Son," says the father in the parable, "thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." This, which was a just and severe reproof of the selfish Pharisees, will again be the state of things when the Jews as a people are "reconciled unto God in one body by the cross." The twelve Apostles, and St. Paul as one born out of due time, with the myriads of Jews, among whom were many gifted persons, and all of whom led the way to the Gentiles to come in to Christ, were the instruments, in the hand of God, of conveying the blessed tidings of the Gospel among all nations. St. Paul alone declared, by a strong figure, that he had preached the Gospel to every creature under heaven.*

But scarcely one fifth of the population of the earth is composed of Christians, though it is now nearly two thousand years since the Gospel was first preached. But as the Jews first led the way, not only in the call of Abraham and in the subsequent

* Col. i. 23.
dispensation of Moses, but in the first preaching of the Gospel; so we have the strongest assurances in the scriptures,—particularly in the prophecies of Isaiah and the Revelation of St. John,—that after the fall of Antichrist,—that is, of the Romish church, which will be gradually and insensibly reformed and converted to a purer faith—and before the second coming of our Lord to judgment, the Jews shall be converted, and again become a great church. They will exchange situations with, or rather assume the situation of, the younger brother, the Gentiles, in the parable, and will "arise and go to their father," and by a confession of their own unworthiness, and of their faith in the true Messiah, be once more enrolled among the sons of God. This, it is thought by some, will be the state of the Christian world in the Millennium. Christ will reign, not in person, as is thought by other critics, but in the righteousness of his church upon earth before he finally transfers it to heaven.

The Apostle to the Romans hath therefore revealed this mystery that we, like the Jews, should not be "wise in our own conceits," and presume that we are elected to the exclusion of that once favoured people—"that blindness hath in part happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written in the Prophet,* There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away the ungod-

* Isaiah lix. 20.
liness from Jacob: for this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, when I shall take away their sins." *

The conversion of the Jews will be the means, probably of opening the blinded eyes of the unconverted heathens and Mahometans. "For," says the Apostle, "if the falling of them be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness: and if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"† Numberless are the prophecies which yet remain unfulfilled, and which will have their completion in this grand consummation. I shall content myself with adverting to the following prophecy of Isaiah: "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people: and to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious."‡

But this great and glorious event will not be brought about by the inglorious and unchristian mode of mixed worldliness and fanaticism, which are characteristic of the age in which we live. On this, and various other pretences, money is extorted from the necessities of the poor. The conversion of the Jews, which is unquestionably predicted, in the holy Scriptures, to precede the grand consummation of the Christian Scheme at the Second Advent of the Saviour, cannot be the consequence of the base and unworthy means which have been employed for its furtherance. That, upon which ignorant and sinful

* Rom. xi. 26. † Rom. xi. 12, 15. ‡ Isaiah xi. 10.
mortals expend much time, and not unfrequently waste considerable talent, may, if it be the will of God, be accomplished in a moment. That the conversion of the Jews will one day come to pass, we know by the sure word of prophecy; but it is a work too great, it would appear, for mere man, without indisputably Divine authority. It will probably be the sole work of the High God.
CHAPTER V.

PARABLES ON THE TRUE NATURE OF PRAYER.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON PRAYER.

The last chapter contained three parables on the efficacy of repentance; and in the present we propose to examine two on the true nature of prayer. While, however, our Lord enforced these practical duties, he never lost sight of the main object of the parable,—the unfolding of the mysteries of the kingdom of God; for, as the importunate widow teaches us the nature of prayer, she shows us by what means the church of Christ will be supported; and the unjust judge, in whose character the rapacity of the Pharisees, who were members of the Sanhedrim, is reproved, carries our thoughts to that just Judge of all the earth, by whom our prayers, when offered in a proper spirit, will ever be heard,—while the parable intimates that the unjust judges of the Jewish nation will be no longer ranked among God's people. The publican and the Pharisee al-
lude more obviously to the different portions of the Jews and Gentiles. The humble publican is justified, and the Gentile world, which he represents, is elected into the church of God, from whence the proud and disdainful Pharisee is rejected.

As, however, prayer is the object of both these parables, which will be expounded in the following sections with slight reference to their prophetic character, I shall make a few preliminary remarks on the nature and necessity of prayer and devotion to such dependent beings as ourselves—"beings that are encompassed with many wants, which, by the constitution of our nature, require to be supplied."* It is a saying of the Jews, that "He that believes in Providence, must believe that prayer is profitable to him."†

It has been remarked that man is more distinguished from the animal world by devotion than by reason. The remark has more depth of thought and profound truth than at first may appear; especially when it is added, that many brutes discover faculties, if not of reason, yet which approach so near to that divine faculty in man, that it is not easy to distinguish the mental process of the half-reasoning elephant, and of many other, to us more familiar animals, from the same process in man. But no animal ever exhibited any faculty which in the least resembled devotion. In form, in attitude,

† Ibid.
and in the reasoning faculty, the brute creation make gradual approaches to the nature of man: and while the half-reasoning elephant forms no inconsiderable link in the reasonable part of God's creation, almost connecting himself with us by the sagacity of his understanding, the ape, and some other animals of the same species, assume the form and erect posture of human beings. But with all these obvious affinities and resemblances, man and the lower animals are for ever separated by one great gulph,—the knowledge of the Creator, and the power of approaching Him by prayer and devotion, and for ever enlarging the expanding faculties of our reason.

This constitutes that Divine image in which we were formed. The face and the form of the ape, however they may resemble, can never rank in equality with the symmetrical figure of man, nor the form and expression of "the human face divine." Nor can the reasoning faculty of the noblest animals ever arrive at the knowledge, nor render them capable of the reception or communication of that divine knowledge which can raise them from their sphere, and elevate them into the rank of men, as men will rise into the rank of the angels. As, therefore, all rational beings are made in the image of their Divine Creator, and are continually drawing nearer to him by the accession of knowledge and wisdom, but are nevertheless for ever at an infinite distance from him; so the brute creation, in the wonderful economy of Divine Providence, are made so near a link
to the human race, that the highest animal appears almost to unite with our species; yet they are at a great, though not at an infinite, distance from each other; they can never unite; and the reason of this is to be sought in the different relations in which they stand to their common Creator.*

* On the gradation of spiritual substances I cannot refrain from transcribing the following passage from Locke:—

"It is not impossible to conceive, nor repugnant to reason, that there may be many species of spirits, as much separated and diversified one from another by distinct properties, whereof we have no ideas, as the species of sensible things are distinguished one from another by qualities, which we know and observe in them. That there should be more species of intelligent creatures above us, than there are of sensible and material below us, is probable to me from hence, that in all the visible, corporeal world, we see no chasms or gaps. All quite down from us, the descent is by easy steps, and a continued series of things, that in each remove differ very little one from the other.

—And when we consider the infinite power and wisdom of the Maker, we have reason to think that it is suitable to the magnificent harmony of the universe, and the great design and infinite goodness of the Architect, that the species of creatures should also, by gentle degrees, ascend upward from us towards his infinite perfection, as we see they gradually descend from us downwards; which, if it be probable, we have reason then to be persuaded, that there are far more species of creatures above us than there are beneath; we being, in degrees of perfection, much more remote from the infinite being of God, than we are from the lowest state of being, and that which approaches nearest to nothing." Locke’s Essay on the Human Understanding, b. iii. c. vi. § 12.

To this may be added the capacity of rational beings, such as men and angels, of rising in the scale of creation; whereas the instinctive reason of the brute never rises higher than the state in which it is created.
Man is made at once the creature and the servant of God. Over all his creatures has God been ever watchful; but of this care of the Divine Providence, the brute is for ever kept in ignorance. But to man he has communicated himself; and man alone has the privilege of bowing down before him, and pouring forth his soul in prayer, whether of thanksgiving or distress—"crying day and night unto him" to be delivered from suffering; or like the elders in the Apocalypse, "worshipping him that liveth for ever and ever, and casting their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." *

This is the divine spirit of devotion, which is the distinguishing characteristic of man from beast. Devotion is, as the word imports, the dedication of the whole soul to Him who "created all things," and is therefore "worthy of glory and honour and power." Prayer must constitute a very principal evidence of our devotion; because God having so constituted man as to be capable of the knowledge of Himself, and having therefore revealed Himself, it is but to act consistently with our nature, and therefore the highest act of reason, to express our sense of God's goodness, to pour out our hearts in thanksgiving for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of life, and to tell out our sorrows unto him in prayer. God has allowed us this mode of communion with him

* Rev. iv. 10, 11.
as the highest privilege which can be bestowed on a creature: and it is surely the most stupid act of ignorance and folly, as well as the basest ingratitude and wickedness of heart, to refuse to God this natural homage, and upon the dictates of a principle falsely called reason. Rather is it reasonable, in a dependent creature like man, to pray for support under his manifold weaknesses and infirmities—to pray, in the language of a pious and eloquent Divine, whose pages are equally illumined by religion and reason, that he may be "renewed in the spirit of his mind,—that he may be inflamed with holy fires, and guided by a bright star; and then his prayer will ascend to heaven upon the wings of the holy dove, and dwell with God, till it returns, like the useful bee, loaden with a blessing and the dew of heaven."*

Devotion may, indeed, be too much without the check of reason, and degenerate into enthusiasm. But the raving of the wildest enthusiast and fanatic, if it proceed from any sense of religion, is to be preferred as a thing in itself more reasonable than the fanaticism—for it surely is a species of fanaticism—of the infidel. Hence in Scripture he is designated "the fool that hath said in his heart there is no God." Few deny the existence of God otherwise than in his moral Providence over men. If there be any who deny God altogether, which cannot now be disputed, they must be the objects of our compas-

sion, rather than of our scorn, as madmen and idiots. But the state of him who is called a Deist, who acknowledges the existence of God, and yet denies his moral Providence, and refuses him the homage due from a creature to the Creator, is indeed awful, desperate, and dangerous. His denial of the Divine Providence proceeds not from reason, but is the result of moral depravity. The error of the Atheist is idiocy or madness; but that of the Deist is sinful pride. If they be both classed under the head of madness, the one is the madness of the head; but the other is the more desperate madness of the heart.

As therefore the moral and intellectual nature of man inclines him to the service of his Maker; as devotion is the dictate of reason, the voice of Nature, and the mandate of Religion,—all who value their immortal souls will seek to establish themselves, and educate their children in the habits of piety, and of the reasonable service of God. This is an age of contrary extremes: it is an age of blasphemy and infidelity; and it is an age of enthusiasm and religious fanaticism. Both extremes, though not with equal force, destroy pure religion, and make the mind to deviate from true piety and acceptable devotion.

Having shown the reason and necessity of practical devotion and of prayer, and their suitableness to the constitution of our nature; it only remains to remark the mention of these duties in the Scriptures. Continual prayer to the throne of grace for our general pardon, as well as for the particular forgiveness of our individual and actual sins,—for
support, for pardon, and for preservation in our Christian warfare, is the constant admonition of Christ and his apostles to all Christians.

The Apostle to the Thessalonians exhorts them to "pray without ceasing." By such phrases, however, we are not to understand that we are literally never to cease praying, nor to pursue any other employment.* But prayer and devotion at all proper times are to be the habits of the soul. There are duties of active life to be performed,—duties which it is the part of religion to prosecute, and for which we were placed in this lower and probationary sphere of existence. But in the performance of these duties we shall be aided by habitual piety; and they cannot for a moment be alleged as a plea to neglect our public and private devotions. Indeed all men have their peculiar sources of sorrow and of joy as individuals, which will send every pious person to his closet to pour out his soul in prayer for consolation, or in grateful thanksgiving to the Father of mercies and the God of love.

The Apostles, we are told by the Evangelist, after the ascension of our Lord, "were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God."† This is

* "To be always thus engaged, if it could be, would be to make God what He is not: since it seems to suppose, that He wants, and we merit of Him by it; or that He is bound to give what we ask without our endeavouring; or, at least, that He is a Being obnoxious to importunity and teasing." Wollaston's Religion of Nature, p. 224. For some admirable strictures on prayer and rules for our devotion the reader is referred to the above work, p. 221—233. 8vo. London. 1759.
† Luke xxiv. 53.
explained by the same inspired writer, in his history of the Acts of the Apostles, when, speaking of the new converts to the faith, he says—"they continued daily with one accord in the temple:"* that is, they resorted thither at the appointed hours of morning and evening prayer. Pious persons, among the Jews and early Christians, offered up their morning and evening prayers in the temple, as we do in our private chambers. We find Daniel during the Captivity, when removed from the temple, privately exercising the same habits of devotion, and praying three times a day in his own chamber at Babylon.

Such is the duty of prayer prescribed by religion and nature for the wants and necessities of man; and such are enforced in all their purity in the following parables.

SECTION I.

THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because

* Acts ii. 46, iii. 1.  
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this woman troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"* 

Our Lord had been discoursing of the kingdom of God, and of the coming of the Son of Man at the last day. Being questioned by the Pharisees "when the kingdom of God should come," he replied to them in that striking account of the last day which concludes the preceding chapter. This coming of the Son of Man is indeed by expositors frequently interpreted of the destruction of Jerusalem; and it is contended that his coming is not to be taken literally, but figuratively. This interpretation has been controverted by the learned Bishop Horsley,† who ably argues that the expression is to be taken literally of the actual coming of the Son of Man to judgment at the last day. Into his masterly reasoning, however, I cannot now enter. The subject is now mentioned to make the reader understand that the parables to be expounded in this chapter, are in continuation of the discourse related in the previous chapter of the Evangelist on this great and awful


† See his admirable sermon, the first in the published collection, on the text of St. James v. 8: "For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."
event. The first parable seems more particularly addressed to his own disciples, that they might be prepared for the sufferings and persecutions which awaited them after his death. The last was addressed to the Pharisees in reproof of their hypocrisy.

To his own disciples, and in the hearing of the Pharisees, "he spake a parable," the purport of which is, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."*

In the apostolic, and in many subsequent ages of the church, there was abundant scope for the exercise of the grace of patience and perseverance enjoined by the words "not to faint." The early disciples and converts to Christianity were afflicted by every possible species of suffering and persecution. The two duties of prayer and patience are thus united, or follow each in the natural order, by the Apostle to the Romans, who are exhorted to be "patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer."†

The object of the parable of the importunate Widow is, as we have already observed, the duty

* The meaning of the original words μὴ εὐχαρίστησον, is "not to faint or despond" under the prospect of approaching afflictions. St. Paul uses the word in this sense in several passages of his Epistles. "For which cause we faint not, Δοῦνας εὐχαριστήσωμεν, though our outward man perish." 2 Cor. iv. 16.—Also verses 1, 8, of the same chapter. Vide Whitby, Hammond, and Grotius. Lightfoot explains it in the same manner. Works, vol ii. p. 462. folio.

† Rom. xii. 12.
of perseverance in prayer. This is illustrated by a similar parable in the eleventh chapter of the same Evangelist, which he delivered after having taught his disciples to pray in the inimitable words of that perfect form of prayer which is now emphatically called the Lord's Prayer.

"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. And he from within shall answer and say, 'Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.'"

So in this parable of the Widow, who desired the judge to "avenge her of her adversary;" though "he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." These two parables might have been repeated the one for the other with little or no variation, and in their stories were, I doubt not, familiar to the Jews.

The judge, in the parable, is used, by a very strong figure, to illustrate the dealings of God with men, who are his servants and subjects. To get rid

of the widow's importunity, the wicked judge,* who feared not God, nor regarded man, granted her request, "lest by her continual coming, she should weary him." The original word here rendered "weary," is a very strong expression, and means that he would avenge her of the injustice which had been done her, lest by her continual coming she shame him, and raise feelings of uneasiness in the breast of her judge.

"And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

If so wicked a man as this unjust judge is pre-

* Lightfoot suggests some queries respecting this judge, as whether he was distinguished from an elder or presbyter. Deut. xxi. 2.—"if the scene of this parabolical history must be supposed to have been amongst the Jews." That it should be so understood we think most consistent with the general character of our Lord's parables, and indeed of his whole preaching during his ministry amongst that misguided people. The very instance of so corrupt a judge among them was of itself an intimation that the kingdom of God was to be taken from the Jews and given to others more worthy of it. This appears to have been the impression of the learned Lightfoot, who gives the following character of a just judge from Maimonides:—"How widely distant," he says, "is this wretch from the character of a just judge! Although in the Triumviral court, all things are not expected there which are requisite in the Sanhedrim, yet it is necessary that in every one of that court, there should be this sevenfold qualification—prudence, gentleness, piety, hatred of mammon, love of truth, that they be beloved themselves, and of good report." Maimon. Sanhedr. cap. i. Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 462. fol.
vailed upon, and by so unworthy a motive, to avenge the poor widow of her enemy, shall not God, the judge of all the earth, and whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity,—" shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

In the same simple yet forcible manner, which at once strikes conviction on the mind, does our Lord enforce the same doctrine at the end of the parable, already cited, in the eleventh chapter of this Evangelist. He illustrates the superior and transcendent goodness of God to his spiritual children by the natural affection of men for their children. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Those persons, who are here called "elect," are not chosen by an arbitrary decree, irrespective of their good works, and limiting even the will of God. But as God knew from all eternity who would stand, and who would fall—for past, present, and future, are ever before him, one day being as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day—" he hath, before the foundation of the world, (as expressed in the seventeenth article of the church,) decreed by

his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour."

* This scriptural language has been abused into the conveyance of doctrines which were never preached by the inspired authors of the New Testament—much less could they have been uttered by the lips of Him who spake as man never spake, and who, instead of teaching the abhorrent doctrine of man's being arbitrarily decreed to salvation or damnation, constantly inculcated practical goodness upon the basis of faith in His name; for "there is no other name under heaven, in whom and through whom men may be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The elect were in the first instance the Jews, who were a chosen and elect people, separate from the

* On this subject the reader is referred to the Bampton Lectures of Dr. Laurence, the present Archbishop of Cashel, intituled, "An attempt to illustrate those Articles of the Church of England, which the Calvinists improperly consider as Calvinistical." This is incomparably the best work which has been published on this subject, and satisfactorily proves to a candid and capable reader, especially in the notes, that the compilers of our Articles used the language, commonly employed by the Reformers of the age, against the Romish doctrine of merit; and that the peculiar dogmas of Calvin were not contemplated by these venerable men. The history of the progress and the changes of language is an essential part of criticism, especially in Theology; and had the changes, which have taken place in our language since the Reformation, been considered, much of the controversy, which these Articles have excited, would have never taken place.
other nations of the earth. When this people was rejected for their apostasy and infidelity, the term was limited to such of the Jews as believed in Christ, and all Christians chosen out of the world through faith in His name, who are now the people and the church of God. At the last day, and not till then, it will appear who are indeed elect—who had the true faith, manifested by as perfect obedience as the unstable will of frail man can testify; for the "elect," in this parable, are not men satisfied with their own election, and, like the proud Pharisee in the next parable, "trusting in themselves that they were righteous, and despising others;" but they "cry day and night unto God," like the publican, saying, "God be merciful unto us sinners!" The elect are all good and sincere Christians who believe in God, and pray to him continually, and "faint not" under affliction and persecution, but trust in God that He will in his own good time deliver them.

This parable is generally interpreted of the destruction of Jerusalem, which is apparently indicated by one or two phrases—such as that, God will avenge his elect, though he bear long with them, that is, with their enemies; and that he will avenge them speedily. But the description of the day of judgment, and of the coming of the Son of man in the preceding chapter, and the conclusion which refers to the coming of the Son of man at the day of judgment, abundantly prove that our Lord intends the end of the world and the day of judgment.*

* The import of "the coming of the Son of man," which Bishop Horsley, in the Sermon before alluded to, has so unan-
The "elect" here, as referring to the Jews, is expounded by one of our ablest commentators* to signify, those Jews who believed in Christ, and are on that account styled both by St. Peter and St. Paul, "the election of grace," and absolutely "the election."† The believing Jews were undoubtedly thus indicated in the epistolary writings of these Apostles: but that this passage refers not to the believing Jews, as separate from other Christians, is clear from this circumstance, that St. John, in the Apocalypse, refers to this passage when writing of the persecution of the early Christians—which is supposed to allude to the cruel persecution under the Emperor Diocletian—and when he cannot possibly refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, which had taken place when this Apostle wrote the Apocalypse. The passage is as follows:—"I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"‡

The elect in general signify all Christians chosen out of the world, through faith in Christ, to be the Church and people of God. When it relates particularly to the Jews, it signifies those of them who believed in Christ, and upon that account are styled "the election of grace," and absolutely "the election." Whitby, vol. i. p. 366, 4to.

* The elect in general signify all Christians chosen out of the world, through faith in Christ, to be the Church and people of God. When it relates particularly to the Jews, it signifies those of them who believed in Christ, and upon that account are styled "the election of grace," and absolutely "the election." Whitby, vol. i. p. 366, 4to.

† 1 Pet. i. 2. Rom. xi. 5. 7. 

‡ Rev. vi. 9, 10.
That God would avenge them "speedily," may seem to contradict this, and refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. But our error in judging of God is, that we measure his actions by our own wants, and our own state and dependence on time. But ages to Him are nothing; and expressions which refer to time are to be judged rather by the whole scheme of the Christian dispensation, by the progress of the Kingdom of God, than by our admeasurement of duration. Of this we are warned by numerous passages of the Scriptures. "Be not," says St. Peter, "ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up."* In the same sudden and speedy manner will God avenge the cause of his elect, though he yet "bears with the wickedness of men."†

* 2 Pet. iii. 8—10.
† If however the translation of ἐν ταχεῖ by Beza and Macknight, of "suddenly," be correct, the sense will be perfectly consistent and reconcilable with the passage of St. Peter quoted in the text. "Scripture and experience teach," observes Dr. Macknight, "that in most cases punishment is not speedily executed against the evil works of evil men; but that when the Divine patience ends, oftentimes destruction overtaketh the
Nevertheless—the parable concludes—when the Son of man cometh, will he find faith on the earth?"

This is a very difficult passage. It must, however, have reference to the second coming of Christ to judgment; and this is confirmed by St. Peter in the same chapter from whence the last extract was taken. He tells us of certain " scoffers," who " shall come in the last days, saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."* That the whole parable refers to the day of Judgment, and not to the destruction of Jerusalem, this text alone does, in our opinion, demonstrate. For the Son of man did not come at the destruction of Jerusalem; and the expressions of Scripture should always be taken literally when they can be so taken with truth and consistency. The question, however, whether he would "find faith on the earth?" is very awful; and the prophecy of St. Peter renders it doubly dreadful. It was evidently intended to warn his disciples, as well as the Jews, and it should warn all Christians, that every one "that standeth take heed lest he fall."

wicked as a whirlwind," Ps. lxxiii. 18—20: And by its suddenness becomes the more heavy." Macknight's Harm. vol. ii. p. 544. Beza in loc. vol. i. p. 330, fol. 1589.
* 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.
SECTION II.
THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE.

The striking parable of the Publican and Pharisee is a sequel to that of the importunate Widow. Both were spoken upon the same occasion: but the first was addressed to the disciples, and intended more particularly for their edification, though in the hearing of the Pharisees, who were warned of the Divine vengeance suspended over their heads. Though the long-suffering of God would "bear long with them," yet a time must arrive when the thunder-cloud would burst—when he would "avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him."

The necessity of fervent and continual prayer,—which no sufferings should have power to abate, no persecution make to faint or despond,—is the great object enforced upon the true disciples of Christ by the first parable, which has been examined in the preceding section. Humility and self-abasement, in reproof of the proud and self-righteous Pharisee, in offering up our prayers, is the object of the second parable, which we shall examine in the present section.

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with
himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

The Pharisee is represented as standing by himself, and the publican as “standing afar off.” This relative position is to be explained by reference to the opinions of the Pharisees, or to the usages of the Jewish church. By some commentators it is supposed that the Pharisee separated himself from the publican, because the touch of such a person was esteemed a pollution. Thus† when the woman, who was a sinner, came into the Pharisee's house where Jesus was, and brought an alabaster box of ointment, and anointed him,—“the Pharisee which had bidden him, spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.”—Not only the sect of Pharisees would have regarded the touch of the publican as pollution, but likewise “all the Jews” were infected with similar prejudices, who, says the Evangelist, “except they wash their hands oft, eat not, taking the tradition of the elders.”‡

By others, however, it is apprehended to have been no more than the common usage of the Jewish church; the Pharisee standing in the court of the Israelites, the publican in that of the Gentiles. The Pharisee is said to stand apart, moreover, to imply that he poured forth his secret thoughts.*

But it is probable, and is consistent with the scope of the parable, that, as Lightfoot expresses it, the reason why "this publican stood so much farther off while he prayed, than the Pharisee, was

* This is the opinion of Grotius, whose words are—"Non puto hic significari seorsim illum a publicano, quasi impuro con- stetisse. Nam mos id ferebat ut publicani in atrio gentilium, Pharisaei in atrio Israelitarum starent, nec quicquam in eo erat insolitum aut Pharisaeo imputandum," Oper. tom. ii. p. 436. The first is the opinion of Whitby, which agrees with that of the learned Lightfoot and Prideaux, who place the court of the Israelites in that part of the court of the priests where the Israelites stood when their own sacrifice was respectively offered; and they hold that usually the men were in the area, and the women in the galleries of the court of the women: whereas Lamy and Calmet call the second court, the court, not of the women, but of the Israelites; assigning the east side of it to the women, and the three remaining sides to the men. Valpy's Annot. vol. ii. p. 323.

Lightfoot says "that the Israelites, when they went into the temple to put up their own private prayers, went beyond the eastward court, or the court of Gentiles, into the court of the women. That, therefore, the reason why this publican stood so much farther off while he prayed than the Pharisee, was probably more from his humility than any necessity that lay upon him so to do. For though the heathen and publican go together in these words of our Saviour,—'Let him be unto thee as an heathen and publican'; yet it is a question whether the publicans, if they were Jews, were bounded to the outward court only as the heathen were." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 464, fol.
more from his humility, than any necessity that lay upon him so to do."

Standing was the usual posture of the Hebrews in offering up their prayers at the temple, as we learn from the Psalmist. "Praise ye the Lord, O ye servants of the Lord, ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God."*

The publicans were those who collected the public taxes; and as Judea was for many ages a conquered and a tributary province, the tax-gatherers, or publicans, were frequently Gentiles and heathens. But this was not always the case; and Lightfoot uses the conditional expression,—"if they were Jews," — which shows that he considered these persons sometimes to be native Hebrews, and that in the supposed case in the temple our Lord may have intended the publican to have been a Jew as well as the Pharisee. At all events, he must have been a proselyte, if, as it is thought by Grotius, he stood in the court of the Gentiles. He offered up his prayers to the same God, the Jehovah of Israel, as was worshipped by the Pharisee, and in the same building, if not in so sacred a part of it. The sins

* Ps. cxxxv. 1, 2.

One of the arguments used by Lightfoot to show that they stood in the court of the women, is curious:—"The negative upon their entrance into that court is confirmed, at least if that rule avail any thing, which we meet with in Hieros. Beracoth. fol. 8, 4.—'R. Joshua ben Levi saith, He that stands to pray, it is necessary that he first sit down, because it is said, Blessed are they that sit in thy house.' Now it was lawful for no person to sit down in that court, but the King only." See Lightfoot as above.
of injustice and extortion were very probably committed by the publicans in their exactions upon the Jews; and adultery was not considered a crime by a heathen. But although the Pharisee evidently intends to ascribe these sins to the publican then present, we must presume the allusion to be as unjust as it is uncharitable, inasmuch as such a character was not likely to have been devoutly praying to the true God. At least, if he had been such a character, he had repented of his sins before he entered that sacred place.

This imputation, therefore, on the humble and devout publican forms no inconsiderable portion of the censurable proceedings of this self-righteous Pharisee in the temple. Although thanksgiving must necessarily constitute a distinguished feature of the worship of God by his dependant creatures who owe him life and breath and all things,—and, as the form of words indicates, this was a part of the Jewish prayers; yet the matter of his thanksgiving was very sinful. We are not to thank God, in the arrogant style and haughty spirit of this Pharisee, that we are better than others, and thus by the very comparison inflate that pride which it is the province of religion and piety to subdue. Neither was he justified in his uncharitable conclusions respecting another individual, because he happened to belong to a class of persons who are sometimes extortionate and unjust in their proceedings. This is the sin so powerfully exposed in the following passage of the Apocalypse:—

"Thou sayest," says the Spirit to the Church of Laodicea, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and
have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."*

This Pharisee, who thus applauded his own righteousness, and despised the humble-minded publican, was rejected by that pure and Omniscient Being, before whom he thus vaunted his meritorious observances; for God saw into his heart, which was swollen with pride and selfishness; but he accepts the brief, fervid, and humble prayer of the being so much despised by the rigid Pharisee. This proud and self-righteous man,—or rather, the sect† which

* Rev. iii. 17.

† The two great sects of the Jews were the Sadducees and Pharisees in the time of our Saviour,—also called Karraites and Rabbanites. They are thus described by Buxtorf.—“Duo Jüdæorum genera hodie in mundo reperiri; unum nempe eorum qui vocantur ὁ nazē Karraim, Karrae; alterum eorum qui vocantur ὁ nazē vel ṣeb ṣeb Rabbanim, Rabbanitae, plane sicut olim tempore Christi fuerunt divisi in ὁ nazē Sadduceos, et ὁ nazē Pharisæos.”

The Karraites, or Sadducees, adhered to the literal text of Scripture, and rejected the traditions of the Rabbis. “Soli littere textus Scripturae et Legis adhærent, totam legem oralem, h. e. omnes Rabbinorum traditiones, constitutiones, glossas, rejicientes, et Scripturam pro suo libitu exponentes.”

But the Rabbis, or Pharisees, received not only the Scriptures, but with them the traditions and expositions of the Rabbis. I subjoin the whole of Buxtorf’s account of the opinions of this text; for it states the opinions of the modern as well as the ancient Jews.

“Rabbanitae sunt, qui non tantum Legem Mosis scriptam, cum reliquis Prophetarum libris, amplectuntur, sed etiam Legem oralem tenent, constitutiones, traditiones, et expositiones Rabbinorum observant, et pro norma et regula fidei et vitae suæ habent.
Hi sunt genuini filii Pharisaorum, qui sic dicebantur à radice Paraschi, quae separare significat, quasi separatos dicas; quia se à vitius et prophanis mundi, et communis plebis, moribus, per singularem vitae sanctimoniam, et severam ac rigidam Legis et praeceptorum observationem, separabant, vel saltem separare studebant. Postmodum superstitione invalescente, humilitate sanctâ in fastum et superbia conversa, et sanctimonìa verâ totâ in externis ritibus, traditionum humanarum observatione, et innumeris ἐθελοδρησισις, quae speciem potiûs, quàm rem ipsam sanctitatis verae habebant, constitutâ, hoc nomine se à caeteris hominibus de plebe, quos Ἰαχνίαν ὑπὸ Populum terræ, vocabant, discernebant, et reliquos præ se ceu καβαρματα contemnabant, adeò ut non solûm ab illorum, ceu prophanorum et pollutorum conversatione et convictu, sed etiam contactu omni abstinerent. Hinc Pharisaecus ille in Evangelio gratias agit Deo, quod non sit ut reliqui homines, &c. Luc. xviii. 11. Hinc Joh. xviii. 28. Pharisaec dicuntur non introivisse in praetorium, ne polluerentur. Hinc etiam à foro et turba hominum promiscua venientes, non edebant, nisi priûs baptizati vel abluti fuerint, Marci vii. 4. quia nempe, et Populum terræ ipsum, et vestimenta eorum pro immundis habebant, ut ab illorum contactu se pollui crediderint.

left upon another. While, therefore, he thought himself rich in good works, and the good things of this world—while he valued himself upon his customary fasts on the stated days according to "the tradition of the elders;" he was ignorant of his own wretchedness, and knew not that he would soon be "miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

"I fast," continues the Pharisee, "twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

The public and private fast days of the Jews were upon the second and fifth days of the week, that is, Monday and Thursday.* When the Christians seceded from the Jews, they changed the days to Wednesday and Friday. While they would not be outdone by them in devotion, the Christians would not observe their fasts on the same days as were appointed by the traditions of that people.

* "It was very usual for the single person," (i. e. a private person) to devote himself to stated and repeated fasts for religion's sake, even when there was no affliction or calamity of life to urge him to it. And those that did so, chose to themselves those very days which the congregation was wont to do, viz. the second and the fifth day of the week." Taanith, fol. 12, 1.

"This Pharisee in the profession he maketh of himself imitates the profession that he was to make that offered the first fruits. I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and given them to the Levite and to the stranger, to the fatherless and to the widow, &c. But tell me, O thou Pharisee, dost thou thus strictly give tithes of all things, out of an honest mind and pure justice, viz. that the priest and Levite, and poor may have their own; and not rather out of mere fear and dread, because of that rule, He that eateth of things that are not tithed, is worthy of death.' Sanhedr. fol. 83. 1. Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 463. fol.
On another occasion our blessed Lord denounces the hypocrisy of the Pharisees; and notices, among other things, their payment of tithes to the clergy, while they neglected all the moral and substantial parts of the Law. "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."*

The behaviour of the publican is very different.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner."

This humility is so beautiful and becoming in a frail and sinful creature like man, that it scarcely needs a remark by way of comment. He stood afar off looking upon himself as unworthy to draw nigh unto God; and, from a sense of the same unworthiness, "he would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven," but powerfully affected with penitence for sin, humility in himself, and devout adoration of God, "smote upon his breast;" and humbly confessing that he was a sinner, earnestly implores mercy, in those few and emphatic words—"God, be merciful to me a sinner."

How different the deportment of the Pharisee, a learned doctor of the Law, bred from his birth in that

* Matt. xxiii. 23.
holy and true religion which had been revealed to them by Jehovah, and sanctified by prophets and holy men, and which was, until the advent of Christ, for many ages, the only true religion and church upon earth! This very circumstance, however, inflated the pride instead of touching the hearts of that ungrateful people. The Pharisee, in the parable, instead of pouring forth a devout and grateful heart in thanksgiving for these great and unmerited blessings to that highly favoured nation, and praying that the Almighty would not, as they had so long merited, withdraw his holy Spirit and divine protection from them;—instead of thus praying as a true Israelite, he vaunts his own petty and miserable acts of formal and hypocritical observances of the Law, and uncharitably imputes every odious sin to his companion in the temple, while he claims to himself a total exemption from all sin.

It does indeed become Christians to beware of this pharisaical pride, which is but too frequent among them. Wheresoever it be found, it is unspeakably disgusting in the eyes of God and man. To mix such leaven with our devotions is the highest imaginable point of this presumptuous sin: for it is an insult to that God who is addressed. To abhor the sin of the Pharisee, and to imitate the meek deportment of the publican, is a study for human nature, but above all for the Christian. "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be
abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

* "I cannot refrain subjoining the following passage from the learned Kennicott's Dissertation on the oblations of Cain and Abel." p. 237.

"The New Testament gives us two remarkable characters, which, for their similitude to the two former, and the same contrast in both, may be here properly subjoined; especially as they mutually illustrate each other—and these are the characters of the Pharisee and the Publican, as described by St. Luke. These two, it seems, went up into the temple together, as did Cain and Abel to their place of sacred assembly. The Pharisee—a man highly opinionated of his own righteousness, advances, like Cain, to offer up not a prayer, but a thanksgiving—he could not stoop to the low acknowledgment of sin; but exalts his own character, by dwelling on the guilt and wretchedness of his companion. While the publican, like Abel, with a pious penitence and a graceful humility, dwells upon his own unfitness to approach the Deity; and smiting upon his breast, utters this powerful petition—'God be merciful to me a sinner!' Our Saviour's inference also is applicable to the case before us—"I tell you, that this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other;' that is, (when freed from the Hebrew idiom)—this man returned justified (or esteemed righteous) and not the other. For the words of Solomon are express—'He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper; but whose confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.' And let us also remember that standing rule in the Divine economy, delivered by a greater than Solomon—'He that exalteth himself, shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.'"
CHAPTER VI.

PARABLES FORETELLING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, THE END OF THE JEWISH POLITY, AND THAT THE GOSPEL SHOULD BE PREACHED TO THE GENTILES.

SECTION I.

THE FIRST PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE.

"He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground? And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

The figures of the Vine and the Fig-tree, the most common products of oriental countries, are very frequently used by the inspired authors of the Scrip-

tures both of the Old and New Testament, and in metaphor and parable applied to the people of Judah.

The prophet Isaiah reproves the ingratitude of the Jews, and sets it forth under the parable of the Vineyard, which, when the Lord "looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought forth wild grapes."*

In the eightieth Psalm the same figure is beautifully applied to the people of God, which are represented as "a vine brought forth out of Egypt, from whence the heathen were cast out, and planted there. It took deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river." But her hedges were broken down —her grapes were plucked off—and "the boar out of the wood did waste it, and the wild beasts of the field did devour it."†

Our Lord adopted these figures into his parables. Of the vine and the vineyard we shall have occasion, in the subsequent sections of this and the next chapter, to expound several parables; and that which will be the subject of the fourth section‡ of the present chapter, is similar in all its features, as we shall fully show, to the beautiful similitudes of

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* Isaiah v. 4.
† Ps. Ixxx. 8—13.
the Prophet and Psalmist which we have just noticed. That the fig-tree, equally with the vine, was the common produce of the East, is obvious to every attentive reader of the Old and New Testament. They are, indeed, very frequently classed together in the exquisite descriptions of nature which are so frequent in the Hebrew Scriptures. That man's mind is not to be desired which does not feel the beauty of the following delightful picture of Spring, exquisitely drawn by the pencil of the royal poet:—"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell."

"To dwell under one's own vine or fig-tree," represents, in Scriptural language, a time of happiness and prosperity, safety and security.† But to have these emblems of peace and pleasure rooted up and destroyed, was the sign of misery and desolation, and of the loss of the Divine favour. Hence the Psalmist prays, that God will "look down, behold, and visit his vine; and the vineyard which his right hand had planted, and the branch that he made so strong for himself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance."

Of the fig-tree no less frequent mention is made

* Cant. iii. 11—13.  
† 1 Kings iv. 25.  
‡ Ps. lxxx. 14—16.
than of the vine in the Hebrew Scriptures. With fig-leaves our first parents made garments to cover their nakedness. The fertility of this tree, as remarked by modern travellers, is almost incredible. It is related by one,* that in the islands of Archipelago, one of their fig-trees usually produces two hundred and four score pound weight of figs. This tree is rendered fruitful by a fat oily liquor with which it is impregnated; and it becomes barren either through defect of this liquor, which, as in the parable, the husbandman cures by dung and sweet water, for which he "dug† about it,"—or through abundance of the liquor, which is remedied by causing the superfluous liquor to exude.

That the fruit of this tree is salutary in surgery, if not otherwise medicinal, we may learn from the order which the prophet gave, that a lump of figs should be applied to the boil of Hezekiah, who was instantly cured.‡ The cure, indeed, was so far miraculous that it was ordered by the prophet, and

* M. Tournefort. See Cruden's Concordance on the word "Figs."
† "Hence the Talmudists—'They dung it and dig it,' &c. The gloss is, 'They lay dung in their gardens to moisten the earth; they dig about the roots of their trees, they take off the leaves, they sprinkle ashes, and they smoke under the trees to kill worms.' Shevieth, fol. 35, 1." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 441. fol.

These circumstances show how familiar must have been the imagery of our Lord's parables, though every parable might not be, to the Jews; and that their meaning could scarcely be misapprehended.

‡ 2 Kings xx. 7.
declared to be by the interposition of God. But
that it was effected by second causes, is evident by
the application, and was in consequence of the good
king's prayer; for without the will of God no medi-
cal skill can preserve the life of man. When our
prayers are answered by the recovery of the sick,
though the patient resorts to medical aid, we impute
it to that general and particular Providence which
watches over us, and without which, however insen-
sible to it, neither the natural life, nor the moral
well-being of man could exist. The cure of Heze-
kiah was of this nature; and the only difference be-
tween that and an ordinary case is, that the prophet
declared that it should be so—the agent of Divine
Providence was visible, which is now recognized
only by faith, which is "the evidence of things not
seen." Nor is this mode of cure even yet obsolete;
for some physicians yet allow that figs are useful in
ripening imposthumes, or boils, such as that with
which king Hezekiah was afflicted.

This fruitful tree, the produce of which was useful
for so many purposes, was an apt emblem of the
people of God, when they had not, by their incred-
ulity and impenitence, merited the Divine wrath; as,
on the other hand, the barrenness of such a tree was
an appropriate indication of the impending male-
diction of the Divine Being, who had so long pro-
tected them, for their want of faith, and of those
fruits of holiness which are the necessary produce
of true faith.

A parallel circumstance to the story of this parable
is recorded to have actually occurred, during our
Lord's ministry, as a warning to the Jews. On Monday in Passion Week, as he was returning from Bethany into the city, "he hungered. 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. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away. 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." *


"All commentators are agreed in considering this miracle as typical of the destruction of the Jewish nation; and they have endeavoured, in various ways, to reconcile the curse pronounced upon the fig-tree with that expression in the parable, 'the time of figs was not yet.' But if we regard this fig-tree as a mere emblem, or type, we shall find a beautiful and perfect harmony throughout the whole. The religion of the Jews had now become merely external, it flourished only in appearance; it possessed the leaves, but not the fruits of holiness. The fig-tree, therefore, became the most apt representation of the state of the Jews at that time, and of their consequent destruction, or withering away. Had it been the season of figs, and the fruit already gathered, the tree would not have been so appropriately the object of a curse, or so expressively a type of the Jewish nation. In this, as in many other instances, our Saviour predicted the future by a significant action, or sign, before he judged it expedient to declare it publicly. The parable of the fruitless fig-tree (Luke xiii. 7.) bears the same signification." —Townsend's Arrangement of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 395.
This event occurred at least a year subsequent to the delivery of the parable, when he was probably on

"There is another miracle of our Saviour, which, when considered in itself, as it stands in the letter of the history, is very difficult, and hath perplexed many commentators; but is easily reconciled, if we take it in its undoubted signification. In the way to Jerusalem our Lord saw a fig-tree, which had nothing but leaves upon it, when he wished for fruit; and he pronounced sentence upon it; in consequence of which it soon withered away. Now a fig-tree is no object of a curse, unless it be for a sign or figure; least of all could this fig-tree be so, because, as the history adds, it was not yet the season of figs; had it been so, they would have been gathered, in which case no fruit could have been expected, and then the tree had not been proper for the use he intended to make of it, as a sign of the character and fate of the Jewish Church. He was returning in displeasure from Jerusalem, where he had observed the unprofitable state of the people, whose religion was now reduced to a form of words, without any good works; as a fig-tree having leaves but no fruit: and from this example it was to be understood, that, as the fig-tree withered away, so should the fruitless Jerusalem perish. Its fate is elsewhere signified under the parable of a fruitless fig-tree, visited for three years (the term of our Lord's ministry among the Jews), and then, after another short trial, to be cut down as an incumbrance to the ground. The parable and the miracle are of the same interpretation. They have long been fulfilled upon the Jews; but they are applicable at all times, in the moral of them, to those persons who bring forth no fruit under the means of Divine grace; whose end will be to wither away, and be cast out of the vineyard."—Jones of Nayland's Works, vol. iii. p. 206.

The reader may consult Lightfoot on this miracle, who has a long and curious note concerning the several kinds of figs mentioned in the Talmudists. Like all other commentators, he considers this miracle as "an emblem of the punishment that was to be inflicted on the Jews for their spiritual barrenness and hypocrisy."—Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. 225—228. fol.
a tour, and a few days prior to his own death. The supernatural powers here given to true believers are such as were miraculously imparted to the Apostles, and other inspired men, after the descent of the Holy Ghost. In the principle of faith being barren without works, and in the instruction conveyed by both, this miracle and the parable are not merely similar, but the same. Both prefigure the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish polity, for want of faith. As our Lord came to the fig-tree when "he hungered, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only;" so, in the parable,—"A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none." And as Jesus cursed the fig-tree—"Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever;" so the Lord of the vineyard "said unto the dresser, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

As the fig-tree was commanded by the Lord of the vineyard to be "cut down," on account of its unfruitfulness; so, Christ tells them, shall the Jews have the like sentence passed on them for their infidelity and unfruitfulness—their want of faith in the Messiah, whom, by reason of their worldly minds, they rejected, and their consequent defect of the fruits of holiness. In their worldly eyes, the blessed Jesus "had no form nor comeliness; and when they saw him, he had no beauty that they should desire him."* He came not in the habiliments of a king,

* Isaiah liii. 2.
nor mounted on the triumphant car of a conqueror,—though he was the greatest king and the most mighty conqueror that ever trod the earth. But he came, as had been predicted by their own prophets,—“lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.”* But although the prophecy was strictly fulfilled, and the joy of the daughter of Zion, and the shout of the daughters of Jerusalem rent the sky—“Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest;”†—still “he was despised and rejected” of the Jews;—“they hid their faces, as it were, from him; he was despised, and they esteemed him not.”‡

The Lord of the Vineyard had come three years seeking fruit on the fig-tree, but found none. This has been thought to allude to the three years which comprised the term of our Lord’s ministry. But this, it has been contended, cannot be the meaning; for the Jews were not only spared, but had favour shown them for nearly forty years. The Gospel was preached to them first; and the time of God’s long-suffering and patience with them lasted during the whole of the Apostles’ preaching: and many myriads of the Jews were converted before the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and the final downfall of their church and polity.§

* Zech. ix. 10. Matt. xxi. 5. † Ver. 9. ‡ Isaiah liii. 3. § This cannot refer, as has been supposed, to the three years of Christ’s ministry; for the Jews were spared, and had favour shown, and the Gospel preached to them, not one year, but nearly forty years, Acts i. 8. xiii. 38, 46, xxi. 20. Grotius and
The reasoning therefore is according to the nature of the tree. Some fig-trees, it was supposed, came not to maturity until the third year. Or, as others think, the fig-tree bore fruit at least within the term of three years after the time at which fruit might generally be expected. Thus it exemplified the patience of God.* The time was come when it should have borne fruit. The time was come when the Jews should have received their Divine Messiah, their King, and their promised Redeemer, with joy and shouting. But they rejected him with every possible mark and manifestation of ignominy and scorn. Yet was not the patience of God utterly exhausted, as it is finely set forth in the conclusion of the parable. For the dresser of the vineyard said unto his Lord:

"Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."


* There was no tree, that was of a kind to bear fruit, might lightly and upon every small occasion be cut down, that law providing against it in Deut. xx. 19, 20, where the Pesikta observes that there is both an affirmative, and also a negative command, by which it is the more forbidden that any tree of that kind should be cut down unless upon a very indispensable occasion. Rabh saith—Bava Kama, fol. 91. 1.—"Cut not down the palm that bears a cab of dates. They urge, And what of the olive, that that should not be cut down? If it bear but the fourth part of a cab. R. Chaninah saith, My Shibcah had not died had he not cut down a fig-tree before its time." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 441, fol.
The process of recovering fig-trees has already been shown to be agreeable to the language of the parable. And the long-suffering of God, in respect of the Jews, is easily deducible, and has been anticipated in our remarks on the first branch of the parable. The Apostles preached throughout all Judea before the final excision of the Jews; and having converted all that were not perversely hardened in unbelief, the great Fig-Tree, the Vine which Jehovah had brought from Egypt, and planted in the promised land of Canaan, was "cut down." The army of Titus besieged and took Jerusalem, after a siege accompanied by the most dreadful sufferings, and utterly destroyed the temple. Thus for the last time, and in a manner and to an extent wholly irrecoverable, the prophecies were fulfilled;—the wrath of God was poured out upon the heads of that devoted people,—and their goodly inheritance was violently taken from them. "The wild man out of the wood did waste it, and the wild beast of the forest did devour it. Their country was desolate, their city was burned with fire; their land, strangers devoured it in their presence, and it was desolate, as overthrown by strangers."*

SECTION II.

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morn-

* Ps. lxxx. 13; Isaiah, i. 7.
ing to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye all the day idle? 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. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto the steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, 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. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last
shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."*

Our Lord had been discoursing on the danger of riches, which had been suggested by the affecting incident of the rich young man who had, from his youth, kept all the commandments, but had felt an attachment to the world, in consequence of his great possessions, which was inconsistent with the pure and heavenly doctrine of the Gospel. On this occasion St. Peter, who was always most zealous, boldly declared that they, the disciples, had forsaken all and followed Christ. In reward of such zeal and affection Jesus declares that they who have followed him now "in the regeneration," or new state of things, shall be the chief ministers in his kingdom, and preach that doctrine by which men shall be judged. And they that forsake their worldly possessions, and forego their earthly affections for his sake, shall be rewarded hereafter. But it is added, in prophetic allusion to the impending rejection of the Jews, "many that are (now) first shall be last,"—the great body of the Jewish people who rejected Jesus as the Messiah;—and they that are now "the last"—the Gentiles who would be converted to the Gospel—"shall be first."

This truth he proceeds to illustrate in the foregoing parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. This parable was familiar to the Jews, and is yet extant in the writings of the Talmudists; but the application is, it may be supposed, widely different

* Matt. xx. 1—16.
from that of the parable of our Lord.* This applies, as we have already intimated, to the calling of the Gentiles who were last, and their election into the Christian church, and the promises of salvation and eternal happiness through the blood of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world; and to the rejection of the Jews who had been the first—who had been the only true church upon earth, and the children of faithful Abraham, in whose seed the families of the earth were to be blessed,—from the kingdom of God, and of Christ, whom they had denied and rejected.

By all expositors this has been the general interpretation of this fine parable. But they differ in the more minute exposition of the several parts of it.

Whitby distinguishes the several parts of the parable into the several stages of Christ's ministry;

* You have such a Parable as this, but madly applied in the Talmud. We will produce it here for the sake of some phrases. (Hieros. Berec. fol. 5, 3.) "To what was R. Bon bar Chaija like? To a king who hired many labourers: among which there was one hired who performed his work extraordinary well. What did the king? He took him aside, and walked with him to and fro. Οὖν γενοµένη, When even was come, these labourers came, ἵνα ληφώνται τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν, that they might receive their hire, and he gave him a complete hire with the rest. Καὶ εὐγγυζον οἱ εργαται λέγοντες, And the labourers murmured, saying, We have laboured hard all the day, and this man only two hours, yet he hath received as much wages as we. The king saith to them, He hath laboured more in these two hours than you in the whole day. So R. Bon plied the law more in eight and twenty years than another in a hundred years." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. 221. See also vol. i. p. 249. folio.
as, that the third hour was the first mission of the Apostles to preach to the Jews; the sixth and ninth, their preaching to the Jews after the descent of the Holy Ghost; the eleventh hour, the calling of the Gentiles, and their election into equal privileges and advantages with the Jews. Doddridge and others disapprove this interpretation as "an excessive nicety of distinction;" and that as to the burden and heat of the day, the Jews might apply it to their various sufferings for many ages in adhering to the worship of the true God, rather than to any peculiar hardships which the earlier converts among the Jews might have endured more than the believing Gentiles, who had their share of hardships when they embraced Christianity.* It does not, however, appear quite certain that Whitby confines the application of the burden and heat of the day solely to the converts of the Jews, but refers it likewise to the Jews generally; and they complain, not because they had been subject to any peculiar hardships to which the Gentiles were not equally exposed in their conversion to the Gospel, but because "they had been so long the sons of God, and the children of Abraham."† The Jewish converts, we know by St. Paul's Epistles and the

† Whitby makes the general application to the Jews in the first verse of the parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard," ("as," says the paraphrase, "Christ went first to call the Jews to come into it.") He then proceeds to distinguish more minutely the various invitations by the Apostles. See his Paraphrase and Commentary, vol. i. p. 152. 4to.
Acts of the Apostles, retained much of the old leaven of Judaism, after their conversion to Christianity; and as I conceive the parables to have been prophecies of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, the progress of the Gospel dispensation in the world, the present parable may have a particular reference to this temper of the Jewish converts, without excluding its general reference to the effect of the preaching of Christ and the Apostles upon the whole people. With this view, however, of the scope and bearing of the whole, will the following exposition be made—adopting the ingenious paraphrase of Whitby as to the progress of the Gospel after the preaching of Christ and the Apostles, though prima-
larly referring the application to the rejection of the whole nation of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles.

The householder is Christ, who first went to call the Jews into his vineyard. About the third hour he sent his Apostles, as we find recorded in the tenth chapter of St. Matthew, to preach in their villages and cities. To show that this first preaching by his Apostles was to be confined to the Jews, Jesus expressly commands them—“Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”*

About the sixth and ninth hours he again went out, by his Apostles, after the death of their Divine Master, who had sent the Holy Ghost, the Com-

* Matt. x. 5, 6.
forter, upon them, by whose assistance they renewed their preaching and supplications to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." In Judea, and to the Jews dispersed in the various countries of Asia, was the Gospel everywhere preached before they turned to the Gentiles. Few, however, of their countrymen attended to the affectionate appeals and warnings of the Apostles. They then turned to the Gentiles. But, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, they did not take this decisive step without due warning and authority from above. Peter was commanded by a Divine vision to go to Cornelius, to whose household he preached, and the Holy Ghost fell on them, and they were "baptized in the name of the Lord."* St. Paul, moreover, who had been the most zealous persecutor of the Church, was miraculously converted† for the purpose of converting the Gentile world. He was at the same time a strong and awful warning to his own countrymen.

This then was the "eleventh hour," at which Christ, by his Apostles, "went out and found others—that is, the Gentiles,—standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us." The Gospel had not yet been preached to them. This was now done by St. Peter and St. Paul, and is thus intimated by the parable—"Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive."

* Acts x. † Ibid. ix.
"So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith to the steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny."

The Gentiles had equal privileges with the Jews, and possessed every advantage under the new dispensation, which they could have experienced, though they had been the children of Abraham, and the chosen people of God before the advent of Christ.

The parable unquestionably applies to the whole nation of the Jews, who were rejected because they would not receive the Gentiles into the fellowship of faith with themselves, and at once rejected the Messiah who did not confine himself exclusively to their nation. At the same time the opinions of the Jewish converts are admirably represented by the murmurs of the earlier labourers in the parable. And, as I conceive this parable to be a prophecy of the progress of the Gospel after the death of Christ, this double meaning is strictly agreeable to the construction of the prophetic writings.

"When, therefore, the first—the Jews—came, they supposed that they should have received more, but they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house;" because he had no more regard to them who had been so long the favourites of heaven, than to the Gentiles, who had been outcast for ages, and had been abandoned to ido-
latry and wickedness, and who were now to be admitted into equal privileges with those who, in the language of the parable, "had borne the burden and heat of the day." These last, say they, have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden and heat of the day." This language and this imagery are proper circumstances of the story of the allegory or parable, and bear no necessary reference to any hardships or persecution endured by the Jews before Christ, or of the disciples after his advent, but refer to the duration of God's favour to the Jews before it was visibly extended to the Gentiles. Are these last, the Gentiles,—say the Jews in expostulation—who have come so late into the vineyard that the sun is now almost set,—are these to be admitted to equal privileges and blessings of the Divine favour with us, who have been so long the Sons of God, as the children of Abraham,—who have toiled in the vineyard "from sun-rising to the appearing of the stars," and have thus "borne the burden and heat of the day;" while these have come to their work when the sun is declining below the horizon?*

"But,—continues the parable—he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto thee." Thou, says the Lord to the discontented Jew, art no less a partaker of the

* The time of working among the Hebrews was from sun-rising to the appearing of the stars, and not from break of day. See Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 221.
blessings of the kingdom of the Messiah which, by the predictions of your own prophets, are promised to all nations, because the Gentiles are admitted with you into His kingdom.

"Is it not lawful," asks the Lord of the vineyard, "to do what I will with mine own?"—Shall I not confer the promised blessings of Messiah's kingdom, the inheritance purchased by his blood, upon the Gentiles, as well as upon thee, O Jew?—"Is thine eye evil, because I am good towards these new, but zealous and faithful servants? Your baseness and ingratitude in thus reproaching your heavenly Father, and reviling his Son, your Lord and Redeemer, are so wicked and deserving of punishment,

*Ἀγαθὸς, here rendered "good," frequently in the New Testament signifies bountiful or liberal; as works of mercy, Acts ix. 36.—doing good, Matt. xii. 12. and other passages. In this passage it obviously means liberal. Charity rests the equality of the several payments on the liberality of God. It is supposed by some that the later labourers were more diligent, and on that account deserved more than the first. Hammond endeavours to establish this idea by the parable cited from the Gemara, and given from Lightfoot in a preceding note. That our Lord had his eye on that parable is very probable; but he applies it, like other Jewish parables, of which he made use, very differently. Le Clerc, however, observes, that as the Jewish writers came after Christ, they more probably drew their parables from the Gospels. But to this it has been justly replied, that it is not probable, considering the hatred which the Jews bore to Christ, that they should imitate his parables. But as he condescended to use their proverbs, and took part, it is said, of the Lord's prayer from their forms; it is more likely that he might apply some of their parables to the spiritual matters of his kingdom. See Hammond, Whitby, and Valpy's Annot. vol. i. p. 324.
that I will reject thee as a people, and receive the Gentiles—"the last shall be first, and the first last."

The Gentiles, who believe in, and thankfully receive Christ, shall become his Church and people; while the ungrateful Jews, who murmur and fall off from Christ because he extends his love and mercy to the Gentiles, shall be excluded and cast out from his kingdom till the last: for though "many" of the Jews "be called," by the preaching of the Gospel which was first offered to them, "few of them will be "chosen,"* or prevailed upon, by faith in

* The expression here used is supposed to refer to the manner in which the Romans selected men for recruiting their armies. The honour of being chosen to serve their country in a military capacity, was esteemed the reward of superiority. The consuls summoned to the Capitol, or the Campus Martius, all citizens capable of bearing arms, from the age of seventeen to forty-five. They drew up by tribes, and lots were drawn to determine in what order every tribe should present its soldiers. That which was the first order, chose the four citizens who were judged the most proper to serve in the war; and the six tribunes who commanded the first legion, selected one of these four, whom they liked best. The tribunes of the second and third legions likewise made their choice one after another; and he that remained entered into the fourth legion. A new tribe presented other four soldiers, and the second legion chose first. The third and fourth legions had the same advantage in their turns. In this manner each tribe successively appointed four soldiers, till the legions were complete. They next proceeded to the creation of subaltern officers, whom the tribunes chose from among the soldiers of the greatest reputation. When the legions were thus completed, the citizens who had been called, but not chosen, returned to their respective employments, and served their country in other capacities.—See Clarke's Comment, in loc. Townsend's Arrangement of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 370. 2d Edit.
Jesus as the Christ or Messiah, to become the elect of God.

This interpretation of a passage unquestionably difficult is however strongly confirmed by St. Paul. In the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, the object of which is to show that God casts off such only of Israel as rejected the Gospel, the Apostle asks—"Hath God cast away his people?—meaning his people of Israel—God forbid. For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew."* But, the Apostle argues, as God reserved to himself, in the time of Elias, those who had not committed the sin of idolatry for which he judicially punished so many;—"Even so then at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace,"† of those who by faith have received Christ.

"Many," indeed, were "the called," κλητοί,‡ "but few" were "the elect," εκλεκτοί. But the Apostle tells us that at the time of his ministry there was "a remnant according to the election of grace"—the few who, like the Gentiles, voluntarily and gladly believed in Christ, and were therefore the elect or chosen "according to the election of grace."

"The called," in this passage, are those who, in another very striking parable, which ends with the

* Rom. xi. 1, 2.  † Ib. ver. 5.
same words as this, were called or invited by Christ and his Apostles to the marriage feast, or supper, of the Gospel, which, with all its inestimable benefits and privileges, was freely offered to them, but was rejected, by some with scorn and circumstances of cruelty, and by others with indifference and contempt. These were "the many" among the Jews: and we need but read the history of our Lord's life and ministry in the Gospels to perceive that they formed the great mass of the Jewish people; and that there was left, as the Apostle expresses it, but "a remnant according to the election of grace."

These were the "few," who are styled "chosen or elect" in this parable. The believing Jews, scattered through the different provinces of Asia, to whom St. Peter addresses his first epistle—which by the most sceptical critics is acknowledged to be genuine—are in like manner, and a like sense, styled by that Apostle, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."* In the same epistle these few and scattered believers are designated "a chosen or elect generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."†

The meaning of these words, "called, and chosen or elect," can hardly be misunderstood by such as follow the scriptures unreservedly as their guide,—and who interpret scripture by itself, by the connection and consistency of the whole scheme of redemp-

* 1 Pet. i. 2.  † Ib. ii. 9.
tion, and by the sameness and analogy of particular terms.

The import of the foregoing parable seems to be this:—The Jews who were first called to be God's people, to whom the Gospel was first preached, and to whom the blessings and privileges of Messiah's kingdom were first offered, shall, for their unbelief, be rejected from God's favour; and instead of being the first, they shall now be the last in his esteem, and shall be the last who shall be admitted into the kingdom of our Lord.

If the ingenious distinction made by Whitby, and partly followed in the foregoing exposition, be allowed, still that is past, and is as a fulfilled prophecy. If any Jews are now converted to Christianity, they will certainly not claim any precedence from priority of God's grace, from which they have long been outcast; nor are they likely to claim any pre-eminence from having been for so long a space of time God's peculiar people to the exclusion of all other nations; for their very conversion to the religion of Jesus, as it cuts off all claim to priority, will effectually exclude all title to pre-eminence on account of what they had been before Christ, from the conviction that since his coming they have been suffering under the judicial penalty of their national infidelity. The application therefore of this part of the parable is to the whole Jewish people who yet stand out from the church of Christ.

But the Gentiles, who were not called until the kingdom of Christ had been rejected by the Jews, who had been the people of God, the first though
now the last in his esteem,—the Gentiles will accept
the gracious offer of Christ, and will thus become
God's people and God's Church, will be preferred
before the Jews, and will be the first instead of the
last, who will be permitted to partake of the bless-
ings of the Gospel. "So the last shall be first, and
the first last." The Jews, who gloried in the title
of being the firstborn of God, and had served him so
long, and murmured that the Gentiles were admitted
to the same privileges and favour with themselves—
these will be rejected, and put last, because they re-
jected the Gospel. And though "the many" of
them are "called," from the time of Christ and his
Apostles to this day, in Judea and throughout all
their dispersions, "few are chosen," because few,
but "a remnant," have believed in Christ. Few
then, and fewer now, answer that call, and embrace
the Christian faith. They will therefore unques-
tionably be the last who will be admitted into the
kingdom of God and his Christ.

When the conversion of this most unhappy and
deluded people, who have lived an apostate people
so many ages since the promulgation of the glad
tidings of the Gospel, will take place, it is impossible
to know. The wisdom of God, which, for wise pur-
poses to us unknown, hath hung a veil over the hearts
of this extraordinary people, may, and probably will,
suddenly remove it, that "we without them should
not be made perfect."*

The numerous societies, which have been at dif-

* Heb. xi. 40.
ferent times formed for the conversion of the Jews, have never made any progress which is sufficiently considerable to attract the attention of sober Christians, nor even of the Jews themselves. Much deceit and imposture have been carried on, it is to be feared, under this scheme of conversion; and, as in all such cases, the good and unsuspicious have been the victims of the worldly-minded, and of the too great fervour of their own excited feelings. But all our efforts will not bring on the Providence of God in these great matters. We shall much sooner arrive at these desired ends by every man taking heed to himself, and strictly and conscientiously performing his duty in his own sphere, or, as it is admirably expressed in the simple but forcible language of our Church Catechism, by "doing his duty in that state of life unto which it hath pleased God to call him."

That this parable does not relate to the rewards of another world, is evident from this consideration—that though men may murmur here, and as at the propagation of the Gospel, we learn from the evangelists, murmurs of envy and every bad passion were expressed by the Jews towards Christ and his disciples; yet at the great and awful day of judgment there can be no murmurs against God. In whatsoever manner that mighty scene will be conducted; whether, as is probable, the whole business of that dreadful day will pass before us in an instant, and in our bodies and souls we shall all pass to our final habitations; or whether it will be conducted in the manner literally described in holy writ, one thing is certain—at that day no lip will move, but
our consciences* will at once inform us, for they are
our debt-books, whether we shall be happy or mi-
serable.

Much dangerous doctrine has been founded on the
terms, "calling and election," and "called and elect,
or chosen," as used in this parable, and in other parts
of Scripture. The controversy respecting the free-
dom of the human will—whether our actions are

* Rev. xx. 12.—"Our consciences," says Jeremy Taylor
in his awful and eloquent Sermons on Christ's advent to Judg-
ment, "shall be our accuser: which signifies these two
things: 1. That we shall be condemned for the evils that
we have done, and shall then remember; God by his power
wiping away the dust from the tables of our memory, and
taking off the consideration and the voluntary neglect and rude
shufflings of our cases of conscience.—2. It signifies this also:
that not only the justice of God shall be confessed by us in
our own shame and condemnation, but the evil of the sentence
shall be received into us, to melt our bowels and to break our
hearts in pieces within us, because we are the authors of our
own death, and our own inhuman hands have torn our souls in
pieces."—"At the last judgment the soul shall see clearly all the
records of this world, all the register of her own memory: for all
that we did in this life is laid up in our memories; and though
dust and forgetfulness be drawn upon them, yet when God shall
lift us from our dust, then shall appear clearly all that we have
done, written in the tables of our conscience, which is the soul's

A living Author thinks it "even probable that all thoughts
are in themselves imperishable; and that if the intelligent
faculty should be rendered more comprehensive, it would re-
quire only a different and apportioned organization, the body
celestial instead of the body terrestrial, to bring before every
human soul the collective experience of its whole existence.
And this, this perchance is the dread book of judgment, in
whose mysterious hieroglyphics every idle word is regis-
governed by our own free choice, or by fate and inevitable necessity—was among the first, and will probably remain among the last difficulties and mysteries which will perplex the minds of speculative men. From this controversy, however, the New Testament is totally exempt. Our destiny is there placed in our own keeping. With the grace of God assisting all our good thoughts and designs, we may as freely choose life or death, as the Israelites to whom Moses proposed that choice.*

But early converts from the schools of philosophy of ancient Greece introduced this controversy into the Christian Religion. The doctrine of decrees, throned! Yea, in the very nature of a living spirit, it may be more possible that heaven and earth should pass away, than that a single act, a single thought should be loosened or lost from that living chain of causes, to all whose links, conscious or unconscious, the free will, our only absolute self, is co-extensive and co-present." Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, vol. i. p. 115.

The author of this work scruples not to profess his entire belief in the substance of this fine passage—not because he derived it from Mr. Coleridge, or any other author, ancient or modern,—but because it has been the conviction of his mind, and, so far as the memory is respected, confirmed by his own mental experience, long before he ever met with the thought in any books. In a moral point of view this belief is not only awful but salutary; while it kindles the love, and sanctifies the pursuit of real knowledge.

* "Two principal fountains there are of human action, knowledge and will; which will, in things tending towards any end, is termed choice. Concerning knowledge; 'Behold,' saith Moses, 'I have set before you this day good and evil, life and death.' (Deut, xxx. 19.) Concerning will he addeth immediately, 'Choose life;' that is to say, the things that tend unto life, them choose." Hooker's Eccl. Pol. b. 1. Works, Oxf. ed. vol. i. p. 220.
which was made into a system by Calvin at the Reformation, is now received by many respectable bodies of Christians in Europe. It has even been charged upon our church, that our seventeenth Article of religion contains the same doctrine. That article adheres to the language of Scripture. But though a Calvinist may be a very good churchman,—and it was perhaps the object of those wise and venerable men who compiled the articles to conciliate all parties,—no sound Church-of-England man allows that the doctrine of decrees, according to Calvin, is a part of our faith. Indeed that article was composed in opposition to the doctrine of merit of the Romish Church, and before Calvin, who was a learned and venerable man, stood very forward in the ranks of the Reformers.*

Such is not the doctrine of the Church, nor of the Evangelists and St. Paul. The doctrine of election in Scripture seldom or never refers directly to a future state. It more commonly means the election into the Church of the Gentiles, and of "a remnant" of the Jews, of whom "the many were called" at the first preaching of the Gospel, but, by reason of unbelief, "few were chosen."

* See Bishop Lawrence's inestimable Bampton Lectures—especially the notes, where this fact is clearly shown—which have been already referred to in the notes to this work.
SECTION III.

THE TWO SONS.

"A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, Sir: and went not. Whether of these 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. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him."

The purpose of this parable was obviously the reproof of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and of their obstinate rejection of the doctrine of John the Baptist. John was the forerunner of Jesus; and their rejection of their Messiah was the natural consequence of their rejection of his appointed messenger. Nor did they, like the first son in the parable, "when they had seen" the Messiah, "repent afterward, that they might believe him."

By the first of these sons we are to understand the Publicans; by the second, the Scribes and Phari-

*Matt. xxi. 28—32.
At the end of the parable our Lord himself so interprets it. Addressing the Scribes and Pharisees who had been tempting him, he concludes—"Verily I say unto you,—whom I now address—that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

By the first son likewise may be understood the Gentiles, and by the second the Jews; for publicans were always ranked by the Jews among heathens; and the heathens were represented by the Jews likewise as πορναί, harlots, and born of harlots.

When Christ came among the publicans and harlots, or they sought him, he always found them more ready to believe in him than the Jews, especially the Scribes and Pharisees. He declared on one occasion, when he healed the centurion's servant, that "He had not found so great faith, no, not in Israel;" and added, "That many should come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven."—And in the case of the Syrophœnician woman, upon the expression of her humble and undoubting faith, "he said unto her, For this thy saying, go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter."

Many other similar cases might be selected and

* The answer of the second son—"I go, Sir,"—was a proper emblem of the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees; who addressed God under the most honourable titles, and professed the greatest readiness and zeal in his service, while their whole lives were a series of disobedience and rebellion. Doddridge's Expositor, vol. ii. p. 315.
† Matt. viii. 10, 11. ‡ Mark vii. 29.
adduced. The meaning therefore of the parable is—That the Jews, who called themselves the sons of God, and the Scribes and Pharisees, who affected so much religion as not only to judge themselves secure of the kingdom of God, but to be the guides of others in the way of life, were more alien from the kingdom of God, as taught by our Lord and his forerunner John the Baptist, than the publicans and harlots whom they despised, and the whole Gentile world, who were by the Jews considered as publicans and harlots, and as such doomed to certain destruction.*

SECTION IV.

THE VINEYARD.

"There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and

* See Whitby's Commentary, vol. i. p. 161, 162. "And in this interpretation," says Whitby, "I have the suffrage of Origen upon the place, (Apud Huet. tom. i. p. 456,) who saith, 'In my judgment the parable contains τον περὶ του ἀπειθήσαντος Ἰσραήλ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγον, καὶ τον περὶ τοῦ πιστεύοντος λαοῦ απὸ τῶν εἷσιν, a discourse of the infidelity of Israel, and of the belief of the Gentiles.' Of the same opinion are Theophilus Antiochenus, Haliog. can. 22. in Matth. St. Jerome, 'Opus imperfectum,' Chrysostom, and Theophylact." Additions to the above, No. 34. ibid. p. 667.
when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 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. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 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. 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? Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

It is the object of the several parables which are collected together in this Chapter, and of others which bear too close a resemblance to require a par-

ticular exposition,* to warn the Jews, especially the chief priests and Pharisees to whom, as in this para-
ble, our Lord particularly addressed himself, that the Church, which had been confined to the descend-
ants of Abraham in the line of Jacob or Israel, as the chosen seed, would be now thrown open to the Gentiles, all the nations of the earth—all who be-
lieved in Jesus as the Messiah, and accepted the glad tidings of the Gospel; and that the Jews, the largest portion of whom denied their Messiah and rejected his Gospel, should be "cast out into outer darkness;" and that "the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."†

Although, however, there is a general resemblance and a sameness of purpose in several of these para-
bles—such as that of the labourers hired into the vineyard at different hours of the day;‡—the mar-
riage of the king's son,§ and the present parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, there are pe-
culiar features characteristic of each parable, which make them well worthy of separate expositions. Had there not been these peculiar differences, the Holy Spirit would not have directed the Evangelists to record them. We are told by St. John that a very small portion of "the things which Jesus did" is

* Such as The Great Supper, Luke xiv. 10, which, though spoken on a different occasion, is the same in substance as the Marriage Feast, which is examined in the next and last Section of this Chapter.
† Matt. xxi. 43.
‡ See Section II. of this Chapter. § See the next Section.
recorded—"the which," he says, "if they should be written every one, I believe that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."* Such things, therefore, are recorded as will effectually show forth the full intent of the Gospel of Christ, the truth of his Divine mission, and the power and Divinity of his person. Of the things that he said, the present parable is one of the most important prophecies that he uttered, which was fulfilled in his own death, and in the subsequent rejection of the Jews.

This parable was very familiar to the Jews; and the evidence of this fact rests, as we shall show, upon a foundation infinitely more certain than their traditions now collected in their Rabbinical writings. It is the most frequent allegory of the prophetic writings, and is used always for the purpose of prefiguring the future state of Judah. Indeed the figures of the vine and the vineyard are the usual allegorical designations given by the inspired authors of the Hebrew Scriptures to the chosen people. † In the eightieth Psalm, as we have already noticed in this work, the prosperity and subsequent destruction and desolation of the Hebrew Church are represented by the image of a vine in the most exquisite and pathetic strains

* John xxii. 25.
of divine poesy. In the Canticles, or Song of Solomon,* the calling of the Gentiles is briefly expressed by the figure of a vineyard of Solomon which "he let out unto keepers; and every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver." The prophet Jeremiah, in reproving Judah for her sins, uses the same figure. "I had planted thee," says Jehovah, "a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?"† But in the book of the prophet Isaiah,‡ we have the Church so exactly represented by a vineyard, as in this parable of our Lord, that there can be no doubt that he took it from that truly evangelical prophet, and applied it to the then situation of the Hebrew nation, which was on the eve of its final desolation in consequence of their rejection of their promised Messiah. The parable therefore will not be fully intelligible unless the original from Isaiah be likewise examined, which will be done after the exposition of this of our Lord. The comparison of the two will demonstrate the divinity of Jesus—and that he was the Jehovah of the Old Testament; which is farther evident from the present state of the Jews, who are not only a living monument of the truth of Christianity, but of the divinity of Christ.

In this parable of the vineyard,§ therefore, our

* c. viii. 11. † Jer. ii. 21. ‡ ch. v. 1—7.
§ This parable, we may observe, consists of two parts. The former of which is contained in Luke xix. 12, 14, 15, to 27, and relates to the rebellious subjects of this prince, who "went into a far country to receive a kingdom;" the latter is included in
Lord did but speak to the Jews in the language of a prophet, and by the known allegory of other prece-

the 13th, 15th, and so on to the 27th verse, and relates to this prince’s servants, to whom he had committed his money for them to improve in his absence; and the explication of the whole is generally supposed to be this:—The nobleman or prince here is our Lord himself, the eternal Son of God; his going into a far country to receive a kingdom, is his ascension into heaven, to sit down at the right hand of the Divine Majesty, and take possession of his mediatorial kingdom; his servants may be either his apostles and disciples, who, upon his return, were to give an account of the progress of his Gospel; or Christians in general, who, for every talent, whether natural or acquired, are accountable. His citizens are, questionless, the Jews, who not only rejected him with scorn, but put him to an ignominious death; and his return, is the day of his fierce wrath and vengeance upon the Jewish nation, which came upon them about forty years after this time, and was indeed so very terrible as to be a kind of emblem and representation of that great day of account, when he will render “to every one according to his works.” It is observed, however, by some commentators farther, that our Lord took the rise of this parable from the custom of the kings of Judea (such as Herod the Great, and Archelaus his son), who usually went to Rome to receive their kingdom from Caesar, without whose permission and appointment they durst not take the government into their hands. In the case of Archelaus indeed, the resemblance is so great, that almost every circumstance of the parable concurs in him. He was this ἵνα ἡμῖν, or man of great parentage, as being the son of Herod the Great. He was obliged to go into a far country, i.e. to Rome, to receive his kingdom of the Emperor Augustus. The Jews, who hated him because of his cruel and tyrannical reign, sent their messengers after him, desiring to be freed from the yoke of kings, and reduced to a province of Rome. Their complaint, however, was not heard: he was confirmed in the kingdom of Judea; and, when he returned home, tyrannized for ten years over those that would have shook off his dominion. But then there is this re-
ding prophets, but with such additional circumstances and predictions as the state of the Church demanded. In addition to the well-known figures of the vineyard and the wine-press, mentioned by Isaiah, and which we shall presently examine and compare, and which, as in the Song of Solomon, was "let out unto keepers or husbandmen," he sets before them their treatment of the servants and prophets of God.

"And when the time of the fruit drew near, he—the householder, who is God the Father—sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another." *†

For the explanation of this part of the parable we must consult the sacred historians of the Old Testament, by whom the prophets are always called "the

markable difference between his case and that in the parable, that the Jews, upon their second complaint to Caesar, prevailed against him, and procured his banishment to Vienna. Calmet's Commentary, and Beausobre's and Whithy's Annotations. Stackhouse's Hist. of the Bible. New Edition, 4to. vol. iii. p. 211.

* Verses 34, 35.

† There seems to be an allusion to the punishment and manner of death in the council. 1. ἔξεισις, which properly signifies the fleaving off of the skin, is not amiss rendered by interpreters 'beat,' and the word seems to relate to whipping, where forty stripes save one did miserably fle off the skin of the poor man.

2. ἀπεκτάνσις ('killed') signifies a death by the sword, as ἄρθρο doth in the Sanhedrin. "Four kinds of death are delivered to the Sanhedrin, stoning, burning, killing ἄρθρο, and strangling." Sanhedr. c. 7. hal. 1. Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 228. fol.
servants of God." That their usage was exactly that which is charged upon the husbandmen in the parable, must be very evident to the most superficial reader of his Bible. In the twenty-fourth chapter of the second book of Chronicles * we read of a transaction of this nature. Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, by the Spirit of God admonished the people of Judah, who had "transgressed the commandments of the Lord, that they could not prosper." He was "stoned at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord." This was an act of the grossest iniquity towards God, and of cruelty and base ingratitude towards the prophet's family: for his father Jehoiada had been the most faithful servant of king Joash. It is therefore added that "the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son." That son too was the servant and prophet of God, and was put to death for the discharge of his duty, which was by the express command of the Spirit of God.

Such were the acts of atrocious wickedness and impiety which drew the judgments of God in wars, and captivities by foreign powers, whom the Divine Providence raised up as their scourges, many centuries prior to the advent of Christ. It is therefore recorded against them, previous to their great Captivity at Babylon in the reign of Zedekiah, that "the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, (that is, as rendered in the margin, "continually and carefully," ) and send-

* Verses 20—22.
ing; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy."* Nehemiah, on his coming to Jerusalem for the completion of the wall and the rebuilding of the temple and city, repeats the same charge upon this impious and ungrateful people. "They were disobedient and rebelled against God, and slew his prophets which testified against them to turn them to God, and they wrought great provocations."

Nor shall we find the cruel temper of this wicked people at all changed when we turn to the pages of the New Testament. The prophets and holy men of God, who testified their zeal as his true servants, were beaten, and stoned, and killed, as mentioned in the parable. At the death of St. Stephen, the Protomartyr of the Christian faith, who was stoned to death, for testifying against the perverseness of his countrymen, and setting forth the mercy of God in preparing the way for Messiah or Christ, that Saint concludes his sermon in these striking words:—

"Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."† St. Paul reproaches them with the same spirit of persecution, which was exercised

against himself and other prophets of the New Testament. "They both killed the Lord Jesus,"—he tells the Thessalonians,—"and their own prophets, and have persecuted us."* And in his Epistle to the Hebrews he thus recounts, in a very pathetic style, the sufferings of the Hebrew prophets:—"Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."†

Such is the account given by inspired men, of the cruel and bloodthirsty spirit of persecution which animated this perverse and faithless, yet once highly favoured people; "until," as the sacred historian affirms, "the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." For though "again he sent other servants more than the first; they did unto them likewise."‡—But, to complete their destruction, they acted in the same cruel manner to the son of the householder, as they had done to his servants. For, continues the parable,—

"Last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him,§ and let us

* 1 Thess. ii. 15. † Heb. xi. 36—38. ‡ Matt. xxi. 36.
§ These are the exact words used by the brothers of Joseph,
seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.”*

The son of the householder, who is God the Father, is manifestly the Messiah, whom the Jews, at the instigation of the chief priests and Pharisees, the husbandmen† intended by the parable, cruelly killed. It was the more strikingly applicable to these worldly priests and hypocritical Pharisees, because they were not ignorant, as Christ told them, who and whence he was.‡ It was this know-

Gen. xxxvii. 20. ἄμετρον ἀποκτενωμένον αὐτον. LXX. Compare Matt. xxi. 38. in the original. Joseph was a distinguished type of Christ.

* Verses 37—39.
† "The husbandmen, to whom this Vineyard was let out, were the priests and Levites, doctors and rulers of that church and people, who are here represented, not only as wanting in their duty, which was to make this vineyard fruitful, and to prepare it to receive his prophets and messengers with due reverence, and especially to receive his Son and their Messiah with faith, reverence, and obedience; but consulted with, and spurred on the people to offer the most vile affronts unto them, and even to destroy his Son and their Saviour; for though Christ spake this parable to the people, Luke xx. 9. the Priests and Pharisees perceived that ' he spake of them,' ver. 45. When, therefore, it is here said, 'They will reverence my son,' ver. 37. these words, as Theophylact notes, Christ spake, not being ignorant what really they would do, but showing what was fitting to be done; and therefore, Luke xx. 13. the phrase is varied thus, ἵσως, 'perhaps they will reverence my son when they see him.’” Whitby in loc.
‡ John vii. 28. In the preceding verses, the 26th and 27th, the people, who were awe-stricken by his wonderful works, reasoned thus as to whether he was the Messiah or not:—"Do the rulers know, indeed, that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man, whence he is? but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.”—There is some obscu-
ledge of his Divine mission at least, though they might not, and probably did not, know how pecu-

rity in this text, which, however, Lightfoot completely clears away by the following statement of the Jews' notions respecting the Messiah.—"They conceive a two-fold manifestation of the Messiah, the first in Bethlehem, but will straightway disappear and lie hid. At length he will show himself, but from what place, and at what time that will be, no one knew. In his first appearance at Bethlehem he should do nothing that was memorable; in the second was the hope and expectation of the nation. These Jews, therefore, who tell our Saviour here, that "when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is," whether they knew him to have been born at Bethlehem or no, yet by his wonderful works they conceive this to have been the second manifestation of himself; and therefore only doubt whether he should be the Messiah or no, because they knew the place (Nazareth) from whence he came; having been taught by tradition that Messiah should come the second time from a place perfectly unknown to all men." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 558. fol. These seem to have been "the murmurings" of the common people, as they are called at verse 32, which after Christ's remarkable answer alarmed the Pharisees. For the Evangelist tells us that immediately "Jesus cried in the temple" (ἐξοράξας, cried with a loud voice, so that the Pharisees might hear, and in a sense different from the tradition, and evidently addressed to the learned doctors)—saying, "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am?" and, he adds, "I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not." He tells them that they know, and knowingly reject him; but they knew not God, in a moral sense, or they would not so wickedly and faithlessly reject their Messiah. The people, we find, are struck with this answer, and "many believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" But "when the Pharisees heard that they murmured such things concerning him, the Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take him." This evinces their comprehension of his reply, and that they were conscience-stricken,
liarly he was the Son of God, which caused that awful denunciation of our blessed Lord respecting the sin or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; because, though they knew him to be Messiah, they declared that he cast out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils. The Pharisees and the chief priests, who thus blasphemed the Holy Spirit, by whose power Christ in his human nature and prophetical office wrought his miracles, were perfectly aware that he cast out devils by the finger, or the Spirit of God. Hence that appalling species of blasphemy was pronounced unpardonable.

The parable was exactly fulfilled; for "when the husbandmen saw the son," they knew who and whence he was; they knew that he was the Christ and Messiah; and actuated by the same vile mo-

and therefore desired to put him away. Verses 28—32.—In John xi. 48, there is a yet stronger proof that the Pharisees knew who Christ was. After the resurrection of Lazarus, the chief priests and Pharisees held a council, and expressed their alarm at the progress of Christ by his "many miracles." "If," say they, "we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." On this occasion the high priest Caiaphas declared, "that it was expedient for them that one man should die for the people." Ver. 49. If this verse (48) of St. John, and the verse of the parable under consideration, be compared together, it is the opinion of Lightfoot, and an opinion which few will feel disposed to controvert, that they "seem to hint that the rulers of the Jews acknowledged among themselves that Christ was the Messias; but being strangely transported beside their senses, they put him to death; lest bringing in another worship and another people, he should either destroy or suppress their worship and themselves."—Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 229, fol.
tives as the murderers in the parable, "they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance."

The prophecies respecting the Messiah, of which the chief priests could not be and were not ignorant, did not permit them to doubt who Jesus was; for none could perform such miracles, and none spoke with such authority as this extraordinary personage. That he was no impostor was self-evident; for their most learned doctors, whom at twelve years old he had confounded by his wisdom, could not stand before him: but we find them retiring, as upon the delivery of this parable, with wounded pride and Satanic malignity, to plot his destruction by treachery, and by cunning to circumvent Him, against whom, by their collected wisdom and influence, they could not contend with dignity, nay without discomfiture and dishonour.

The motives of these wicked and apostate men were the same as those imputed to the husbandmen in the parable. They knew that he was the Christ; yet their love of worldly power, as the rulers of the Church, made that very knowledge,—which should have restrained every thought to his injury, much more every species of violence against so holy a person,—to plunge them into wickedness the most desperate and deadly. They were aware that he must overthrow their power in the visible church as then constituted, which was his lawful inheritance, if some decisive step were not taken. Had they not, by their own evil passions, been deprived of their judgment, they would, they must have known how
vain all their attempts must have been against Him, whom their own Scriptures indicate as the Divine Being; and their traditions, which they more highly valued, described the second Adam as a person possessed of Divine authority.* But they were infatu-

* One of the strongest proofs that such was the expectation of the Jews is to be inferred from the comparison of 2 Sam. vii. 19. and 1 Chron. xvii. 17. in which, as is ably shown by Bishop Horsley, the Divine Messiah is contemplated. 2 Sam. vii. 19. "And this (namely, what was said about his house in distant times,) is the arrangement about The Man, O Lord Jehovah." 1 Chron. xvii. 17. "And thou hast regarded me in the arrangement about The Man that is to be from above, O God Jehovah." That is, in forming the scheme of the Incarnation, regard was had to the honour of David, and his house, as a secondary object, by making it a part of the plan that Messiah should be born in his family. Horsley's Bib. Crit. vol. i. p. 351.

The original word דָּוִד translated 'the Man,' by Bishop Horsley, is by Dr. Kennicott translated 'the Adam.' The inferences to be drawn from this passage are, that the Messiah would, at a period remotely future, descend from David, and that he would sustain a relation to the human race analogous to that of the first man.

In the New Testament also, our Lord is called the Adam from above. We read these remarkable words, (1 Cor. xv. 47.) "The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from Heaven." Through the greater part of that beautiful chapter St. Paul draws a parallel between the first and second Adam. In the Epistle to the Romans, (v. 14.) he calls the first Adam the figure of him that was to come. (Compare also John iii. 31. viii. 23.)

The Jewish traditions also affirm the same doctrine, and St. Paul, in this passage, (1 Cor. xv. 47.) uses the very same expression, which is found in the book Zohar on this subject: a circumstance which may be considered as affording a proof of the real date of that curious book. It is said to consist principally of a recital of the expositions and doctrines of Rabbi Si-
ated—they knew not, as Caiaphas told them, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. Quos vult perdere Deus, prius dementit. They therefore, in the words of the parable, "caught" the holy Jesus, "and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." The casting him out of the vineyard was properly only a circumstance in the description. But this was as strictly fulfilled as the figure would allow. Christ was cast out of the synagogue as a profane person, and was delivered to the Romans, an heathen nation, by whom he was executed without the walls of the city.*

This awful depravity, this most atrocious wickedness could not escape with impunity. The expressive words of the latter part of the parable point at the punishment of excision from the church and favour of God, which had been for so many ages their prime glory and "exceeding great reward," upon the immediate commission of that heinous sin;

mec, the Son of Jochai, who was the contemporary of the Apostles, and probably known to St. Paul, himself one of the most learned men of his day. The Messiah is there called Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, the Adam on high, and is said to have dominion over all things, as the first man, the Adam below, Ἰσχαὼν Ἰησοῦς, had by divine appointment over the inferior creation of this world. The same idea repeatedly occurs in the Rabbinical writings. See an excellent note on this subject, of which the above is an extract, in Townsend's Arrangement of the New Test. vol. i. p. 93—97. See also Townsend's Arrangement of the Old Test. vol. i. p. 651. 1st Edit.

* Fecerunt αποστολοι (extra Synagogum,) et ut hominem αυτον (Legis expertum,) curarunt eum a profanis hominibus occidi: atque adeo ipsi magis eum occiderunt quam Romanus Prael, qui ali quandiu reluctans tandem manus dedit illorum improbitati. Grotius, Oper. tom. ii. p. 198.
but the sentence was not completed until the final destruction of Jerusalem about forty years subsequent to the death of Christ. As a church, however, the Jewish hierarchy was no more—the middle wall or partition between the Jews and the Gentiles was broken down—the hand-writing of ordinances was blotted out and nailed to the cross.

According to St. Matthew, the chief priests and Pharisees are made, though unwittingly, to condemn themselves. "When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto these husbandmen? 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."* St. Luke, however, makes our Saviour answer instead of the Pharisees, who briefly say, "God forbid!" "What therefore," says our Lord, "shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they—the Pharisees—heard it, they said God forbid."†

There appears an inconsistency in the relation of the two Evangelists: but it is not so. In St. Matthew, as likewise in St Mark,‡ Christ inquires of the Pharisees—"what the Lord of the vineyard will do to these husbandmen:" And they answer—"He will destroy them, and let out the vineyard to other husbandmen." In St. Luke, Christ himself declares what the Lord of the vineyard will do to these hus-

bandmen; and they seem to say, God forbid that he should do so. The Pharisees do not by these words deny that the Lord of the vineyard would destroy these husbandmen; but knowing that the parable was spoken against them, they say, μὴ γενοῦτο,—"far be it from us husbandmen to do a work so worthy of this punishment."—In St. Matthew and St. Mark, the parable was spoken directly against the Pharisees, and they confess that such persons are worthy of punishment: but as they professed to consider Christ as an impostor, they do not intend their answer to apply to themselves. In St. Luke they deny altogether that they shall destroy the Messiah whom they knew to be the Lord of the vineyard; because, they say, this man, who addresses us, is not the Christ or Messiah, but an impostor.*

But the same conviction is flashed upon them by our Lord in all the Evangelists. To the denying Pharisees in St. Luke's Gospel he says—If this will not be so, if this dreadful punishment will not overtake you,—what is then the import of this that is written, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner."† Now, he plainly infers, "you are these builders, and I whom you reject, that chief corner-stone."

The confession is, as we have intimated, made by these wicked hypocrites, because they think that it cannot apply to themselves; or if, as is a common sign of the weakness of human nature, they had a consciousness of guilt which they would stifle, or at

* Whitby on Luke xx. 16.  † Ps. xcvi. 22.
least hide from the people, they answer in this strong language—"He will miserably destroy these wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons."*

The blessed Jesus takes advantage of this hypocritical confession, as he did of the impudent denial in the Gospel of St. Luke, and convicts them of their guilt, and of the dreadful consequences which it will bring upon themselves. "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?"‡ He then more plainly predicts their destruction, the desolation of their city and nation,

* Matt. xxi. 41.
† Ps. cxviii. 22. In the psalm it is first applied by David to himself, as being first rejected and despised by Saul and the chief of Israel, and then raised to the throne. Then, in a much higher and sublimer sense, it applies to Christ, and to the rejection of him by the elders and rulers. This is Hammond's exposition. By Parkhurst, the author of the Hebrew and Greek Lexicons, and by others, it has been supposed to allude to the junction of the Jews and Gentiles compacted at this angle as it were by Christ. But, as Grotius observes, as it is said to be fulfilled by St. Peter, Acts iv. 11, before the calling of the Gentiles; it indicates probably only the strength of a corner-stone in supporting the edifice. Hence the chiefs of the people are named παπα Hebri. γανατι by the Hellenists, as 1 Sam. xiv. 38. LXX. παπας τας γωνιας του Ἰσραήλ, all the chief people of Israel. See Taylor's Concord. ad voc. ΠΑ; Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon on the word παπ, and Greek Lexicon on the word ακρογωνιοσ; and Grot. Oper. tom. ii. p. 199, folio.—See also Valpy's Annot. vol. i. p. 337.
‡ Matt. xxi. 42.
the end of their polity,—that the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and given to others,—and, in a word, that the Gospel, which they rejected, and thus sealed their own final ruin, should be preached to the Gentiles.* "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."†

The vineyard which God had planted—which he had warmed and nourished by his Divine favour, and watered with heavenly dew, the doctrine of the Law and the prophets—which he had hedged round about, not only by his providence and parental care, but by his Covenant and Divine presence—this vineyard, which is the kingdom of God, was taken from

* Matt. xxi. 43, 44.
† Dr. Hammond thinks that the phrase, "grind him to powder," alludes to the mode of threshing the corn, and breaking it with an instrument, (a flail among us,) or by bringing the wheel over it, or by treading it out, as was the custom of the Jews. Hence, he thinks, it signifies, in this passage, that Christ shall come upon the Jews, with the threshing instrument in his hand, and shall break them, and dash them to pieces, and violently separate the straw from the wheat, the multitude of obstinate and obdurate from the few sound believers among them. Hammond's Works, vol. iii. p. 104. folio. But Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, and more consistently with the judicial nature of the punishment of the Jews, that the whole sentence alludes to the manner of stoning. The place of stoning was twice as high as a man. From the top of this one of the witnesses striking him on his loins, felled him to the ground; if he died of this, well; if not, the other witness threw a stone upon his heart." Sanhedr. c. vi. hal. 4. Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 229. fol.
the Jews, because they rejected the head-stone of the building of God, the Messiah whom they had expected for so many ages. This is the stone, which, in the vision of the prophet Daniel, "was cut out of the mountain without hands, which brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold." And this stone is the figure of "the kingdom," which, the same prophet declares, "the God of Heaven shall set up, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."*

The object of this work is, as I have already intimated, to show that, independent of their practical excellence, the parables of our Lord form in themselves a series of prophecies concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of God, the progress and the effects of the Gospel dispensation. The parables collected in the present chapter, which foretell the destruction of the Jewish state, and the desolation of the church and people of Judah, are peculiarly of this character. This parable of the vineyard, which we have just expounded, is one of the most direct prophecies of this event,—inasmuch as it harmonizes with the very language and imagery of the Hebrew prophets on the same subject. The exposition of this parable therefore were incomplete, were we not to compare with it the allegory of Isaiah to the same effect, and which our Lord has but taken up and extended upon the canvass, as the times and circum-

stances of the Church demanded. This must be
done so as to give a full-length portrait, or rather
sketch, of the Jewish nation, from the call of Abra-
ham to their final destruction for their rejection of
the Messiah; and that this was clearly predicted in
the Hebrew Scriptures, we need go no farther than
the prophecy of Isaiah, some passages of which I
shall compare with his allegorical representation of
that people under the figure of the vineyard. In
the end it will, we think, follow, as a necessary
inference from the whole, that the present state
of the Jews is, according to their own prophets,
a demonstration of the Divinity of Jesus the Mes-
siah.*

The most striking events of the Divine Economy,
in the dispensations of Providence, are the rejection
of the Hebrew nation, which has for ages been com-
prehended under the common denomination of Jews,
from the Divine favour and protection, and the call-
ing or election of the Gentiles, people of all nations
and of all languages, to all and more than all the
blessings and privileges of this once favoured peo-
ple.† To the contemplation of these mighty events

* On this subject, see "A Discourse of the Divinity of Christ,"
by the Rev. John Methven Rogers, LL.B. Lond. 1824.
† The destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews,
are in themselves events of no greater importance than the de-
struction of Nineveh and Babylon, or the fall of any great city
or nation. In worldly power the Jewish city and people were
not to be compared with other and mightier nations of the earth.
In their moral and intellectual character they were inferior to
the Greeks and Romans. They were for many ages under the
protection of some predominant power; and they were a proverb
we are led by our Lord's parable of the Vineyard, which is so wonderfully confirmed by a similar parable in the fifth chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah. The first seven verses of that noble and sublime chapter contain the beautiful parable of the Vineyard, which, like that of our blessed Lord, is the prophecy of the rejection of the people of God for their ingratitude and apostasy. We will compare this prophecy with other predictions of the same prophet; we will consider the Divine government of the Hebrew nation; and we will apply the whole to the situation, the circumstances, and the opinions of this people at the period of the Advent of their Messiah, and the

and a by-word to the more civilized nations. Hence the well-known lines of the Roman Satirist:

Dum flamma sine, tura liquescere limine sacro
Persuadere cupit. Credat Judæus Apella,
Non ego. Hor. Sat. Lib. i. c. 6.

Yet the destruction of their city and temple, and the dispersion of the people, are the greatest events of the kind that ever happened; as their preservation to this day, a distinct people, though diffused over every part of the habitable globe, is the most wonderful provision of the Divine Providence for the purpose of evincing the truth of our holy Religion, and the divine nature of our Redeemer. The history of this people forms a main feature in the history of the human race. In the sacred records, preserved by them from the beginning of the world, we find the foundations of all our faith and hope of life and immortality as rational beings in a future state. With a great portion of this magnificent scheme of our Redemption is the history of this obscure, and in many respects contemptible, people blended,—not certainly for any merit on their part, but to show the eternal and immutable character of God's judgments, as well as the inexhaustible nature of his love and mercy to the children of men.
causes and consequences of their rejection of that Divine Person.

A thoughtful mind is astounded at the events which so rapidly succeeded the death of Christ;—the destruction of so singular a nation as the Hebrew, and the preservation of them, at this distant period, as a distinct people, though scattered over every country of the habitable globe. What could so suddenly cause their final overthrow, their utter desolation? For though they had been, for a series of years, under the dominion of the various predominant powers of Asia, of Africa, and of Europe; still they had been protected, and permitted the free and undisturbed exercise of their religion, and, until a few years before the public appearance and ministry of Jesus as the Messiah, the administration of their laws, without any interference on the part of the powers to whom they were tributary. But suddenly they are irrecoverably overthrown—their religion superseded—their city and temple utterly destroyed—and themselves dispersed, like the first murderer of the righteous Abel, as murderers over the face of the earth.

From the call of Abraham to the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish people, there were, according to the common chronology, about two thousand years. During all this time, Abraham and his descendants, a numerous and populous nation, whose increase was as the stars of heaven—so numerous, if we apply the prophecy to the natural progeny of Abraham, was that highly favoured people—during all this period
they were protected and supported by the Divine Providence in such a manner as was never known of any other nation. Abraham was divinely called from a country of idolaters, and promised both spiritual and temporal blessings. He was a frequent sojourner, though never positively settled in the land of Canaan, and left an only son, the child of promise, whose son Jacob, or Israel, and his numerous family were rescued from the jaws of famine which raged in that country, and were removed, by a train of wonderful circumstances, into a country which had been preserved from the same awful judgment by the inspired wisdom of one of their own brethren, and of which powerful empire he was at that time the executive head. In Egypt, whither they were so providentially removed, they increased into a numerous and formidable people, insomuch that they were grievously oppressed through the apprehensions of the king of that country. After that Jehovah, the God of Israel, had abundantly evinced his Divine power and protection of this singular people in the presence and in defiance of their enemies, they were miraculously conducted, by the Divine hand, out of the land of their oppressors; the sea was cleft asunder to make them a passage; the waters closed upon, and engulfed their pursuers; they were miraculously sustained in a barren wilderness for forty years, and they ate the bread which was sent them from heaven;—until it pleased the Divine Being, who had wrought all these stupendous miracles for their preservation, to conduct them, in the same miraculous manner, into that country from whence
they had been driven by famine—a country which had been promised to their fathers—a land described, as a sign of its fertility, to be flowing with milk and honey. This country was conquered, not by the power of the sword, but by the miraculous power of Jehovah. At the sound of a trumpet the walls of cities fell down; and armies fled in consternation, of the nature of which they themselves were wholly ignorant.

A people so protected, and so governed—for their laws were delivered by the voice of God amid thunders and lightnings, and afterwards by their divinely inspired lawgiver Moses—under the visible protection of the Supreme Being—a people thus highly favoured must have committed sins of the most deadly and unpardonable nature,—nothing in fact short of absolute apostacy from their Divine King,—to have been thus deserted, and punished in their expulsion from their country; and in being compelled, for all succeeding ages,* to seek their habitations among strange nations, with none of whom can they ever mix: for the mark of their peculiar manners, and their attachment to their abrogated Law, keep them in hopeless separation from all other people.

* The remarkable character of the conquest of Jerusalem, and of the dispersion of the people by the Romans, consists in the irrevocable nature of that Divine judgment; for until the termination of the Christian scheme, as it respects the final destiny of man, this people will never be re-collected: but from former dispersions and captivities they recovered, and a portion of them returned to their country and rebuilt the Temple.
But although their *final* excision was sudden, though the Divine favour was withdrawn from them immediately after the death of Christ, and in about forty years their city was an heap of rubbish, and of their temple there was not left, as our Lord had predicted, one stone to lie upon another;—yet the threatened judgment had been suspended by the Divine forbearance and mercy for many ages. When the prophet Isaiah denounced this judgment upon them in the parable which we are about to examine,—and which is the same in its infant form with that which our Lord’s parable presents when the time was ripe for the execution of judgment on this devoted people,—they had been in possession of the promised land for about seven hundred years; and it was not until about eight hundred years subsequent to this prophetic denunciation, that the judgment was finally executed upon that rebellious and apostate people.

We will now proceed to the examination of this parable of the prophet, which throws so much reflected light on the parable of our Lord. In the beautiful style of allegory peculiar to the Hebrew Scriptures, the prophet, in the person of Jehovah, thus vividly pourtrays the ingratitude of the people of God.

“Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein:
and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: and it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." *†

* Isaiah v. 1—7.
† This beautiful parable or allegory is thus translated by Bishop Lowth, for the introduction of which into the notes I need not apologize to the general, nor perhaps to any reader.—Vol. i. p. 13.

"Let me sing now a song to my Beloved;
A song of loves concerning his vineyard.
My Beloved had a vineyard,
On a high and fruitful hill:
And he fenced it round, and he cleared it from the stones,
And he planted it with the vine of Sorek;
And he built a tower in the midst of it,
And he hewed out also a lake therein:
And he expected, that it should bring forth grapes,
But it brought forth poisonous berries.
And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and ye men of Judah;
It is very clear that this parable of the vineyard was intended by the prophet to denounce the judgment of God upon the Jews; for the vineyard is identified with that people. "The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant." It is equally evident to any one who compares the two, that our Lord makes use of the same parable, and for the same purpose of showing the apostacy of the Jews, and their consequent rejection from the Divine favour and protection. But Jesus adds the circumstance of the husbandman, God the Father, having a Son, himself their promised Messiah, whom they slew; for which atrocious murder "the Lord of the vineyard did miserably destroy those wicked men, and let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, which should ren-

Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard,
What could have been done more to my vineyard,
Than I have done unto it?
Why, when I expected that it should bring forth grapes,
Brought it forth poisonous berries?
But come now, and I will make known unto you,
What I purpose to do to my vineyard:
To remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;
To destroy its fence, and it shall be trodden down.
And I will make it a desolation;
It shall not be pruned, neither shall it be digged;
But the brier and the thorn shall spring up in it;
And I will command the clouds,
That they shed no rain upon it.
Verily, the vineyard of Jehovah God of Hosts is the house of Israel;
And the men of Judah the plant of his delight:
And he looked for judgment, but behold tyranny:
And for righteousness, but behold the cry of the oppressed."
der him the fruits in their seasons." That is, God rejected the Jews from the Church, "the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts," and elected the Gentiles into their place, who are required to "render him the fruits in their seasons," faith and holiness; and the rejection of the Jews for their apostacy from the Son of God, at his first Advent, holds out an awful warning to us, who have professed to receive and to believe in him, if we render him not the fruits of faith and holiness; for our rejection, at his second coming to judge the quick and the dead, will be infinitely more terrible than the severity of God's wrath yet exercised against the Jews, who will one day be received back into the vineyard.

Another circumstance of resemblance in the two parables of Isaiah and of Christ is remarkable. This is the tower, which the prophet describes as built in the midst of the vineyard, and which is likewise noticed by our Lord. By this tower is meant the temple of Jerusalem, "the wall of which was broken down and trodden down."

The learned Bishop Lowth has noticed this circumstance. "Our Saviour," he says, "who has taken the general idea of one of his parables from this of Isaiah, has likewise inserted this circumstance of building a tower; which is generally explained by commentators, as designed for the keeper of the vineyard to watch and defend the fruits. But for this purpose it was usual to make a little temporary hut,* which might serve for the season while the

* Isaiah i. 8. "The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard." Authorized Translation.—"The daughter of Sion is left as a shed in a vineyard." Bp. Lowth's Translation.
fruit was ripening, and which was removed afterwards. The tower therefore should rather mean a building of a more permanent nature and use; the farm, as we may call it, of the vineyard, containing all the offices and implements, and the whole apparatus necessary for the culture of the vineyard, and the making of the wine. To which image in the allegory, the situation, the manner of building, the use, and the whole service, of the Temple exactly answered. And so the Chaldee paraphrast very rightly expounds it:—"Et statui eos (Israelitas) ut plantam vinea selectae, et ædificavi sanctuarium meum in medio illorum."* So also Hieron. in loc. "Ædificavit quoque turrim in medio ejus: Templum videlicet in media civitate."† That they have still such towers or buildings, the learned Bishop refers us to Harmer's Observations.‡

I need not pursue the parallel§ further; for it is

* "And I have appointed them (the Israelites) as a plant of a choice vine, and I have built my sanctuary in the midst of them."

† "He built also a tower in the midst of it: namely, the Temple in the middle of the city."

‡ Harmer's Observations, ii. p. 241.

§ Ver. 2. "And also made a wine-press therein." Authorized Translation.—"And he hewed out also a lake therein." Lowth's Transl. Upon this the Bishop has a note, the substance of which, though not of a nature to be introduced into the text, is too interesting to be passed over. It is therefore inserted here.

"This image also our Saviour has preserved in his parable. τρώγλην, LXX. render it here προλησιον; and in four other places, ὑπολήνιον, Isa. xvi. 10. Joel iii. 13. Haggai ii. 17. Zech. xiv. 10. I think more properly; and this latter word St. Mark uses. It means not the wine-press itself, or calcatorium, which is called
clear that the house of Israel and Judah is signified under the images of the vineyard and the vine, or "pleasant plant;" that they were under the immediate protection of Jehovah, who was their king both in a civil and religious sense, and their government, as it is styled by their own historian Josephus, was a Theocracy;* but that they would be, as we

* This celebrated passage of Josephus (against Apion) is as follows:—"Some legislators have permitted their governments to be under monarchies,—others put them under oligarchies,—and others under a republican form. But our Legislator had no regard to any of these forms; but he ordained our Government to be a Theocracy, by ascribing the authority and the power to God" Θεοκρατίαν απείτεν (απεδέιξε, Eusebius) το πολιτεύμα, Θεο

This furnished no authority. In a note he attempts to show that the expression "Theocracy" was used in accommodation to the notions of the Heathens. To those who desire to lower the Divine nature of our Redeemer, such reasoning may have its value. The following view of the learned author of the Divine Legation is much more consonant to the minds of those who look upon
know they have been, rejected for their tyranny, their oppression of Jesus, their apostacy from the Messiah. The text, which expresses all this in the parable of Isaiah, has been more strictly rendered by Bishop Lowth as follows:—

"Verily the vineyard of Jehovah God of Hosts
is the house of Israel;
And the men of Judah the plant of his delight:
And he looked for judgment, but behold tyranny:

Christ as the Divine King of the Jews, the Jehovah of the Hebrew Scriptures.

"The true and real meaning of the Sceptre of Judah, is that Theocratic Government which God by the Vicegerency of Judges, Kings, and Rulers, exercised over the Jewish nation. This Theocracy, which was instituted by Moses, continued over that people till the coming of Shiloh or Christ; that Prophet like unto Moses, whom God had promised to 'raise up.' And to support what hath been urged from reason, to illustrate this important truth, we have here a prophetic declaration announcing the same thing—'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come.' Shiloh is Christ. Now Christ is not the successor of these Vicegerents of the Jewish state, but of God himself, the King of the Jews. The sceptre therefore which descends to him through the hands of these Vicegerents is not merely a civil, but a Theocratic Sceptre. This at the same time explains the evangelic doctrine of Christ's Kingdom, arising out of the Theocracy, or Kingdom of God." Divine Legation, vol. v. p 113. Hurd's Edition of Warburton's Works.

With the hypothesis of the learned Bishop respecting the tribe of Judah we have nothing to do. The passage is adduced to show the view taken by so acute a mind of the connexion subsisting between the Theocracy of the Jews and the Kingdom of Christ: both constitute one Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, of which Christ is King.

* Gen. xlix. 10.
And for righteousness, but behold the cry of the oppressed."

That the last part of this verse refers to their apostacy in rejecting and slaying the Son of God, as our Lord himself applies his parable to the apostate Jews, is evident from that touching description of the sufferings of the Messiah in the fifty-third chapter of this Evangelical prophet, which appears yet more clearly in Bishop Lowth's version. After an affecting picture of the sorrows and sufferings of Christ, the prophet proceeds to describe the cause, the manner, and the consequences of his death: viz. That men had sinned; that Christ died for our sins, and was "taken off by an oppressive judgment;" and that his death was "a propitiatory sacrifice for the justification of many."

"We all of us like sheep have strayed;
We have all turned aside, every one to his own way;
And Jehovah hath made to alight upon him
the iniquity of us all.
It was exacted, and he was made answerable;
and he opened not his mouth:
As a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before her shearsers,
Is dumb; so he opened not his mouth.
By an oppressive judgment he was taken off;
And his manner of life who would declare?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgression of my people he was
smitten to death."

* Bp. Lowth's Isaiah v. 7.  
† Ibid. liii. 6, 7, 9.
The circumstance of his death as a malefactor, and his burial by the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, and the innocence of his life, are next described in this wonderful prophecy. The prophet then proceeds to state the propitiatory nature of the atonement through the death of the Messiah.

"Yet it pleased Jehovah to crush him with affliction.
If his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice,
He shall see a seed, which shall prolong their days,
And the gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hands."*†

Before we take leave of this Evangelical prophet, who is the interpreter of himself, we may notice one or two other texts which will serve to illustrate his own meaning in the parable of the Vineyard, and must therefore throw equal light on the parable of our Lord, which is the subject of this Section. We have seen that the vineyard intended the Hebrew nation, which, though formerly so favoured of Jehovah, was to be rejected for tyranny and oppression, which we have discovered, by the same prophet, to refer to the crucifixion of the Messiah. We have hastily glanced at the wonderful Providence, with which God had protected this people; and we may well suppose that nothing short of Apostacy from Jehovah himself

* Lowth's Isaiah liii. 10.
† The reader is referred to the first chapter of the second part of Paley's Evidences, entitled "Prophecy," for an able and perspicuous account of the fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy in the death and burial of Christ.
could bring upon them the dreadful judgment, which dispersed them about forty years after Christ's death, when Jerusalem was besieged, and taken, and destroyed, and which yet afflicts them.* The object

* Bishop Horsley, in his excellent translation and commentary of the prophet Hosea, indisputably proves that the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and the Logos of the New, are the same person. He finds much of his admirable reasoning on this passage of his translation:—"At Bethel he found the Angel, who spake with us there; even Jehovah God of Hosts, Jehovah in his memorial." (Hosea xii. 4, 5.)

"God himself says this name Jehovah is his memorial; that is, his appropriate, perpetual name. 'And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. This is my name for ever, and this my Memorial unto all generations.' Exod. iii. 15.

"The person, of whom it is said, that the name Jehovah is his memorial, is no other than he whom the patriarch found at Bethel, who there spake with the Israelites in the loins of their progenitor. He, whom the patriarch found at Bethel, who there, in that manner, spake with the Israelites, was, by the tenor of the context, the antagonist with whom Jacob was afterwards matched at Peniel. The antagonist, with whom he was matched at Peniel, wrestled with the patriarch, as we read in the book of Genesis, (chap. xxxii. 24,) in the human form. The conflict was no sooner ended, than the patriarch acknowledged his antagonist as God. (verse 30.) The holy prophet first calls him Angel, (יוֹם Hos. xii. 4.) and after mention of the colloquation, and of the meeting and conference at Bethel, says, (Hos. xii. 5.) that he, whom he had called Angel, was 'Jehovah God of Hosts.' And to make the assertion of this person's Godhead, if possible, still more unequivocal, he adds, that to him belonged, as his appropriate memorial, that name, which is declarative of the very essence of the Godhead. This Man therefore of the book of Genesis, this Angel of Hosea, who
of the prophet's mission was chiefly to warn them of their perverseness, which would end in their rebellion against the authority of Him who was their civil governor, and in their apostacy from Him who was their God; for both these authorities were vested in Jehovah God of Hosts. In the first Chapter, and at the very commencement of his prophecy, Isaiah therefore thus warns this people:

"Hear, O ye heavens; and give ear, O earth!
For it is Jehovah that speaketh,
I have nourished children, and brought them up;
And even they have revolted from me.
The ox knoweth his possessor;
And the ass the crib of his lord;
But Israel knoweth not Me;
Neither doth my people consider.
Ah! sinful nation! a people laden with iniquity!
A race of evil doers! Children degenerate!
They have forsaken Jehovah;
They have rejected with disdain the Holy One of Israel;
They are estranged from him; they have turned their back upon him.”

Then follows their punishment.
“Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire;
Your land, before your eyes strangers devour it:
And it is become desolate, as if destroyed by an inundation.
And the daughter of Sion is left, as a shed in a vineyard;
As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a city taken by siege.”

All the expressions of anger, in this sublime picture of anger and distress, have reference to the broken allegiance of subjects to their Sovereign, as well as to the ingratitude of children to their Heavenly Father, and to the impiety of “forsaking Jehovah, and rejecting with disdain the Holy One of Israel.” In all these relations did God condescend to connect himself with the Hebrews; and all these endearing ties were finally broken asunder by their rejection of
the Messiah; by which act they "revolted against Jehovah," as rebellious subjects, and "they rejected with disdain the Holy One of Israel,"—a name more than once applied to the Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus the Psalmist, personating the Messiah, in allusion to his resurrection, assures himself that Jehovah "will not suffer his HOLY ONE to see corruption."* This passage is applied by St. Peter directly to Jesus Christ.†

To none other causes than the direct apostacy from Jehovah the God of their fathers, rebellion against their king, and the rejection of the Messiah, who had been promised and impatiently expected for ages—and this through hardness of heart, and perverseness of will—to none other causes than these can be reasonably attributed the fall, the shame, the desolation of so favoured a people. Hence in another part, towards the end of Isaiah's prophecy, the rejection and punishment of the Jews, for want of faith in the Gospel, are largely insisted on. It begins in this animated style:

"I am made known to those, that asked not for me;
I am found of those that sought me not:
I have said: Behold me, here I am,
To the nation, which never invoked my name."

But of the Jews, that once highly favoured people, it is said:—

"Ye shall leave your name for a curse to my chosen:

* Ps. xvi. 10.  
† Acts ii. 27.
And the Lord Jehovah shall slay you; 
And his servants shall he call by another name.”*

The calling and election of the Gentiles may be well believed to be highly agreeable to the infinite mercies of a gracious God: but the same cause will not account for the rejection of the Jews, whom Jehovah designates as his beloved, his children, and his servants, but in the text, just cited, declares, that “their name shall be a curse to his chosen;” and likewise proclaimed by his prophets that final desolation and destruction which happened to them nearly two thousand years ago, and which this extraordinary people still exhibit. The necessary inference, therefore, from these facts is, that it was a JUDICIAL ACT of the Almighty for their rejection of their Messiah.†

But they had rejected, and they had killed other prophets; and yet, though sent into banishment, and once punished with the destruction of their city

† This chapter, says Bishop Lowth, contains a defence of God’s proceedings in regard to the Jews, with reference to their complaint in the chapter preceding. God is introduced declaring, that he had called the Gentiles, though they had not sought him; and had rejected his own people, for their refusal to attend his repeated call; for their obstinate disobedience, their idolatrous practices, and detestable hypocrisy. That nevertheless he would not destroy them all; but would preserve a remnant, to whom he would make good his ancient promises. Severe punishments are threatened to the apostates; and great rewards are promised to the obedient in a future flourishing state of the Church. Lowth’s Isaiah, vol. ii. p. 371.
and temple, the favour of God was not wholly withdrawn from them: prophets consoled them in the sorrows of their captivity; and finally God inclined the hearts of their conquerors towards them, and a multitude of their people returned into Judea, and rebuilt the city, and the temple—the same which stood in the time of our Saviour—the glory of which second temple was declared to be greater than that of the first, not in outward splendour, but because it was destined to be honoured by the presence of the Messiah, "the desire of nations," who "filled this house with glory."

Independent, therefore, of the verbal criticism which has been most successfully employed, and as an auxiliary evidence is unquestionably of the highest importance, the fact of the rejection of the Jews proves to demonstration the Divinity of our Lord: for if he be not a Divine Person,—if he be not the Jehovah of the Old Testament—if he be not the King of Israel, the great prophecies which I have recited, and many others which might be adduced from the Hebrew prophets, remain unfulfilled. But when we look on Christ, as all Christians are bound to regard him, as Jehovah the King of Israel, the whole stream of prophecy is as clear as the noon-day. The desolation of "the vineyard of Jehovah God of Hosts," the rejection of the Jews, is the necessary consequence of their tyranny and oppression of their Messiah and King. The desolation of their country, and the burning of their city and temple by the Romans, "strangers before their eyes," is the judicial punishment of that "sinful
nation, the people laden with iniquity, the race of evil
doers, children degenerate who have forsaken Jeho-
vah, and rejected with disdain the Holy One of Is-
raeil.” They are therefore, as predicted by this pro-
phet, “a curse to the chosen of God,” and us “his
servants hath he called by another name,”—by the
name of Jesus Christ; for “there is no other
name under heaven in whom, and through whom
man may be saved.”

The New Testament fully confirms the view, which
I have taken, of this important subject. When Christ
uttered that memorable address, in his last visit, to
the city, he evidently alluded to the destruction of
Jerusalem in consequence of his rejection. But had
he been no more than a prophet, he could not have
had so superior a claim to all other preceding pro-
phets, as that for his sake the city and temple should
be destroyed, and the people scattered as wanderers
over the earth. But he speaks not as a mere prophet,
nor as an angel of the highest order, nor as any crea-
ture, but as God, the Eternal Guardian of that
city and people, in that remarkable passage. After
reproaching the hypocrisy and cruelty of the Scribes
and Pharisees in persecuting and killing the pro-
phets, he thus pathetically laments over the city:—
“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the pro-
phets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee,
how often would I have gathered your children toge-
ther, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her
wings, and ye would not!—Behold, your city is left
unto you desolate!”

* Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.
It is worthy of remark that there is a passage, in the prophet Isaiah, very similar, both in sentiment and imagery, to this address of our Lord. I shall cite it in the words of Bishop Lowth's translation already referred to; because the similarity is more obvious than in the Authorized Version, which is however exactly the same in sense. The prophet alludes to the deliverance of the Israelites by the Passover of Jehovah,* when the first-born of Egypt were slain.

"As the mother-birds hovering over their young; So shall Jehovah God of Hosts protect Jerusalem;

Protecting and delivering; leaping forward, and rescuing her."†‡

* Exod. xi. † Isa. xxxi. 5.
‡ "The common notion of God's passing over the houses of the Israelites is, that in going through the land of Egypt to smite the first-born, seeing the blood on the door of the houses of the Israelites, he passed over, or skipped, those houses, and forborne to smite them. But that this is not the true notion of the thing, will be plain from considering the words of the sacred historian; where he describes very explicitly the action:

'For Jehovah will pass through, to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood on the lintels, and on the two side posts, Jehovah will spring forward over (or before) the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.' Exod. xi. 23.—Here are manifestly two distinct agents, with which the notion of passing over is not consistent; for that supposes but one agent; the two agents are the destroying angel passing through to smite every house; and Jehovah the protector, keeping pace with him; and who, seeing the door of the Israelite marked with the blood, the token prescribed, leaps forward, throws himself with a sudden motion in the way, opposes the destroying angel; and covers and protects that house against the destroying angel, nor suffers him to
The same power of protection, and even similar figures and similitudes, are used by Jesus and by Jehovah God of Hosts; and if they be not one and the same person, it is indeed difficult to reconcile the two texts, or indeed to understand either. We have seen that Jehovah was the King of Israel and Judah, and that the government of those states, either connected or separate, was a Theocracy. The common title of Christ was King of smite it. In this way of considering the action, the beautiful similitude of a bird protecting her young, answers exactly to the application by the allusion to the deliverance in Egypt: as the mother-bird spreads her wings to cover her young, throws herself before them, and opposes the rapacious bird that assaults them; so shall Jehovah protect, as with a shield, Jerusalem from the enemy, protecting and delivering, springing forward and rescuing her. Lowth's Isaiah, vol. ii. p. 219.

This twofold agency of Jehovah, as the destroyer and protector, is thought by other learned commentators to derive no support from the text of Exodus, while they agree with Bishop Lowth and Vitringa in the primary sense of the word הָעָבָד Pesach 'to leap forward.' But they do not consider it necessary upon every occasion, and not upon this, to refer to the primary sense of the word, and think the appropriate sense of the word in this passage is to preserve. The passage in the prophet is thus interpreted by Archbishop Magee:

"As the mother-birds hovering over their young;
So shall Jehovah, God of Hosts, protect Jerusalem,
Protecting and delivering, preserving (as by a second Passover) and rescuing her."

The imagery is retained in either sense of the particular word Pesach, which affects not the reasoning of the text. The curious and learned reader will find a long note on this subject in Magee's "Doctrine of the Atonement," vol. i. p. 309—321. 4th Edit.
the Jews. As a king and a governor he was expected by all; but because "his kingdom was not of this world," the covetous and ambitious Scribes and Pharisees would not acknowledge him—especially as his spiritual power must, when acknowledged, supersede their authority. But when "Jesus stood before" Pilate, the Roman governor, "and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest."* It need hardly be added that the latter words, "thou sayest," are an eastern mode of speech expressive of assent. That he was not a king of this world, exactly corresponds with his government of that ungrateful and rebellious nation, as set forth in the Old Testament.†

There remains one circumstance which completes the parallel between the fate of the persons denounced in the two parables of Isaiah and of our Lord, and perfects the demonstration of the Divinity of Christ in the present condition of the Jews, who are yet a living monument of this most sublime truth. Pilate was warned by his wife of the innocence of the blessed Jesus in the following message:—"Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."‡ Pilate's apprehensions, lest his cruel and rapacious conduct in his province should be reported

* Matt. xxvii. 11.
‡ Matt. xxvii. 19.
at Rome, * induced him, contrary to his own strong desire, to give way to the people. But as if he could justify himself, or stifle the voice of his own conscience, he acted this scene before them. "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. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." †

This awful invocation of the penalty of that atrocious act of murder, though it could not possibly exonerate from guilt, in the eye of a just God, that wicked and worldly governor, was nevertheless accepted, and the penalty exacted by the Divine vengeance on that guilty and unhappy people to the fullest extent of meaning which the words will bear. If the similar texts of the Law, and other parts of the Old Testament, marked in the margins of the larger English Bibles, be consulted, the attentive reader will find that the expression,—"His blood be on us, and on our children,"—was a judicial phrase, put probably into the mouths of the people by the malicious Scribes and Pharisees, whereby they took upon them-

* The particulars of Pilate's abuses of his government of Judea, his cruelty to the Jews and Samaritans, and his abuse of the sacred money to profane purposes, for some of which he was subsequently complained of at Rome, and deprived of his procuratorship, are detailed by Josephus in his Antiquities, Book xviii. chap. 3 and 4.

† Matt. xxvii. 24, 25.
selves, in the most solemn manner of their Law, the full guilt of that horrible murder of their King, of their Saviour, and of that holy and innocent Man with whom was inseparably united the nature of the Godhead—that Jehovah who had "nourished and brought up these rebellious children" and subjects, who had now for ever revolted from him.

If the reader have followed me with that attention which the subject demands, he can hardly fail to draw the necessary inference from the whole; namely, that the Jews are now suffering—they and their whole posterity—at the distance of nearly two thousand years from the period of this public invocation, the dreadful penalty which their forefathers called down upon them, and which they, by their blindness, a judicial blindness, still continue. They are suffering the penalty of traitors from their lawful King—of apostates from their Messiah—of impious infidels of Jehovah their God!! Wheresoever we see a Jew, we not only behold a living monument of the Divine origin of our holy religion; but we have the strongest possible evidence, which carries along with it the analogy of the whole Bible from the beginning to the end, of the Divinity of Jesus Christ: an evidence which effectually cuts up by the roots the pernicious errors of Socinus, and of the modern Unitarians.
SECTION V.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 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. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 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. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 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. For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

The parable of the Marriage Feast is one of the most striking parables delivered by our Lord. It is striking in its severe and close application to the Jews, for whose sake it was delivered; insomuch that we find the Pharisees so confounded that, in their fear and malignity, they immediately “took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk,” that, by some indiscreet speech in reference to the Romans, their civil governors, they might be avenged by procuring his capital punishment by the Roman deputy, which they finally accomplished in his crucifixion. Nor is it much less striking if it be applied to the wickedness and indifference of Christians in all ages of the church.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son.”

† The original word, which is here rendered “mar-

† “Γαμος signifies among the Greeks ‘a wedding, matrimony,’ &c. but in the common language of Alexandria, or at least among the Jews of that city, it seems to have signified an entertainment or festival in general, in the same manner as the German word for wedding, according to its etymology, may signify any time of general rejoicing: and in this sense it is used by LXX. The example taken from Gen. xxix. 22, where the Hebrew נַחֲשָׁם, a festival, is translated γαμος, affords indeed a dubious [not dubious, but positive, Bishop Marsh] argument, because the notion of a wedding is there intended to be expressed; but Esther ix. 22. καὶ τὸν μήνα—αγεὶν αυτοὺς ημερὰς γαμῶν καὶ ευφροσύνης, where נחשם is again translated γαμος,
riage, is in the plural number, and means the wedding feasts, because, as we may learn from the
and where no allusion can possibly be made to a wedding, puts the matter out of doubt; and in some of the manuscripts, instead of ποτευ, Esther i. 5. we find γάμῳ. In the same sense we find γαμος used in the New Testament, Matt. xxi. 1. where a king made γαμόν for his son, and yet in the whole parable not a single allusion is made to a bride, nay it is even difficult to conceive how that notion can be admitted in any part of the relation. Γαμοί can signify therefore in this passage nothing more than a public festival, instituted by the king in honour of his son, perhaps on the public occasion of declaring him the heir of his kingdom: this hypothesis at least throws a light on the whole parable, and may serve to explain the reason why many of those who were invited refused to come, and why one person in particular offered an affront to the master of the feast, by appearing in a dress unsuitable to the solemn occasion.” Michaelis.

Upon the above passage of the German Divine his Right Reverend and learned annotator has the following admirable note. “The following statement will set the matter in a clear light, and determine at once what sense the Seventy intended to ascribe to γαμος. The Hebrew word נvanished, which signifies convivium in general, though it is sometimes applied in the sense of convivium nuptiale in particular, occurs forty-eight times in the Hebrew Bible. In the Septuagint it is rendered δοχη, ευφροσυνη, καθων, ποσις, ποτευ, συμποσιον, and in three instances only γαμος, viz. Gen. xxix. 22. Esther ii. 18. ix. 22. In the two first instances a marriage feast is particularly described, and in the third is given a description of a feast which is held in consequence of a marriage.” Marsh’s Michaelis, vol. i. p. 146. 421.

Bishop Marsh has clearly shown that when נvanished is rendered γαμος by the LXX, which is only three times out of the forty-eight in which it occurs in the Hebrew Bible, it signifies a marriage feast. Grotius, ad loc. shows that it sometimes has the same meaning in classic authors. See Hammond, Whitby, and others on the place. See likewise two notes in Valpy’s Annotations, vol. i. p. 339.
Hebrew scriptures, it was the custom of the East to celebrate a marriage by feasts for many successive days; and the various guests, at various times invited to this wedding festival, could hardly have come to one feast. But these feasts continued a week or more. Laban, when Jacob had married his daughter Leah, desires him to "fulfil her week," that is, to keep a seven-days' feast for her marriage.* And "Sampson made a feast seven days,"—ἐποιήσας παποῦν ἡμέρα ἑπτά,—for his Philistine wife; "for," it is said, "so used the young men to do."† This accords with the preparations mentioned in the parable:—"My oxen and my fatlings are killed,"—which indicates a preparation for several days' feasting.

The kingdom of heaven is the Church of Christ, including of course her doctrines, which are a vital part of herself, and are particularly alluded to in this parable. The king is intended to represent God the Father; and the Son is the Lord Jesus Christ, (who is uniformly described in the New Testament as the spouse or bridegroom of the Church, a name and title which he appropriates to himself in several passages of the Gospels, particularly in the parable of the Ten Virgins,‡ and by which the apostles St. Paul and St. John expressly designate him.§

"And he sent forth his servants to call them that

* Gen. xxix. 27. † Judges xiv. 10.
‡ Matt. xxvi. 1. ix. 15. John iii. 29.
§ 2 Cor. xi. 2. Rev. xix. 7.
were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come.”

The “servants, sent forth to call them that were bidden,” were the apostles and the seventy disciples, who, as it is related by St. Matthew and St. Luke, were sent at first only to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The Jews had been bidden or invited both by St. John the Baptist, and again by our blessed Lord,—both of whom called them to repentance, “because the kingdom of God was at hand.” But neither at the invitations of the Baptist and the Saviour, nor at the calling of the apostles and the seventy disciples, would that perverse generation of Jews come to the marriage feast.

* It was customary to call them that were bidden a second time. This custom may be seen in Josephus’s account of the feast given by Queen Esther to King Artaxerxes and Haman, when the Queen’s Eunuchs, who went to call Haman to the supper, saw the gallows which had been erected for the purpose of hanging Mordecai. Joseph. Antiq. Book xi.


‡ “The parable of the Great Supper,—Luke xiv. 16–24—though delivered on a different occasion, and before our Lord’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem, bears so strong a resemblance to the present parable of the Marriage Feast, that it were unnecessary to make a separate exposition of it. It is introduced by two other short parables, teaching the excellence of works of charity before a rigid and formal observance of the Sabbath day to the neglect of such works of love; and the grace of humility which exalts, whereas pride debases the soul.—Luke xiv. 1—11.

—Our Lord then turns the discourse to the master of the house, whom he admonishes to invite the poor and the needy, rather than the rich, to his feast. This doctrine he illustrates by the parable of the Great Supper, which, while it was a practical les-
Yet so great was the love of our heavenly king to his subjects, that

"Again, he sent 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."

son to all who then heard, and now hear or read it, was at the same time prophetic of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles.

"If we compare this with another passage elsewhere, [Matt. xxii. 2, the parable examined in the text,] we may be satisfied that by the kingdom of heaven is here represented the Gospel dispensation; and this, as it ministers true plenty and pleasure, all that men can want, and all that they can wish, to render them perfectly happy, is compared to a supper. The bounty and infinite love of Almighty God are signified by the greatness of that supper and the multitudes bidden to it. The first bidding implies all the previous notices of the Messiah, by which the law and the prophets were intended to prepare the Jews for the reception of him and his doctrine. The second bidding, when all things were ready, seems to import all that Jesus did, and taught, and suffered, for their conversion and salvation, and all the testimonies and exhortations of his Apostles and other preachers of the Gospel, to the same purpose. The excuses sent for their absence are the prejudices, and passions, and worldly interest, which did not only hinder those Jews from coming into the faith, but disposed them likewise to treat all attempts to win them over with the utmost obstinacy and contempt. The guests brought in from abroad, to supply their places, are the Gentile world, to whom (after that the Jews had thrust it from them) the subsequent tenders of this grace and salvation were made: and the declaring that "none of those who were bidden should taste of this supper," denotes the giving those Jews over to a reprobate sense, and leaving them under infidelity and perverseness, in which they continue hardened to this very day." Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, vol. iii. Stackhouse's History of the Bible, new edition, vol. iii. p. 199.
These servants who were sent again, and described as "other servants" to mark the difference of the time and commission, were the same apostles, and other spiritual persons sent by our blessed Lord himself after his resurrection, as we find it recorded in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which describes the resurrection, and this commission to be afterwards carried into effect: and this was his last command before he ascended into heaven. He tells the apostles—"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem; and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

The servants, who were sent the first time, have been thought to be the prophets of the Old Testament. But Whitby assigns three very satisfactory reasons why they should be interpreted of the apostles. 1. This parable respects the kingdom of heaven, and those times only when that kingdom was come, which was in the time of the apostles, not the prophets. 2. It is a parable of "a king making a marriage for his son," which is generally interpreted of Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, and must therefore respect his advent alone. 3. The persons sent out the second time were sent to the same persons to whom the first were sent; and the second servants are always allowed to be the apostles of our Lord.†

But the second invitation was equally unavailing with the Jewish people.

* Acts i. 8. † Whitby's Additions to Matt. xxii. No. 35.
“They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.”

In the parable of the Great Supper, in the Gospel of St. Luke, they send their several excuses. “One had bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it. Another had bought five yoke of oxen, and went to prove them. Another had married a wife, and therefore could not come.” *

We find this part of the parable completely verified by the facts which immediately ensued upon the first preaching of the Gospel by the apostles. When the Holy Ghost descended upon the assembled apostles on the day of Pentecost, the by-standers, many of whom were “Jews and Proselytes,” while all men were amazed and were in doubt, said one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.”†

At the first sermon of St. Peter, “three thousand souls” were converted; but these were out of all nations mentioned by the sacred historian at the beginning of the Chapter. And though many myriads of the Jews were afterwards converted to the faith as it is in Jesus; still these bore no comparison to the number of that populous nation, “the many” of whom yet continue bigoted to their errors.

But all those who rejected the invitation were not of the passive character of those persons who excused themselves, and derided the messengers: for, the parable adds,—

"The remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them."

The frequent stonings and imprisonments of the apostles, and other insults and indignities inflicted by the Jews—the stoning of St. Stephen, and other martyrdoms recorded in the New Testament and the ancient ecclesiastical writers—these facts abundantly confirm the truth of this prophetic part of the parable.

"But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth, and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

This may be considered as part of our Lord's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, by which signal act of God's judgment upon the Jews, it was fearfully fulfilled. The Roman legions under Titus might with the strictest propriety be called the "Army of God," as fulfilling his will.*

Of this signal event in the Jewish history Daniel had prophesied upwards of five hundred years before Christ.† But our blessed Lord predicted it more plainly than in this parable, in the next chapter of this Evangelist, and notices the cruelty of the Jews in "killing the prophets." But he adds—"Behold, your house is desolate. For I say unto you, ye

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* This is the opinion of Le Clerc and Whitby. But Grotius explains it that the armies of God are his angels, by whose ministry he acts, 1 Kings xxii. 19. Luke ii. 13. They distribute his judgments, and brought them, i. e. famine and pestilence and war, by the Romans, on Jerusalem. Grotii Oper. tom. iii. p. 200, folio. Valpy's Annot. vol. i. p. 340.

† Dan. ix. 26.
shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”* On that memorable occasion of his last approach, prior to his triumphant entry into the city, he thus pathetically laments and predicts the coming destruction. “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”†

The accomplishment of this prophecy alone were enough, did infidels object from reason, to convert the most obstinate unbeliever to the truth. The account of the siege and utter destruction of Jerusalem is handed down to us by Jewish and Heathen historians, all of whom were bitter enemies to the faith. But their accounts exactly fulfil the prophecies of Daniel, and particularly of the blessed Jesus. So completely did the Roman army perform the part allotted by Divine Providence, of which they were the unconscious instruments, that, according to Josephus the Jewish historian, during these wars they destroyed “eleven hundred thousand Jews,” burnt their temples, and consumed and laid waste their

city: so that all men conceived, says the same historian, “it never could be built again.”*

* There is a very long and excellent note showing the fulfilment of our Lord’s Prophecies respecting the destruction of Jerusalem in Townsend’s Arrangement of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 415. The following extracts will not be uninteresting to the reader who may not possess that valuable work.

“Josephus, in his preface to the Jewish war, mentions that a star hung over the city like a sword; and a comet continued a whole year. The people being assembled at the feast of unleavened bread, at the ninth hour of the night, a great light shone about the altar and the temple, and this continued for half an hour. The eastern gate of the temple, which was of solid brass, and could hardly be shut by twenty men, and was fastened by strong bars and bolts, was seen at the sixth hour of the night to open of its own accord! Before sun-setting there was seen, over all the country, chariots and armies fighting in the clouds, and besieging cities. At the feast of Pentecost, when the priests were going into the inner temple by night, to attend their service, they heard first a motion and noise, and then a voice as of a multitude, saying, ‘Let us depart hence.’ What Josephus reckons one of the most terrible signs of all was; that one Jesus, a country fellow, four years before the war began, and when the city was in peace and plenty, came to the feast of tabernacles, and ran crying up and down the streets, day and night: ‘A voice from the East, a voice from the West! a voice from the four winds! a voice against Jerusalem and the temple! a voice against the bridegroom and the bride! and a voice against all the people!’ Though the magistrates endeavoured, by stripes and tortures, to interrogate him, they could obtain no answer but the mournful cry of ‘Woe, woe to Jerusalem!’ and this he continued to do for several years together, going about the walls, and crying with a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe to the city, and to the people, and to the temple!’ and, as he added, ‘Woe, woe to myself;” a stone from some sling or engine struck him dead on the spot!

“These were indeed fearful signs and wonders; and there is
not a more credible historian than the one who relates them, who appeals to the testimony of those who saw and heard them. But an additional evidence is given to his relation by the Roman historian Tacitus, who presents us with a summary account of the same occurrences; and as 'the testimonies of Josephus and Tacitus confirm the predictions of Christ, so the predictions of Christ confirm the wonders recorded by these historians.' But these were only the beginnings of sorrows, (Matt. xxiv. 8.) and from the calamities of the nation in general, Christ passes to those of the Christians in particular, (xxiv. 9, Mark xiii. 9, 11, Luke xxii. 13, 14, 15.) We need look no farther than the Acts of the Apostles for a melancholy proof of the truth of their predictions. But although the followers of Christ's religion were persecuted beyond measure, it is a remarkable fact, and a signal act of Divine Providence, that none of the Christians perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. So literally was that assertion fulfilled, 'There shall not an hair of your head perish.' And, notwithstanding the persecutions and calamities of the Christians, it was prophesied, 'This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.' And accordingly we find, from the writers of the history of the Church, that before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel was not only preached in the Lesser Asia, and Greece, and Italy, but as far northward as Scythia, as far southward as Ethiopia, as far eastward as Parthia and India, and as far westward as Spain and Britain. Agreeably to this, Eusebius informs us, that the Apostles preached the Gospel in all the world, and some of them (probably either St. Simon or St. Paul,) passed beyond the ocean to the Britannic Isles. Theodoret likewise affirms, that the Apostles had induced every nation and kind of men to embrace the Gospel, among whom he reckons particularly the Britons; and St. Paul himself declares, the Gospel 'is come unto all the world, and preached to every creature under Heaven;' and (in Rom. x. 18.) he elegantly applies to the lights of the Church these words of the Psalmist,
Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid them to the marriage. So these 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."

The guests, who were bidden, were not worthy, because they were not disposed to receive the Gospel, though it was so earnestly and repeatedly offered to them. We find the same word used in reference to those who had the Gospel preached to them when Christ sent forth the twelve apostles "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," as recorded in the tenth chapter of the same Evangelist, which was the first invitation to the wedding feast. "Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

'Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.' And all this was fulfilled to convince every nation of the crying sin of the Jews, in crucifying the Lord of glory, and of the justice of God's judgment upon them. And then came the end, the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish polity, when the abomination of desolation stood in the holy place. The verses (15 and 16 of Matt. xxiv.) are explained by the parallel passage in Luke xxi. 20, 21. The Roman army is the desolation of abomination spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, chap. ix. and xi; and it is so called, from its ensigns and images, which were abominations to the Jews; and Josephus informs us, that after the city was taken, the Romans brought these ensigns into the temple, placed them over against the eastern gate, and there sacrificed to them." Townsend's Arrangement of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 419. 1st Edit.

* The Rabbis say, "The travellers come in, and sit down upon the benches or chairs, till all came that were invited." Ba. Beracoth. The gloss is: It was customary among rich men to invite poor travellers to feasts. Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 229.
And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you." * They were despisers of the heavenly banquet, and preferred their secular interests and the pleasures of this world to the Kingdom of Heaven and the Government of the Messiah.

The servants of Christ were therefore sent forth into the highways, first to the Jews who were dispersed into the different countries round about Judaea, and afterwards to the Gentiles. If we follow the apostle St. Paul in his travels, we shall find that he exactly pursued this course, and did not turn to the Gentiles until he had been finally rejected by the Jews, from whom he had patiently borne every species of injurious usage and persecution while there remained the faintest hope of their conversion. We find him preaching in the Synagogue at Antioch, whence he and Barnabas were driven by a persecution raised by the unbelieving Jews. But before they departed they thus expressed themselves:—"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." † This zealous Apostle may be subsequently traced to Corinth, whither he came from Athens. He is still "reasoning in the Synagogue every Sabbath," and "persuading," not only "the Jews," but "the Greeks," who were Gentiles. "And when Silas and Timotheus were come

* Matt. x. 11—13.  † Acts xiii. 46.
from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they (the Jews) opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.”*

From this period we find this Apostle sedulously and fearlessly preaching the Gospel in the different provinces of Greece until he was taken to Rome for the express purpose of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation in the capital of the world. “Be it known unto you,—he tells the assembled Jews whom he had called together in that city,—that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”† The last circumstance, which we read of this Apostle, is that he “dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all—Jews and Gentiles—that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”‡

These servants, it is said, “gathered together all as many as they found, both good and bad; and the wedding was furnished with guests.”

The bad as well as the good compose the visible church, as they likewise compose the world. The honest man and the hypocrite, the faithful believer and the infidel apostate, profess the faith of Christ crucified. “Many,” therefore, as it is afterwards added, “are called, but,” it is to be feared that

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* Acts xviii. 5, 6. † Ibid. xxviii. 28. ‡ Ibid. ver. 30, 31.
"few will be chosen," unless the Christian religion have more faithful professors.

The conclusion of this fine parable is very striking, and even awful to such as do not duly, and with befitting seriousness and sincerity, consider the nature and responsibility of the Christian calling.

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how earnest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 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. For many are called, but few are chosen."

The wedding garment is a figure very appropriate to this parable. It was the custom of the East* to have festival garments, which were worn upon such occasions; a custom which is frequently alluded to in classic authors, and very common to the Scriptures, where the application is the same as in this parable. Thus in the Apocalypse† it is said,—"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." And at the marriage of the Lamb, his wife, the Church, is "arrayed in fine linen, clean

* On this custom the curious reader will find ample accounts in the commentators, Grotius, Hammond, and others. There is a very ingenious note in Dr. Macknight's Harmony, which is too long for insertion, but well worthy the reader's attention. Harm. vol. ii. p. 610.
† Rev. iii. 5. xix. 8.
and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

The meaning of the rejection of him who had not on a wedding garment may, and can hardly be otherwise understood than to apply to the Jews, who were first called, but rejected for their unworthiness, as indicated by the former part of the parable. But if the Jews were rejected from the visible church of God, the kingdom of heaven as it commences upon earth, for not having on the wedding garment, "the fine linen of righteousness,"—will not the professing Christian be in like manner expelled from the kingdom of Christ at the final day of account, if he be not appropriately arrayed? The meaning therefore of this rejection, as it applies to the Christian world, is clearly that though he had been called to the Marriage Feast—though the Gospel had been preached to him, and he had professed his faith and acceptance of it; yet he had not arrayed his soul in the requisite virtues and graces of Christianity—he was not "renewed in the spirit of his mind, nor had put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." *—He had not "put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, and above all these things charity, which is the bond of perfectness." † He was not "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." ‡

* Eph. iv. 23, 24. † Col. iii. 12, 14. ‡ Dr. Hammond's paraphrase on this passage, as applying to the first converts to Christianity, is so just that I shall, without
As religion is born in the soul, and there sustained by faith and love, if from a defect of these apology, transcribe it.—"When this is done, the feast furnished with guests, the Gospel received by the Gentiles, then shall Christ come to visit, and discern whether all come in to this feast in such manner as is required. If any man that continues in his sins, his heathen practices, crowd in under that profession, Christ will expostulate with him, and show him the great unreasonableness of this, and he shall never be able to plead any excuse in this matter, but fall under the terrible sentence of Christ as a judge, and be delivered up to the officers or serjeants for a sad and direful execution."

Whitby is very singular in his exposition of this text. Faith, he observes, cannot be the wedding garment; since to receive the invitation, and come to the wedding supper, must import believing. He therefore conjectures that we are to understand the false brethren of the Jews, who endeavoured to retain the Law of Moses; and by this subverted men's souls. On all occasions Whitby bends the parables too exclusively to the Jews—not always remembering that they are prophecies of the mysteries of the kingdom of God; and that therefore they frequently allude both to the progress of the Gospel, and the graces befitting Christians for that blessed dispensation.

As the parable applies to Christians generally, Calvin's interpretation of the wedding garment in this passage seems unobjectionable. "It is needless to dispute about the wedding garment, whether it be faith, or a pious holy life. For neither can faith be separated from good works, nor can good works proceed except from faith. Christ's meaning is only that we are called in order that we may be renewed in our minds after his image." Claiming our own interpretation of these words, inasmuch as they neither express nor deny our free agency, we cannot but agree with them, as well as with the comment of one of the most amiable of Calvin's disciples. "God requires," says Dr. Doddridge, "holiness in order to our receiving the benefits of the Gospel, but is graciously pleased to work it in us by his Holy Spirit; and therefore may justly resent, and punish our rejection
vital principles, Christians do not apply to all the positive institutions of the Gospel as the ordinary means and vehicles of grace, they can hardly expect that they will be among the "few names which have not defiled their garments."* This rejection of the man without the wedding garment is for instance very commonly, and very justly applied to such as habitually neglect, or unworthily receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, the tree of life, the sign of that life and immortality purchased for us by the blood of the Redeemer, the second Adam. It was from a similar feast in the parable that the unworthy guest was rejected: and unless Christians frequently and worthily receive the spiritual graces conveyed by that blessed sacrament, how can they expect to "walk with Christ in white; for they are not worthy."*

Such unworthy persons are rejected, and cast into outer darkness: "for," the parable concludes, "many are called, but few are chosen." In the parable of the Labourers hired into the vineyard,† which concludes with these words, they apply to the Jews only. But ‡ commentators differ with respect to the ap-

* Rev. iii. 4.

† See Section 11. of this Chapter.

‡ This text referred, c. xx. 16, to the Jews; here it relates also to the Gentiles, and imports that many shall be admitted to the Christian Religion, but few into the Kingdom of Heaven. Taking the whole together, God will offer his religion to many of the Jews, and of the Gentiles, who will reject it; and of those in general who receive it, few will be deemed worthy disciples:
plication of the same words in this parable. They unquestionably apply to the Jews in the first place; but in a secondary sense they must apply to Christians. Although "a remnant" of the Jews certainly accepted the invitation to the heavenly feast of the Gospel, the wedding was chiefly furnished with guests from the Gentiles. Of these one was unworthy and was rejected. The Jews, we must suppose, had been already rejected. Whosoever therefore, whether Jew or Gentile, receives the Gospel from the lip outward, and not inwardly in the heart, is already rejected from the benefits and privileges of the Christian Dispensation; and unless he repent, he will be finally rejected from eternal happiness and glory:

(Le Clerc.) Theophylact, Grotius, and Whitby confine it to the Jews. See Hammond's Commentary on Matt. xx. 16. c. and I Pet. ii. 6. for an exposition of the various passages, both in the Old and New Testament, of this kind. Valpy's Annot. vol. i. p. 342.

The following passage of a very original writer, who looks upon the parables, as they are regarded in this work, as prophetical, is worth the reader's attention:—"The field, the good seed, the tares, the mixture suffered to remain unto the harvest—these are no ordinary likenesses—no definite enunciations, once appointed to be verified, but since daily fulfilled only by accident!" Again: "The marriage feast, the general invitation, not given until all things were now ready, the shifting and hypocritical excuses, and finally the intrusion of unfit guests after all—these cannot be mere protests, and records of condemnation, against the Jews; but general, and recurring, and pregnant testimonies of the case between the Almighty and his people, through all the generations of those, who, on the failing of the natural branches through unbelief, were grafted in by faith." Miller's Bampton Lectures, p. 140.
"for many are called, but few are chosen." But, says our Lord, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."*  

* Rev. iii. 5.
CHAPTER VII.

PARABLES WHEREBY CHRIST DESIGNATES HIMSELF.

SECTION I.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again,
Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly: I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."*

There is no designation in the Scriptures by which the relation between God and his church is so frequently marked as by that of the pastor in con-

* John x. 1—18.
nexion with his flock, or the shepherd with his sheep. A brief examination of some of these passages in the Hebrew Scriptures, will form a very appropriate introduction to the exposition of the beautiful parable of the Good Shepherd. Without some such preliminary inquiry, we shall not understand the full import of the parable, and its perfect harmony with scriptural language.

In the first ages of mankind pasturage of flocks was a principal employment of men, and in their sheep and goats consisted all their property. The first type of the Messiah as the crucified Redeemer, the righteous Abel, was a keeper or feeder of sheep.* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, followed the same occupation. The children of Jacob, or Israel, were therefore allotted the land of Goshen,† which had been previously occupied by the Arabian shepherds,‡

* Gen. iv. 2.

† When Joseph presented his brethren to Pharaoh, the king said unto them, “What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers. They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” Pharaoh complies with their request. Gen. xlvi. 3—6. The reader will find some valuable observations on the occupations of the Hebrews, from the earliest times until and after the conquest of Canaan, in Dr. Russell’s “Connection of Sacred and Profane History,” vol. i. p. 224.

‡ In the beautiful history of Joseph we read that “the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.” Gen. xliii. 32. The Pastor kings, or Arabian shepherds, had subjugated and tyrannized
when Jacob and his family were invited into Egypt by Pharaoh, while Joseph was the executive head of over Egypt, and were but just expelled when the Israelites came into that country, and inhabited the land of Goshen, in which the Arabians had fed their flocks. Hence the disgust of the Egyptians to the Hebrews arose from their occupation: "For every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." Gen. xlvi. 34. "It was not," says Bryant, "a bare dislike, but an abhorrence; which must have arisen in great measure from the cruel treatment the Egyptians had experienced. Some indeed, among whom is Theodoret, imagine that their antipathy was owing to the different customs of the two nations: the shepherd's occupation being to rear and tend sheep, which they sacrificed and fed on; while the Egyptians abstained from this food, and held it in abhorrence." This custom of abstinence, however, Bryant shows, by the testimony of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, could never have been the cause of universal abhorrence; for in many parts, it is certain, they fed on sheep. Besides, Pharaoh himself kept large flocks, which Grotius supposes was for the wool. But that is very improbable. The sacrifice of blood, and of animals held sacred by the Egyptians, was very probably the abomination of the Egyptians mentioned by Moses, Exod. viii. 26.

"This made the Egyptians dislike shepherds; not their occupation; for nothing was more innocent or necessary. Besides, they had flocks of their own, and consequently people to tend them. But they disliked foreign shepherds on account of their different rites and customs: which hatred must have arisen from an intimate intercourse: for we do not abominate what we are little acquainted with. We may dislike at a distance, and disapprove: but this was a total abhorrence. It was a general and national disgust; to promote which, many things must have concurred. In the first place, the Egyptians were a fastidious people from the beginning; and held every nation but their own in low esteem. Βασιλεύς ἔπες ταύτες ὁ Αἰγύπτιοι καλεούσι τούς μη σφιτὶ ὄμογλωσσος.* This contempt was carried into

* Herod. lib. ii. cap. 158. See also lib. ii. cap. 41. Gen. xliii. 32.
that powerful kingdom. We afterwards find David, from whose family the Messiah was to spring, following the same occupation of a shepherd.* Hence the following message to that favoured king:—"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel."† The first scriptural sense of the word shepherd is, therefore, one who takes care of a flock of sheep—who provides them with a good pasture, and protects them against external injuries by wild beasts or other accidents.

The simple habits and few occupations of the primitive inhabitants of the earth furnished the scanty elements of human language; and hence we find in the Hebrew language and Scriptures a fewness of words and a sameness of imagery. The implements of husbandry and the pastoral employment, the ploughshare and the shepherd's crook, or rod, and the pastoral staff, of the first sons of Adam, are the almost solitary figures of the inspired volume,

a disgust by the contrariety in their religious customs: and this still heightened and embittered by the tyranny of the Pastor kings, and the cruel usage that the Egyptians experienced from them; particularly when they broke down the shrines of their gods, and overturned their altars. Hence arose that fixed hatred we have been speaking of, which was prior to the coming of the Israelites. "For every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians" before they knew Joseph. Gen. xlvi. 34. Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology, vol. vi. p. 165—177. See a paragraph, introduced into the text of Stackhouse's History of the Bible, by the learned editor, Bishop Gleig, on the charge of Joseph to his brethren, that they were spies, vol. i. p. 402.

* 1 Sam. xvi. 11—13. † 2 Sam. vii. 8. Ps. lxxviii. 70.
which are drawn from the habits of men, and contrasted with the weapons of war and the wild beasts of the forest. These images, and the sublime and beautiful objects of nature with which the occupations of agriculturists, and especially of shepherds, constantly familiarized the prophets and inspired poets of the Old Testament, form all the machinery of those exquisite specimens of the beautiful, the affecting, and the sublime, to be found in the sacred writings of the Hebrews. Thus, for instance, the peaceful reign of the Messiah is depicted by the following delightful images. "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."* "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."† The power of God over his creatures is expressed by "the sweet Psalmist of Israel" in the same figurative style and the same images. "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine."‡

The secondary meaning, therefore, of the scriptural Shepherd applies to God, the Jehovah, Jehovah-Elohim, and Jehovah-Angel, of the Hebrew Scriptures, who, as we have already shown in other instances,§ and shall likewise prove in the present

* Isa. ii. 4. † Ib. xi. 6. ‡ Ps. I. 10, 11. § Sect. IV. of Chap. VI. supra.
instance, is identified with the Messiah of the Old, and the Christ of the New Testament. The third application of the term is made to the prophets of the Old Testament, and the doctors of the Law and the Levitical priesthood, and to the ministers of the Gospel.

In the twenty-third Psalm, God is thus beautifully represented as the faithful Shepherd of his people. "Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."* The Hebrew Scriptures, especially the Psalms, furnish almost innumerable examples of this designation of Jehovah. That Jesus Christ, "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," is to be identified with the Divine Shepherd of the Psalmist in the beautiful words just cited, will be shown in the ensuing exposition of the parable of the Good Shepherd. Before, however, I proceed to this exposition, I cannot deny myself, nor my readers, the pleasure of the following passage from the elegant pen of the accomplished Bishop Horne on the first two verses of the twenty-third Psalm:

"In these words, which one cannot utter without feeling the happiness they were intended to describe, the believer is taught to express his absolute acquiescence and complacency in the guardian care of the great Pastor of the universe, the Redeemer and Preserver of men. With joy he reflects, that

*Ps. xxiii. 1, 2. See also Ps. lxxiv. 1. lxxviii. 52. lxxix. 13. xc v. 7. c. 3. cxix. 176.
he hath a 'Shepherd;' and that that Shepherd is JEHOVAH, one possessed of all the qualities requisite to constitute the pastoral character in the highest perfection.

"The loveliest image afforded by the natural world, is here (verse 2.) represented to the imagination; that of a flock, feeding in verdant meadows, and reposing, in quietness, by the rivers of water, running gently through them. It is selected, to convey an idea of the provision made for the souls, as well as bodies of men, by His goodness, who 'openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness.' "By me," saith the Redeemer, "if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." And what saith the Spirit of peace and comfort? 'Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' Everyone flock that we see should remind us of our necessities; and every pasture should excite us to praise that love by which they are so bountifully supplied."

We will now proceed to the parable of the Good Shepherd, as delivered by our Lord and applied to himself.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep

* John x. 9.  
† Rev. xxii. 17.
by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

The parable commences with a description, by contrast, of the false and of the true shepherd. The sheep were all gathered into the fold at night, lest they should stray; and there was one large door by which the sheep and the shepherds entered. All other modes of entry must be by stealth or violence, and could be made for no good purpose.† Another circumstance proper to the story, and which

* John x. 1—5.
† There was in the sheepfold one larger door which gave ingress and egress to the flock and shepherds, and a lesser, by which the lambs passed out for tything. Lightfoot's Works, fol. vol. ii. p. 575.

Sir Isaac Newton apprehends, that the sheep kept in the fold for the sacrifices, near the Temple, gave occasion to the parable; and that Christ here alludes to what was peculiar in these folds, that in them the door, being kept locked, excluded not only the thief, but the shepherd, till opened. But the leading out the sheep to pasture, does not agree with that circumstance: nor is it a probable image to compare the people of God to sheep kept in a fold or pen to be sacrificed. In these countries, infested by wild beasts, the fold probably was in general secured by a door, and a servant or porter left to watch in the night; whilst the chief shepherd came to lead them out to pasture in the morning. Doddridge's Expositor, vol. ii. p. 204. Sir I. Newton on Daniel, p. 148. Valpy's Annot. vol. iii. p. 103.

I have passed over the various expositions of the Porter, which are rather fanciful than real or important. Grotius properly leaves it unexplained as a part of the description.
harmonizes with the manners of the East, is the calling the sheep by name, which hear and obey the voice of the shepherd. In Judea, and throughout the East, the sheep were accustomed to follow the shepherd, instead of being driven before him, according to modern usage.* "The sheep hear his voice—he calleth them by name—he leadeth them out." Thus in the Psalmist: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."†

The true shepherd in this parable is he who entereth in by the door, whose voice the sheep know and follow. The false shepherd is he who "climbeth up some other way;" the thief and the robber;‡ the stranger whose voice the sheep know not, and whom they will not follow. The first is the description of the Messiah, as we shall presently prove from the Scriptures: the second represents the Scribes.

*Shepherds had names for their sheep, which answered to them as dogs and horses do with us, following to the pasture ground, and whithersoever the shepherds thought fit to lead them. The custom also was to lead the sheep, playing on some musical instrument. Macknight's Harmony, vol. ii. p. 455. Doddridge's Expos. vol. ii. p. 205. See also Hammond on John vi. 37. and on this part of the parable.

† Ps. xxiii. 2.

‡ "In Talmudic language, 'Who is a thief?' He that takes away another man's goods, when the owner is not privy to it, as when a man puts his hand into another man's pocket, and takes away his money, the man not seeing him; but if he takes it away openly, publicly, and by force, this is not a thief, but a robber. Not κλέπτης, but λῃστής. Maimon." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 575. fol.
and Pharisees, and other doctors of the Law, of the various sects that distracted God's people, and introduced unhallowed doctrines, which were altogether unsanctioned by the inspired word of God.

Our Lord had been reproving the Pharisees, in the preceding chapter, who, with much scorn and haughtiness, said unto him, "Are we blind also?" Jesus tells them that if they had been blind, they would have had no sin: but, because they said, "we see," and boasted of their superior knowledge, their sin remained, and could not be removed by his atonement. He then points out their sin by the parable of the Good Shepherd, in which they are the thieves and robbers, the strangers and the hirelings. But they understood him not, until he spoke more plainly of himself.

"This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door:* by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they

* Pure Israelitism among the Jews was the fold and the door, and all things. For if any one was of the seed of Israel, and the stock of Abraham, it was enough (themselves being the judges,) for such an one to be made a sheep, admitted into the flock, and fed and nourished to eternal life. But in Christ's flock, the sheep had another original, introduction, and mark.—Lightfoot.
might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

As there was but one regular door whereby the shepherd and the sheep could enter the literal sheepfold, Christ describes himself to be the door, or the only regular and possible entrance into the spiritual fold, of which he was also the Shepherd. In his Divine nature he had always been the Shepherd of his people. But he was now, by his incarnation, the door, the means of effecting an entrance for the faithful into the kingdom of God. Nor did he lose his character of Shepherd, as he afterwards declares; for he laid down his life for the sheep. Dr. Hammond thus explains it in his paraphrase:—"I am the door, that is, the only way for the sheep, the true servants of God, to enter by, into that fold, the Church, where all are to live regularly, and not to go out or depart from Christ."

The next passage—"that all before him were thieves and robbers," has been differently explained: but the true sense will appear sufficiently plain when it is considered to whom he addressed the parable. Hammond and Whitby think that those impostors, such as Theudas and Judas Gaulonitis mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles† and by Josephus,‡ who assumed the character of Messiah, are here intended. Grotius supposes that such as these persons may be meant; but that they only fascinated and led the people to insurrection, and did not lay claim to the high character of Messiah.

The learned Lightfoot, however, and he is followed by Macknight,* so far agrees with Grotius, that neither Judas Gaulonitis, nor the Theudas in the Acts, claimed to be the Messiah, nor perhaps did any impostor before the advent of the true Messiah. He refers the passage to the three shepherds, mentioned by the prophet Zechariah,†—"those shepherds that had wasted and corrupted the flock, and who, when the true Shepherd of the sheep should reveal himself, would do the like again." These three shepherds he considers to be "the principals and chief heads of sects, and the leaders of the people, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes."‡

* Macknight, however, would give a different import to προ ἐμοῦ, and explains it as coming into his presence to tempt him; προ being applied to place as well as to time; as Acts v. 23, προ ᾿Ωνος. Luke vii. 27, προ προσωπου. But this, it is observed justly, appears a forced construction in the present text. Macknight Harm. vol. ii. p. 457. Valpy's Annot. vol. iii. p. 104.

† Zech. xi. 8.

‡ "Our Saviour speaks agreeably with the Scripture, where, when there is any mention of the coming of this great Shepherd to undertake the charge of the flock, the evil shepherds, that do not feed but destroy the flock, are accused. Jer. xxiii. 1, &c. Ezek. xxxiv. 2, &c. Zech. xi. 16. And our Saviour strikes at these three shepherds that hated him, and were hated by him, (the Pharisees,) the Sadducees, and Essenes, under whose conduct the nation had been so erroneously led for some ages. I should have believed that these words 'All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers,' might be understood of those, who having arrogated to themselves the name of the Messiah, obtruded themselves upon the people; but that we shall hardly, or not at all, find an instance of any that ever did so before the true Messiah came. After his coming, it is true, there were many that assumed the name and title, but before it, hardly
This opinion is much confirmed by the consideration that our Lord was at this time conversing with the leaders of one of the principal sects, the Pharisees, and was frequently brought in contact with the Sadducees. The Essenes were a sect of ascetics, and did not mix generally with the people: and this will account for the silence of the authors of the inspired books of the New Testament respecting this sect. But they unquestionably contributed to the diffusion of erroneous doctrines among the Jews; and their mode of life, like that of Christian monks, rendered them useless members of that society which was instituted by God, and which every man is bound to support. The false doctrines of the Sadducees, who denied the existence of a future state and of angels and spiritual substances,*—and the corrupt practices, and preference of tradition to the authority of the inspired Scriptures, of the Pharisees, were more notorious, and the frequent subject of our Lord's severe reprobation.†

one. Judas the Galilean, did not arrive to that impudence, as you have his story in Josephus. Nor yet Theudas, by any thing that can be gathered from the words of Gamaliel, Acts v." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 573. fol.—Lightfoot has an elaborate note to prove that the three shepherds of Zechariah, the heads of the three great Jewish sects, are here intended. See his Works as above, p. 573. See also Lowth on Zech. xi. 7, 8.

* Acts xxiii. 7, 8.

† "At this time there were three sects among the Jews, who had different opinions concerning human actions; the one was called the sect of the Pharisees,—another the sect of the Sadducees, and the other the sect of the Essenes. Now for the Pharisees, they say that some actions, but not all, are the work of fate, and
But if the passages of the prophets of the Old Testament, to which our Lord is supposed to refer, be consulted, we can hardly entertain for a moment the opinion that any particular impostors are intended, whatever might have been their pretensions. We have already seen that the scriptural denomination of a Shepherd applied first to God, and next to the servants and ministers of God. The thieves and robbers may therefore be both those who had abused some of them are in our own power, and that they are liable to fate, but are not caused by fate. But the sect of Essenes affirm, that fate governs all things, and that nothing befals man but what is according to its determination. And for the Sadducees, they take away fate, and say there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs are not at its disposal, but they suppose that all our actions are in our own power, so that we are ourselves the causes of what is good, and receive what is evil from our own folly.” (Whiston’s Josephus Antiq. B. xiii. c. v. sect. 9.)

Josephus describes these sects again more fully in the first chapter of the 18th book of the Antiquities; and in the 8th chapter of the 2d book of the Jewish War, in which he gives an extended account of the Essenes; and of the other two he thus speaks:—

“<The Pharisees are those who are esteemed most skilful in the explication of their Laws. These ascribe all to fate, (or Providence,) and to God, and yet allow, that to act what is right, or the contrary, is principally in the power of man; although fate does co-operate in every action. They say that all souls are incorruptible, but that the souls of good men only are removed into other bodies, but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment. But the Sadducees take away fate entirely, and suppose that God is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil; and they say, that to act what is good, or what is evil, is of men’s own choice, and that the one or the other belongs to every one, that they may act as they please. They also take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades.”
the legitimate office of governing and teaching
the people, and those who have assumed the office
irregularly, and climbed into the sheepfold by an-
other entrance than the regular door. In the tenth
and eleventh chapters of the prophet Zechariah, the
rulers of the Jews are designated shepherds. "Mine
anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I pu-
nished the goats." * This text is thus explained by
an excellent commentator. "I was justly displeased
with the Jewish rulers, both ecclesiastical and civil,
as I have severely threatened them by my prophets,
before the captivity, which came upon the whole na-
ton as a judgment for their sins, especially upon
those wicked Jews who were their instruments in
oppressing the people." † In the eleventh chapter
the Messiah is represented as the Great Shepherd of
Israel. "Amongst all the places of the Old Testa-
ment,—says Lightfoot,—which mention this Great
Shepherd, there is no one doth so exactly describe
him and his pastoral work as the eleventh chapter
of the prophet Zechary." ‡ The one true, and the
three false shepherds are thus described. "And I
will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor
of the flock." § But the prophet adds, in the person

* Zech. x. 3. † See Lowth on the place.
§ "And—the verse goes on,—I took unto me two slaves; the
one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bonds; and I fed the
flock." A staff or crook is the proper ensign of the shepherd.
The shepherds of old times had two rods or staves; one turned
round at top, that it might not hurt the sheep; this was for
counting them, and separating the sound from the diseased:
of Messiah, the Great Shepherd—"Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me."* Some commentators explain these shepherds to be the chief priests, Scribes, and elders of the Jews.† Among these, however, were always to be found the heads of two of the sects, the Sadducees and Pharisees. There are two other parallel passages in the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, wherein the rulers of Israel are designated as false shepherds. In the former, the denunciation of these pastors forms the introduction to the splendid prediction of the restoration of the scattered flock under the Great Shepherd, who is there called "Jehovah our Righteousness." ‡

Levit. xxvii. 32; the other had an iron hook at the end of it, to pull in the stray sheep, and hold them fast, while the shepherd corrected them. The Psalmist mentions both these—"Thy rod and thy staff comfort me." Ps. xxiii. 4. The staff of Beauty signified our Saviour. The other staff, called "Bonds," signified the bond of the new covenant. See Lowth in loc.

"This Great Shepherd broke that covenant that had been made and confirmed with that people, ver. 10. 'I took my staff, which was called Beauty, and I cut it off, that I might break my covenant which I made with all people.'—i.e. with the ten tribes and the two tribes." Lightfoot ut supra.

* Zech. xi. 7, 8.
† See Lowth in loc. But Lightfoot interprets them of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes: "which interpretation, though it cannot but sound very unpleasingly in Jewish ears, yet is what seems abundantly confirmed, both from the context and the history of things." See Lightfoot.
‡ "He shall really be what the title imports. (See note on Isa. vii. 14.) He shall be Jehovah, or the true God, and 'our Righteousness,' or the means of our justification. Comp. Isa.
The person so designated is not indeed in this passage called a shepherd; but the Messiah, who is unquestionably meant, is elsewhere called the shepherd, as by Zechariah; * and his office of pastor is clearly to be inferred from the description of the unfaithful shepherds with which the chapter commences.† "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord." In his sermon on the mount our Lord has a similar figure, by which he depicts false prophets. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."‡ They come in the garb of shepherds to destroy the flock which they should feed—they are "thieves and robbers."

In no sense therefore could the impostors who came before Christ, whether they assumed the Messiahship, or merely desired to raise an insurrection for their own pre-eminence, be compared, or rather contrasted, with the blessed Jesus as the good Shepherd. But they who had, or who assumed the office of pastors of the people, in a civil or ecclesiastical

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xliv. 24, 25. I Cor. i. 30. The title of Jehovah is elsewhere given to the Messiah by the prophets. See Isa. xl. 10. xlviii. 17. Hos. i. 7. Zech. ii. 10, 11. Mal. iii. 1." Lowth.

* Particularly in ver. 16 of chap. xi.

† Jer. xxiii. 1—6. See also Ezek. xxxiv. passim.

‡ Matt. vii. 15.
capacity, or in both,—for in the Jewish state they were united,—are very properly contrasted with that good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep. They had abused their sacred office, and were as "the thief which cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." But Christ came that they who were his sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly—a more abundant pasture. This may be expounded in a higher sense, of the excellency of the Gospel above the Law, in the following words of the Apostle. "The letter (of the Law) killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" *

"I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." †

The Divinity of Christ is the necessary inference from a comparison of the several texts of the Old Testament, in which Jehovah assumes to himself that office of the good Shepherd, whom our Lord declares himself to be, and in the precise sense of

* 2 Cor. iii. 6—8.  † John x. 11—13.
the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures. The first and most striking passage of this kind is in the fortieth chapter of the prophet Isaiah, which I shall cite from the elegant translation of Bishop Lowth, which has been already referred to in this work.

'Behold, the Lord JEHOVAH shall come against the strong one,
And his arm shall prevail over him.
Behold, his reward is with him, and the recompense of his work before him.
Like a SHEPHERD shall he feed his flock;
In his arm shall he gather up the lambs,
And shall bear them in his bosom; the nursing ewes shall he gently lead.'*†

The same Lord JEHOVAH, who is so frequently described by the Psalmist as "the Shepherd of Israel who leadeth Joseph like a flock"—who is "our

* Isa. xl. 10, 11.
† "The nursing ewes shall he gently lead." A beautiful image, expressing, with the utmost propriety as well as elegance, the tender attention of the shepherd to his flock. That the greatest care in driving the cattle in regard to their dams and their young was necessary, appears from Jacob's apology to his brother Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 13. 'The flocks and the herds giving suck to their young are with me; and if they should be over-driven, all the flock would die.' Which is set in a still stronger light by the following remark of Sir John Chardin:—"Their flocks," (says he, speaking of those who now live in the East after the patriarchal manner,) "feed down the places of their encampment so quick, by the great numbers that they have, that they are obliged to remove them too often; which is very destructive to their flocks on account of the young ones, who have not strength enough to follow." Harmer's Observ. i. p. 126. Bp. Lowth's notes on Isaiah, vol. ii. p. 259.
Maker, our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand"*—is also described by the prophets to "feed his flock like a shepherd," and the same is the office of the Messiah, who declares himself to be the "good Shepherd" who "came" into the world to "seek and save that which was lost," and "bringeth home the wandering sheep upon his shoulders rejoicing."† In one word, the Jehovah of the Hebrew Scriptures and Jesus Christ are plainly identified by these similitudes to be the same person. In no other way can the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament be consistently reconciled.

It should moreover be remembered, that the whole of this beautiful chapter, which commences with the "Voice crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah," is prophetic of the kingdom of the Messiah, which is here declared "the way of Jehovah," in the words uttered by St. John the Baptist. The tenderness of the imagery of the eleventh verse, in which the Messiah is described as a shepherd feeding his flock,—gathering up the lambs in his arms, and bearing them in his bosom, and gently leading the nursing ewes,"—all this was beautifully fulfilled in "the good Shepherd," who "laid down his life for the sheep." His care and tenderness of his flock we experience every hour of our existence.

The prophet Ezekiel describes the Messiah in two

* Ps. xxii. 1. lxxx. 1. xcvi. 7.
† See W. Lowth's Commentary on Isaiah, xl. 11.
places, in his human character, by the name of David, as a shepherd and a king. David's first employment was that of a shepherd; and he was taken from the sheepcote to be made king over Israel, "And I will set up one shepherd* over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd."†

In the New Testament we find this designation uniformly adopted in reference to Christ. In the epistle to the Hebrews, he is called by the inspired author—"Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep," whom "the God of peace brought again from the dead."‡ St. Peter calls him "the Shepherd and Bishop of souls."§ And in his directions to the ministers and governors of the Church, he promises to those who rightly "feed the flock of God," that, "when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."||

This is "the good Shepherd," who "giveth his life for the sheep."

"The hireling," who "fleeth," when he "seeth the wolf coming," is not he who receives a suitable maintenance from his flock; for of this he is declared to be worthy by the ordinance of Christ. It

* "One shepherd;" rather, "a single shepherd," in opposition both to many shepherds at one time, and a succession of shepherds in different times. Bishop Horsley, Bib. Crit. vol. iii. p. 216.

† Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24. ‡ Heb. xiii. 20. § 1 Pet. ii. 25. || Ib. v. 4.
is either the intruder, who has no right to become an overseer of the flock;* or it is he, who, though it is his duty to take care of the flock at the hazard of his life, neglects his charge, (as the Pharisees with whom our Lord was discoursing,) like a common hireling, at the approach of danger. But, says our blessed Lord,

"I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."†

While Christ testifies his obedience to his Father in laying down his life for the sheep, he plainly declares himself equal to, or "one with the Father." He obeys the will of the Father from their mutual knowledge of each other. But Christ tells them that it is not only for the house of Israel that he lays down his life, but for the Gentiles also.

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this

* "The hireling here intended is not he who receives maintenance from his particular flock, for this he may do by virtue of Christ's ordinances, 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. (of this, saith Christ, 'he is worthy,' Luke x. 7.) and much less he who labours among them, with respect to that recompense, or crown of glory, he is to receive, 'when the chief Shepherd shall appear;' but, he who is an intruder, 'whose own the sheep are not;' who intends not their good so much as his own profit; and who in time of danger flies for his own safety, not caring though the wolf tear and devour them. Hence, also, we may learn, that a true pastor must not desert his flock in time of peril, when by his absence they may be brought into great peril, and by his presence may be happily preserved from it." Whitby's Commentary, vol. i. p. 468. 4to.

† John x. 14, 15.
fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

The Oriental custom of the shepherds calling their sheep, and leading them out, has been mentioned. But the Gentiles, people of all nations, could not, in the same sense as the children of Israel, who had so long been the peculiar flock of God, be called his sheep; for though they should "hear the voice" of the Shepherd, they could not recognize it like the old flock. They are therefore called "other sheep;" and although they cannot possibly remember a voice which they have never heard, yet their minds shall be so prepared, as we know the minds of men were by the Divine Providence prepared for the advent of the Messiah, that they shall hear and obey the voice of the great Shepherd;† they shall be brought into the fold;

* John x. 16.
† "The sheep here cannot be understood to be believers or disciples of Christ, for these are supposed to be sheep before Christ the Shepherd comes to them, and in that to be denominated sheep, that they hear the true Shepherd's voice, when he comes, and so cannot be they that have already received him, as believers must have done; and accordingly of the thieves and robbers that came before Christ it is said, the sheep did not hear them. By all which it is evident that the sheep are a sort of men, not yet considered as Christians, but such as are apt to believe in the true Messias when he comes, and so to follow him, as knowing his voice: which last expression is a key to open the meaning of the parable, and resolve who the sheep are. God the Father is, in the αὐταπόδωσις or moral, the chief Shepherd, that is, the owner or master of the sheep, (as among the Jews men kept their own sheep,) and the sheep are those that are best
and henceforth "there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." All men were originally of one fold, and of one church, from which they had been for

resembled by that emblem, the honest and humble-hearted men, that by the revelation of God's will, and some measure of grace afforded, before the coming of Christ, have been formed into all probity and humility of manners, living either as Zachary and divers others are said to do, \textit{walking in the ways of God blameless}, or else, after an ill life, recovered by repentance; and these are so well acquainted with the ways of God, that when any false Christ or impostor, (or true servant, abusing his trust by false principles,) comes with infusion of impiety or wickedness, they discern them to be contrary to godliness, and so will not hearken to them; but when Christ the true Shepherd (for his \textit{Father and he are one}, ver. 30.) cometh, and that, as with Divine miracles to attest his mission, so with doctrines of piety perfectly agreeable to that which they formerly practised as the will of God, and only more elevated, and of higher perfection, Matt. v. than those,—discerning the agreeableness of his doctrines with those which they have already received from God, and the addition of all the heavenly promises, which agree with the notion which they had of God as a rewarder, they know him to be the \textit{Messias}, the Shepherd which God hath promised to send them, that is, \textit{God Himself}, (not any hired Servant, whose own the sheep are not, ver. 12. but) the true Shepherd, who is the owner of the sheep; and that is the meaning of their \textit{knowing his voice}, upon which it is that they follow him, whereas strangers they fly from, and \textit{do not know their voice.}" Hammond's Annotations on John vi. 27. Works, vol. iii. p. 287, fol.

The above able comment on the import of "the sheep hearing the voice" of the Shepherd, strictly coincides with the principle of the exposition of the parable in the text, in which \textit{Christ}, and \textit{Jehovah}, the true Shepherd, are identified as the same person. \textit{Messiah, the Shepherd}, is declared by Dr. Hammond to be \textit{God Himself}: and such He must be, if the Old and New Testaments are at all reconcileable.
ages separated, when God, for the preservation of true religion, prepared the way for the Redeemer by the call of Abraham. His descendants had for many ages constituted the only visible Church. They were the only flock, and the Lord Jehovah was their Shepherd. But Christ was the "good Shepherd" who would bring all the earth into one fold. "We were," as Peter* expresses it, as "sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls." All who now hear his voice, "when the Great Shepherd shall appear," at the day of judgment, "shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."†

The parable concludes with the declaration of Christ's perfect obedience to the Father as a man, but of his Almighty power as God. How these can subsist together we can no farther understand than it is revealed to us. But to separate one from the other is to distort the language from its ordinary construction—language in itself as wonderful for its simplicity, as the momentous truths which it expresses are stupendous in their sublimity. The Mediator between God and man obeyed the commandment which he had received from his Father,

* 1 Pet. ii. 25.  † John x. 17, 18.
and as a man laid down his life for the sheep: but as the Divine Shepherd, the Lord Jehovah the Shepherd of Israel, this is a voluntary act of love, because "he careth for the sheep." "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."*

*The original word, rendered "power," ἐξουσία, in this text, has been attempted to be perverted to the meaning of "authority" in the Unitarian Version. For a refutation of this perversion of a text so plainly declaring the Divinity of Christ, the reader is referred to an able note in Archbishop Magee's work on the Atonement, vol. ii. p. 516. I shall, however, make a few extracts of the substance of that elaborate note, which no candid scholar can peruse without conviction.

"Trommius, Biel, and Schleusner assign to the word ἐξουσία, besides the species of power implied by the terms authority, privilege, and delegated commission, the sense of power generally, in its fullest and strongest import; and support the sense of the word by numerous examples.—' 1. Vis et potestas efficiendi aliquid, facultas.'—' 2. Libertas agendi, quae et Latinis potestas dicitur.'—' 3. Auctoritas, &c.'—' 4. Licentia agendi et faciendi, jus.'—Schleusner.—Trommius and Biel, also, in their researches into the application of the word by the Seventy and the other Greek interpreters of the O. T., can discover in their use of it no other meanings than 'Potestas, Dominium, Imperium, Dominatio.'

"In Luke xii. 5, when our Lord warns the multitude, that they should fear him, 'who, after he had killed, had Power (ἐξουσίαν) to cast into hell;' I would ask, whether this power is here spoken of as belonging to the Father, or to the Son: if to the Father, by whom was it delegated; and if to the Son, what must
Every humble Christian may therefore express his confidence in the grace of God, in the exquisite language of the inspired Psalmist and Prophet:—

"Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside still waters. He restor eth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his

be the nature of the Being to whom so vast a power is ascribed?—Again, in Acts xxvi. 18. when St. Paul is appointed to turn sinners ' from the Power of Satan unto God;' when in Romans ix. 21, it is asked whether ' the potter ' hath not ' Power over the clay ;' and when Revel. xx. 6, we are told of those, ' over whom the second death had no Power ;' are we, in all these cases, to look to an authority conferred, or commission delegated? The word εξουσία is that which is employed in these, as well as in numerous other passages, in which to apply the phrase authority, or delegated commission, would only excite laughter at the expense of the critic.—But to come more decisively to the point: we have, in the book of Daniel, the rendering of it, both by Theodotion, (iii. 33. and iv. 31.) and by the Seventy, (iii. 33. and iv. 34. Chig. MS. Holmes.) the word εξουσία attributed to the most High God, and applied to express that power and dominion, which he was to exercise over all the nations of the earth, and which was to be everlasting. In Acts i. 7, we are told of the ' Seasons which the Father hath put (επί τῷ θεῷ εξουσία) in his own Power.'"

In Bishop Pearce's Commentary on John i. 12, there is the following enumeration of the meanings of εξουσία, which the Archbishop adduces in the Note whence these extracts are made, and with which I shall conclude. "The word εξουσία signifies power in general; sometimes a natural power, sometimes an usurped power, and sometimes a power given by human or divine laws: and in this last case it is best rendered by a right or privilege, as it should be in 1 Cor. ix. 4, 5, 6. and perhaps in Matt. vii. 29. and Mark i. 22."
Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.”*

SECTION II.

THE TRUE VINE.

“I AM the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”†

In a previous part of this work‡ we have remarked the frequent allegorical representation of

* Ps. xxiii. 1—4. † John xv. 1—8. ‡ Chapter VI. Section IV.
Judah and Israel under the figures of a vine and a vineyard. Of the passages in the Psalms and Prophets there referred to,* and used likewise by commentators in illustration of the present parable, I shall now cite but one from the prophet Jeremiah:† —“I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then,” asks Jehovah, “art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?”‡

The Hebrew people had hitherto been God’s peculiar care, the noble vine which was brought out of Egypt, and planted by the Divine hand in the fruitful soil of Judea—which had been nourished by the sun, and watered by the dew of heaven; but notwithstanding that it had been so “noble a vine, so wholly a right seed,” it was now become a “degenerate plant of a strange vine”—it was to be cast out into the forest, as no longer the stock from whence the church derived its nurture. Instead of the church of Israel, on which the worship of the true God had been grafted, the profession of Christ was henceforth to be the source and well-spring of all our future life, and of all our knowledge of the true God. Hence our Lord begins the parable with this declaration:—

“I am the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman.”

As the vine spreads fruitfulness over all her branches, and by her fruits refreshes the hearts of

* Ps. lxxx. 8. Isa. v. 7.  † Jer. ii. 21.
men with joy; our blessed Lord is the source of strength and growth to his church, of which we are the members or branches. And as, according to the Psalmist,* "wine maketh glad the heart of man," we are made glad by the Spirit of Christ; for we "have all joy and peace in believing."† Grotius is of opinion that, according to his usual custom, Christ took the figure of the vine from the occasion of the Eucharist which he had just instituted; and that he called the wine "his blood," and himself "the true Vine," in the same manner as, in the last parable, he designated himself the good Shepherd, because he stood near the sheepfolds. Lightfoot also thinks that "whilst he was ordaining that Holy Sacrament, and had said, 'This is the New Testament in my blood,' from thence he immediately adds, 'I am the true Vine,' so that, for the future, the church is to be under the administration of a New Testament, no longer as the Jewish church under that of the Old; and that from henceforward 'I am the true Vine,' into which all the branches of the church must be ingrafted, and not into the Israelitish vine any more." The circumstances of standing near the sheepfolds and instituting the Eucharist very probably might have given occasion to the deliveries of the two parables of the Good Shepherd and the True Vine; but it is clear, from the arguments of those commentators who are of this opinion, that they did not originate them. Their sources are to be found in the figurative language of the Hebrew Scriptures, to which,

* Ps. civ. 15. Judg. ix. 13.  
† Rom. xv. 13.
as much as possible, the Scriptures of the New Testament are strictly analogous. The sheep and the shepherd, the vineyard and the vine, are the most frequent figures of the Old Testament; and in order that the New Dispensation may be in keeping with the Old, and be seen to spring from it, the very same language and figures of speech are on all occasions adopted in both Scriptures.*

* Vide Grotius in loc. The latter part of Lightfoot's note on our Lord's designating himself "the true Vine" is given in the text. The first part I shall quote here, and merely remark that Grotius, and the other commentators, refer to the same or similar passages. "We may take these words in opposition to what is spoken concerning Israel. Israel is called a Vine, Psal. lxxx. 8. Isa. v. 7. Jer. ii. 21, &c. In Vajicra rabba (fol. 207, 2, 3.) the parallel is drawn between Israel and Vine, and the similitude is carried on to sixteen particulars, for the most part improper and unsuitable enough. But that which is principally to be regarded in this place is this, that hitherto indeed Israel had been the Vine, into which every one that would betake himself to the worship of the true God, was to be set and grafted in. But from henceforward they were to be planted no more into the Jewish religion, but into the profession of Christ. To which that in Acts xi. 26, hath some reference, where the disciples were first called Christians, that is, no longer Jews or Israelites." Works, vol. ii. p. 601. fol.

A verse in the parable of the Trees, Judg. ix. 13, as well as of the Psalmist, civ. 15, that "Wine cheereth God and man," is commonly referred to by commentators on this parable of the True Vine. I notice it, because it is a frequent subject of scoffing to the infidel. The palpable ignorance displayed in this instance by "the fool that hath said in his heart there is no (revealed) God," is the probable reason why an answer to so frivolous an objection is not generally given. Such objections, urged with the force of ridicule, leave, however, deeper impressions upon the minds of the young and the uneducated than is commonly
The Father is declared to be the husbandman, because the Son was, as he constantly affirms, sent from the Father. According to the figure, therefore, he takes care of the branches, cuts off the suckers and the withered parts, and prunes the vine, and cleanses the faithful branches, that they may bring forth more fruit. The parable therefore continues—

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

Every fruitful branch the Father purges, or cleanses, καθαρτι αυτω. "Now," adds our Lord, pursuing the parable, "ye are clean, or purged, καθαρτι, supposed. Wine was always used in the sacrifices both of the Hebrews and the Heathen. The figure of speech might therefore be common to both; and it is in this instance only used in a parable or fable, which is not a literal revelation of any religious doctrine, nor the specification of any of the Divine attributes. It can therefore have no possible influence whatever on the evidence of the authenticity of the Hebrew Scriptures. Nor indeed would it have any such influence, though it were not spoken in parable, when the figurative style of those writings is considered. The following exposition of Bishop Patrick abundantly explains it. "As for wine cheering God and man, it is a form of speech imitated by the heathen, particularly by Virgil, lib. 2 Georg. ver. 101, where, speaking of noble vines, or wine, he saith, they were 'Mensis et Diis accepta secundis.' For wine, as the Hebrew doctors note, was not only used in their sacrifices, as it was also among the heathen; but Jarchi saith, Till the drink-offering was poured out, they did not begin the hymn that was then sung to God. See upon Numb. xv. 5."

* John. xv. 2, 3.
through the word which I have spoken to you."

The branches which bore no fruit—those who by baptism had been admitted into the church, and confessed the faith of Christ crucified, but were unfruitful in good works—the husbandmen took away; they were cut off from the benefits of the Christian profession; for "faith without works is dead;"* and such persons are as the withered branches of the vine. But the apostles, as has been well observed,† "laboured under many infirmities and prejudices of their minds. They were weak in faith, and understood but little of Christ's salutary passion, and of his oblation of himself as a piacular victim for their sins." They evidently looked upon his death as altogether unworthy of that mighty conqueror and that earthly kingdom, which they had fondly hoped to have seen, and to have obtained in the Messiah. His death, though he had plainly predicted it, overwhelmed them with despair. Nor did they comprehend, though their own Scriptures constantly affirm it, that it was possible that the Gentiles could be included under any Divine dispensation; and, until warned from Heaven, we find that they did not preach the Gospel to any people but Jews. They were moreover infected with fear of the world, and a love of worldly advantages.‡

* James ii. 26.
† Vide Whitby in loc.
‡ To be convinced that such was the temper of the Apostles, and to prevent unnecessary quotations, the reader is requested to consult the following texts; Luke xviii. 31—34. xxiv. 13—27. Acts x. xi. 19—24. Gal. ii. 11, 12. 2 Cor. v. 16. Indeed throughout the whole of the 5th chapter of his Second
Of these and similar infirmities the apostles were in a great degree purged by the heavenly husbandman, when the Holy Ghost was shed upon them, and they were sent forth to preach the Gospel to all nations. Still when Christ says, in this parable,*

Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul appears anxious to approve his own unworldly spirit, as though he was conscious that the Apostles were not always free from the imputation, as when, for instance, on one occasion, he "withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed."

* Grotius thinks that the expression "Now ye are clean," refers to chap. xiii. 10, 11; and that Judas is the branch not purged. "Jesus saith to him, (Simon Peter) He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, ye are not all clean." "Dicit autem, jam, quia impurus Judas jam exierat, nunquam in Apostolicum consortium redivitus, sarmentum inutile." Opera, tom. ii. p. 549. fol.

Lightfoot has a singular opinion. He considers these words to have an allusion to the law concerning the uncircumcision of the tree when first planted, Levit. xix. 23. For the first three years the fruit was to be accounted as uncircumcised, unclean, and not to be eaten; but "you, my branches, now are clean through my word;" that word which I have been preaching to you for these three years. Works, vol. ii. p. 601. fol.

That, however, the disciples, though commissioned to preach the Gospel to the whole world before our Lord's ascension, were restrained from this holy work, even after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and were therefore not comparatively clean, is clear from the vision of St. Peter, recorded in the Xth Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, in which the doubts of this Apostle as to the propriety of preaching to the Gentiles are as circumstantially detailed as the character of the vision would permit. This temper never entirely forsook him, as appears from the circumstance of the altercation between St. Paul and St. Peter, mentioned in the preceding note.
Now ye," meaning his apostles, "are clean," we cannot apply it absolutely, but comparatively in respect of those who rejected, and who disobeyed, the Word of Christ. The apostles, we find, were not wholly freed from their former infirmities, but were to be farther purged, or made clean, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. They were, however, comparatively, "clean through the word which Christ had spoken unto them," in those exquisite discourses recorded by St. John before his death, of which the present parable forms part. But gifted as were those holy and inspired men, and favoured by Heaven as none others can possibly be again privileged, not even they,—and certainly none other professors of His holy religion,—can remain clean and pure without the continual operation of his Holy Spirit—that sacred fountain, from whence cometh every good and perfect gift. The parable therefore continues and concludes with the enforcement of this indispensable continuance in well-doing, by abiding "in Christ, in whom we have once believed."

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father
glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

The parable proceeds with the comparison of the Christian's perfection to the vine and her branches. The branches of the vine will cease to bear fruit, unless they cleave to the parent stem, from which they at first budded and then shot forth, and which must ever remain the source of their strength and growth and fruitfulness. In the same manner therefore our Saviour tells his disciples:—"I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

The fact that the disciples of Christ must abide in him, in order that they may obtain the promised reward of the Gospel, is so self-evident that it will hardly be disputed by any one. But all Christians are by no means agreed as to the import of the term "abiding in Christ." Some think that these words were uttered to the apostles as a warning against apostacy, and that they might not relapse into Judaism; a temper to which we certainly find the early converts, and even the apostles themselves, strongly disposed.† This may be granted. But it is not sufficiently universal in its application; for we must suppose that, although it was addressed to the apostles, it was intended for the instruction of

* John xv. 4—8.

† "Indeed a true fixing and abiding in Christ is by a true faith. But may we not suppose our Saviour here more peculiarly warning them against apostacy, or falling back from the Gospel into Judaism, a plague likely to rage exceedingly in the Church?" Lightfoot.
all the disciples of Christ in all ages of the world; and there is no danger of Christians now falling into Judaism. All commentators therefore concur in the necessity of one common principle, namely, a fixed and true faith, which would equally preserve the disciples of the apostolic age from falling into Judaism, and other errors of practice as well as of doctrine to which they were peculiarly exposed, and the disciples of all succeeding ages from falling from Christ, by heretical doctrines, by positive infidelity, or by corruption of morals. This faith must therefore be in every respect a sound faith,—a faith which may be said to abide in Christ, inasmuch as it impels the disciple to follow his steps. St. John therefore, in his first Epistle, thus defines the phrase to "abide in," μενειν. "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ο λέγων εν αυτῷ μενειν, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."* St. Paul likewise unites faith and works in the following passage of the Epistle to the Colossians, who, he tells them, "were sometimes alienated and enemies in their mind by wicked works; yet now," he adds, "hath Christ reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight; if ye

* 1 John ii. 3—6.
continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven."*†

But as the husbandman cuts off the withered branches of the vine, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned; so will it happen to those who abide not in Christ, and cleave not to that heavenly vine. The vine, as we have already remarked, is the frequent figure used by the sacred writers to express the people and church of Israel. That people has now forfeited the favour of God; that Church is now cast out as the wild vine into the desert, and is a withered branch of Christ, who, he tells us, is the True Vine, and we are the branches. If, therefore, we do not continue steadfast in our faith and obedience, we shall undergo the same punishment of excision, which is now inflicted upon God's chosen people.

This parable of the Vine and her branches, as applied to Christ and his church, becomes the more intelligible when we refer to the denunciations by the Hebrew prophets against the church of Israel under

* Col. i. 21—23.
† Without me, χωρὶς μου, "separated from me,—ye can do nothing." Whitby states the substance of the passage from ver. 4 to ver. 6, to be this:—With respect to all Christians, it relates to faith and its effects, Acts xv. 9. Gal. v. 6.; and to the Spirit, 1 John iii. 24. iv. 13. Rom. viii. 9. With respect to the Apostles, it implies that they could not hope to convert the world without that assistance, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6, hence Acts i. 8. Vide Whitby in loc. and Valpy's Annot. vol. iii. p. 14?.
the figure of the vine-tree. As in the parable of the Vineyard, we shall perceive the same harmony to subsist between this parable and the Hebrew prophecy: and while it fulfils those predictions, it becomes itself a prophecy of that which will happen to the Church of Christ, whose branches will be burned in the fire if they cleave not to their parent stem.

In the fifteenth chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel, we find the rejection of Jerusalem signified by a vine-tree in these words:— "What is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?—Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned.—Therefore thus saith the Lord God; As the vine-tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inheritance of Jerusalem."* Jerusalem was rejected, because her inhabitants had disobeyed Jehovah; but they were not finally rejected, until they rejected the INCARNATE JEHOWAH in the person of JESUS CHRIST, the Messiah, for whose coming they had so long waited and prayed. They had no faith, no love, and no obedience. They did not abide in him, and they were cast forth as a branch, and were withered; and to pursue the simile, "men gathered them, and cast them into the fire, and they were burned:" or according to the Word of Jehovah in the prophet, —"I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them;
and ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I set my face against them.”*†

The parable of the Vineyard was addressed to the Jews, and therefore described the Divine judgment, predicted by the prophets, as having taken place, or about to take place, in the rejection and murder of the son of the householder who was lord of the vineyard. We read, therefore, that “when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they

* Ezek. xv. 7.
† Lightfoot refers to this chapter of the prophet, in illustration of the sixth verse of the parable, and gives the Rabbinical interpretation of the passage quoted in the text. “D. Kimchi paraphrases in this manner: ‘O Son of man, I do not ask thee concerning the vine that beareth fruit (for so it ought to be accounted), but concerning the branch which is amongst the trees of the wood unfruitful, even as the trees themselves are.” Where by the Hebrew word which we render ‘branch’ (for so it is commonly rendered) we are to understand the wild vine. So R. Solomon in loc.—‘I do not speak, saith God, of the vine in the vineyard that bears fruit, but of the branch of the wild vine that grows in the woods.’ So that the sense of the prophet is, O Son of man, what is the vine-tree more than any tree? viz. a branch of the wild vine which grows amongst the trees of the forest, which is unfruitful even as they are.

“And this is our Saviour’s meaning, ‘Every branch in me that bringeth not forth fruit is cast forth, like the branch in the vine that grows wild in the forest, which is good for nothing but to be burned.” Lightfoot’s Works, vol. ii. p. 602. fol.

The same fate is assigned to the vine, brought out of Egypt, in the 80th Psalm. “Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hast planted, and the branch that thou madest so strong for thyself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down.” Ver. 14—16.
perceived that he spake of them."* But the parable of the Vine was addressed to the apostles, and intended for their admonition, and for the use of the church. Our Lord accordingly warns them, in language which they cannot fail to understand, of the evil which will assuredly fall upon them, as it was about to be inflicted on the Jews, if they did not abide in him. Thus, like the parable of the Vineyard, it is a prophecy; but it differs from that parable in its application: for whereas that predicted the punishment of the Jews who rejected the Son, while it tacitly implied the election of the Gentiles, and such of the Jews as received and acknowledged him to be the rightful heir; this predicts the punishment of the disciples of Christ, if they abide not in him, by a reference, implied by the terms of the parable, to the judgment which has been passed on the Jews for their rejection of the Messiah, the True Vine. They are as withered branches; they are cast forth as the branches of the wild vine of the forest; their land is made desolate, because they have committed a trespass."†

The application of the abovementioned prophecy of Ezekiel respecting the Jewish Church, is strengthened by the consideration that the vine-tree is there destined for the fire on account of its perfect inutility and barrenness. Not only had it not borne fruit, but it was unfit for any other purpose by reason of its decay. "Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang

* Matt. xxi. 15. † Ezek. xv. 8.
any vessel thereon?" The judgment is therefore passed upon it. "Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned." * Being thus destroyed, to show the wreck and contemptible state to which the Church, under the figure of the vine-tree, will be reduced by the Divine judgment, it is again asked,—

"Is it meet for any work? Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?"† Thus the parable:

"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me—separated from me—ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

If, however, the denunciation be, as it unquestionably is, very terrible against those who abide not in faith, love, and obedience to their blessed Redeemer; how consolatory, how happy, and how glorious are the promises to the faithful disciples—accepted

* "A fit representation of the present state of Judea, when both its extremities were consumed by the ravages of a foreign enemy, and the midst of it, where the capital city stood, is ready to be destroyed: just as the fire still spreads towards the middle part of a stick, when once both ends are lighted." W. Lowth's Commentary.

† Ezek. xv. 3, 4, 5.
prayers, and abundant fruitfulness in Divine things. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye have much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Such would have been the reward of the whole Jewish people, had they remained steadfast in that faith which is taught in their own Scriptures; and had they not separated themselves from the heavenly and True Vine, of which they had been so long the branches. But they became barren and unfruitful: and they were cast forth. Let us be warned by their excision, lest we be found wanting, and abide not in Christ our Saviour. In the preceding chapter the same promise of the acceptance of prayer is made as the reward of an undoubting faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the eternal Son of God. He tells his sorrowing disciples not to grieve for him; for that he was going to prepare a place for them in his heavenly Father's house. He begins in these delightful words:—"Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."* He then discourses of the mysterious union of the Father and Himself; and in the answer to the questions of the apostles, he at last says—"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.—Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my

* Ch. xiv. 1, 2.
Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”

The first part of this promise refers evidently to the apostolic age, when working of miracles was not uncommonly the work of Christ’s disciples. But though we cannot now work miracles in His name, whatever we ask in prayer, which is profitable for us, will be granted; but we must “keep the faith”—we must believe in the Divinity of the Saviour! The language of the text just cited is so plain and express that this is an indispensable article of our holy faith, that it excites our wonder as well as our sorrow, that we should live in an age when a man’s creed is esteemed a matter of indifference. A man’s faith, however pure, which is not fruitful in good works, is unquestionably a tree without fruit. But it does not follow that a man’s moral works, however good in comparison of his fellow mortals, are acceptable before God without a pure and a sound faith: for this is a tree without a root.† To

* Ver. 11—14.

† If, as the author of this small work professes, his object is to show, however imperfectly, that the parables of our blessed Lord may generally be considered in the light of prophecies; it is also an object, however humble his own pretensions confessedly are, to make them the means, wheresoever, without straining the sense, they will admit of the interpretation, of setting forth the Divinity of Christ. Whether he has been successful in his endeavours, the candid reader will decide: but as the author cannot himself reconcile the Scheme of our Redemption with the Sacred Oracles which reveal it, nor the two parts of the
both of these doctrines the Scriptures are decidedly opposed. We cannot possibly "abide in Christ," if we do not believe him to be the Divine Person he has declared himself: nor can we "abide in him," unless our faith be fruitful of good works.—"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." This is FAITH! But this faith must be fruitful, or, properly speaking, it ceases to be faith. Our Lord therefore concludes this beautiful parable in these words—"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my DISCIPLES." *

inspired volume, the Old and New Testament, with each other, unless this CARDINAL DOCTRINE be received; it is impossible to examine any portion of the Scriptures without touching upon it. If this be not acknowledged as an article of faith, and indeed as the corner-stone of CHRISTIANITY, the Scriptures are altogether unintelligible.

* See Matt. v. 16. Phil. i. 11. John viii. 31. xiii. 35.
CHAPTER VIII.

PARABLES PREPARATORY TO THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

SECTION I.

THE SECOND PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE.

The first parable of the Fig-tree has been already examined and explained in a previous part of this work.* The second striking parable of the Fig-tree is recorded by two of the evangelists.† Its appropriate situation, according to our arrangement, is in the present chapter; because the first parable is an indication of the destruction of Jerusalem and the excision of the Jews; but the second is a sign of the Day of Judgment, which is the subject of this chapter.

The occasion of this parable was the striking description, which our Lord gave, but three days before

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ous.* The whole difficulty appears to hinge upon the sense of the words, rendered in our translation,—

"When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." In the margin of the English Bible, we find the word "he" substituted for, or put as another version equally correct as, the word "it" in the text. In the original, however, neither "he," nor "it," is expressed.

* Among the elder commentators, of the class referred to in the preceding note, Grotius is the only one who departs from the common interpretation noticed in the text. Bishop Horsley, however, has ably shown this interpretation to be erroneous; and it is pleasing to remark that the learned editors of the Family Bible, which has so wide a circulation, have adopted his views.—"Among the passages," says this accomplished prelate, "which have been misrepresented by the refinements of a false criticism, are all those which contain the explicit promise of the coming of the Son of Man in glory, or in his kingdom; which it is become so much the fashion to understand of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman arms, within half a century of our Lord's ascension, that to those who take the sense of Scripture from some of the best modern expositors, it must seem doubtful whether any clear prediction is to be found in the New Testament, of an event in which, of all others, the Christian world is the most interested." Sermons, vol. i. p. 2.

SECOND PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE. 429

To understand the exact meaning of this text, we must therefore ascertain the import of the whole discourse, in which it is introduced: and this may be consulted by the English reader as well as by the scholar.

At verses 30 and 31, "the Son of man" is mentioned as "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," and "sending 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." These are the signs of the day of Judgment; for such signs did not precede the destruction of Jerusalem. He then illustrates the whole of his discourse by this parable of the Fig-tree, in the 32d verse, which, by putting forth its leaves, betokens the approach of summer; "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things (the destruction of Jerusalem, and other things described in the former part of the discourse) know that He (the Son of Man) is at the door."*

* Ver. 33. Οτι εγγυς εστιν επι θυραις. "That it is nigh even at the door."—"This I have interpreted, in compliance with our translation, of the ruin of the Jewish nation. I now think it more agreeable to this phrase in Scripture to understand ὡτος ille. 'He,' the Son of Man mentioned, verse 30, 'stands at the door;' for so St. James plainly interprets this phrase by saying, ἡ παρουσία του κυριου γγυις, 'the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,' ὁ κρίτης πρὸ των θυρων εστηκεν, 'The Judge standeth before the door,' chap. v. 8, 9. And St. Luke, by varying the phrase thus, 'Know that the kingdom of God is nigh,' Luke xxi. 31. i.e. The coming of Christ to execute his kingly office on the Jews, and give his kingdom, thus taken from them, to the be-
An examination of a similar passage in the Epistle of St. James, before we proceed further with the parable, will, I think, throw much light on this part of it. That Apostle exhorts the suffering brethren, to whom his Epistle is addressed, in these words:—

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

In the verse immediately preceding this extract, the Apostle had pointed out the patience of the Just One, who, though he had all power in heaven and in earth, resisted not his oppressors. He therefore exhorts his brethren to patience, until the coming of the Lord, who would reward them for all their sufferings, as he was now about to avenge himself—not by Himself, but by His ministers—of the unbelieving Jews. He enforces his admonition by the familiar, but beautiful image of the husbandman who patiently waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and the produce of his labour, until the unbelieving Gentiles, Matt. xxi. 43." Whitby's additions to the Annotations upon the Gospel of St. Matthew, No. 43.

This critical amendment of so able a critic as Whitby is very valuable; and though his conclusion is the same as in the body of his Commentary, it makes the one adopted in the present exposition much more easy of apprehension, even by those who have entertained the common opinion respecting the sense of this passage of the parable.

* James v. 7—9.
ing of the early and the latter rain. This figure is not dissimilar from the fig-tree, in this parable, putting forth his leaves. The early and the latter rain were the signs of the succeeding fruitfulness of the earth, as the budding fig-tree was the sign of approaching summer; and both were signs of the coming of the Son of man.

The expressions, "coming of the Lord," and "coming of the Son of man," though commonly interpreted of the destruction of Jerusalem, literally signify our Lord's coming in person to Judgment at the last great Day. St. James unquestionably describes the terrors of the destruction of Jerusalem, that he might, if possible, bring the unbelieving Jews to a due sense of their danger. But he consoles the believing brethren with the prospect of the day of Judgment, when the Lord would himself come, and reward them openly, in the sight of men and angels, for their patient suffering. Hence the figure of the husbandman, waiting the course of Providence and the coming of the early and the latter rain, becomes an appropriate and a beautiful image of the expected reward of his labour in the fruits of the earth, as our Lord would reward the faithful with the joys of heaven. But it is no apt figure of waiting for vengeance: for however punishment was merited by the unbelieving Jews, the infliction of it,—though just and necessary as it will doubtless appear to all at the last day, and, as regards the Jews, was merited in the destruction of Jerusalem,—can nevertheless afford no happiness, and will therefore constitute
no reward, to the righteous believers in any period of their existence.

Time, in the eye of God, and therefore in his dispensations, is not measured as we measure time; it is measured by the events. The next great event, therefore, after the punishment and dispersion of the Jews and the establishment of the Church of Christ, is, in the course of Divine Providence, the last great Day, when,—if without irreverence we may so express it,—the whole magnificent drama of the Scheme of Man's Redemption will be wound up—when the righteous will be rewarded, and the wicked punished. Hence, in the verse after the passage above cited, St. James declares, almost in the very language of our Lord,—“Behold, the Judge standeth before the door.” *

* James v. 9.

† This interpretation of the phrases, “the coming of the Lord,” and the “coming of the Son of Man,” will be strengthened by the consideration of the opinions of the early Christians respecting the day of Judgment. There was a tradition that the earth, in a physical as well as in a religious sense, was to undergo a great change at the end of six thousand years. According to the best chronologists, there wanted much less than fifty years, in the apostolic age, to complete this great period of the world: “And although,” says an excellent modern author, “that impression cannot be traced to any authority which ought to receive from a Christian reader the smallest degree of respect, there is no doubt, nevertheless, that it entered deeply into the theological systems of the age which witnessed the introduction of our holy faith. Nay, even in the apostolical writings, there are several terms employed, which, whatever might be their more recondite meaning, could not fail to strengthen, in the minds of the believers, the affecting persuasion that the end of the world was to coincide with the termination of their own lives.”—
SECOND PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE. 433

Such expressions as these, of "the Judge standing before the door"—"He (the Son of man) is near,
The author then quotes and refers to several texts from the New Testament, such as 1 Thess. iv. 15—17; 2 Thess. xi. 1—9; 1 Cor. xv. 23d and following verses; Revel. xx. 4, &c.—and makes some interesting observations, for which the reader is referred to the work itself, being too long for the limits of a note. But I cannot refrain from extracting the following remark:—
"There is little reason to doubt, that the author of the Epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians, as well as the inspired writer of the Apocalypse, partook of the impressions relative to the speedy arrival of the first resurrection, and the beginning of the Messiah's reign, which prevailed among their countrymen; and I agree with Grotius, who hesitates not to state, that St. Paul thought it possible that he might be alive at the time of the general Judgment." * See Dr. Russell's Preliminary Dissertation to his "Connection of Sacred and Profane History," vol. i. p. 102—124.
The use I would make of these observations, in reference to the subject in the text, is that it is certain that the apostles and inspired writers of the New Testament understood these passages, now referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, of the last Judgment and the end of the world. I feel constrained to agree with Dr. Russell in the following opinion respecting the inspiration of these Sacred Writers. "The Holy Spirit brought to the remembrance of the disciples all things of religious importance; and more especially whatever they had seen or been taught in relation to those great facts and doctrines on which the foundations of Christianity are laid: but, in reference to future events, we perceive no evidence to justify the opinion, that these chosen servants of the Redeemer enjoyed views in any degree more vivid or extensive than such as might have arisen from their natural penetration, aided by a careful inquiry into the writings of the Old Testament."

* "Omnino putavit Paulus fieri posse, ut ipse viverit judicii generalis tempore; idque non ex his tantum verbis satis apertis liquet, sed et ex 1 Cor. xv. &c."—See Grotii Annotationes in Epistolam priorem ad Thessal. Opera, vol. v. p. 644.
even at the doors”—“The coming of the Lord”—and “The coming of the Son of man,”—are frequently employed both by the holy Evangelists, who record the words of Jesus when comforting his disciples, and by the inspired penmen of the Epistles to comfort the suffering believers; nor need there, for many reasons which have been already and more which might be mentioned, be a constant endeavour on the part of expositors, in this nor in any age of the Church, to interpret these expressions of the destruction of Jerusalem: For besides that it is contrary to the received rule of interpretation among the best and most sober expositors, to understand a text figuratively when it will more consistently admit of a literal interpretation,—of what importance, it may be asked, is the destruction of Jerusalem to us, further than that it is, as it were, one of the landmarks, showing the verity of our faith, an evidence of the truth of prophecy, and forming an important link in the chain of the Biblical history? But it has no practical application to ourselves: whereas the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, especially of the latter, were written for the express instruction, and for the support and consolation of Christians in all ages of the Church. When, therefore, the holy Evangelists, in recording the discourses of our blessed Lord, and St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. James, in their various epistles—for they all speak in the same style,—console the suffering believers of the apostolic age with the cheering prospect of “the coming of the Lord,” and of “the Judge standing before,”—and “the Son of man
being near, even at the doors,"—the instruction and consolation of the disciples of Christ in all ages of the church, who may be placed in similar circumstances, are manifestly intended and contemplated by the Divine Wisdom of the Holy Spirit, who directed those holy and inspired penmen in the composition of their heavenly and invaluable writings.

"The coming of our Lord," says Bishop Horsley, "is a topic which the holy penmen employ, when they find occasion to exhort the brethren to a steady perseverance in the profession of the Gospel, and a patient endurance of those trying afflictions with which the Providence of God, in the first ages of the Church, was pleased to exercise his servants. Upon these occasions, to confirm the persecuted Christian's wavering faith—to revive his weary hope—to invigorate his drooping zeal—nothing could be more effectual than to set before him the prospect of that happy consummation, when his Lord should come to take him to himself, and change his short-lived sorrows into endless joy." *

That the destruction of Jerusalem was but one of a chain of causes in God's Providence which should gradually conduct to the Judgment of the great Day, and the end of the world; and that this second parable of the Fig-tree can apply to none other event, in the economy of man's redemption, than this final and awful conclusion of the whole, is proved to demonstration in the sermons already referred to by the late learned Bishop of St. Asaph. The whole

* Sermons, vol. i. p. 11, 12.
may be summed up in the following luminous passage:—

"The approach of summer," says our Lord, "is not more surely indicated by the first appearances of spring, than the final destruction of the wicked by the beginnings of vengeance on this impenitent people. The opening of the vernal blossom is the first step in a natural process, which necessarily terminates in the ripening of the summer fruits; and the rejection of the Jews, and the adoption of the believing Gentiles, is the first step in the execution of a settled plan of Providence, which inevitably terminates in the general judgment. The chain of physical causes, in the one case, is not more uninterrupted, or more certainly productive of the ultimate effect, than the chain of moral causes in the other. 'Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.' * 'All these things,' in this sentence, must unquestionably denote

* Hence, says Lightfoot, it appears plain enough that the foregoing verses are not to be understood of the last Judgment, but of the destruction of Jerusalem. There were some among the disciples, particularly John, who lived to see these things come to pass. With Matt. xvi. last, compare John xxi. 22. And there were some Rabbins alive at the time that Christ spoke these things, that lived till the city was destroyed. Works, vol. ii. p. 245.

These facts are indisputable: but they militate nothing against the conclusiveness of Bishop Horsley's reasoning; for this event is equally contemplated by him and the previous commentators; but the learned Bishop considers the destruction of Jerusalem but as a sign of the coming of the Son of man at the last day, whereas they confine the coming of the Son of man to that particular event.
the same things which are denoted by the same words just before. Just before, the same words denoted those particular circumstances of the Jewish war which were included in our Lord's prediction. All those signs, which were to answer to the fig-tree's budding leaves, the apostles and their contemporaries, at least some of that generation, were to see. But as the thing portended is not included among the signs, it was not at all implied in this declaration that any of them were to live to see the harvest, the coming of our Lord in glory.

All that is necessary to be added is the certainty of the fulfilment of this prediction of our blessed Lord. If "that generation did not pass away" without having witnessed the just judgment of God upon the Jews, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of their polity; the great Day, of which this event may be considered a prelude, will as surely come to pass. These are the words of the Redeemer and Judge:—"Heaven and earth may pass away; but my words shall not pass away!" As surely, therefore, as God selected this people of the Jews, for the purposes of his wise Providence, from the nations of the earth; as surely as they were placed under the immediate protection of God, which, but for their disobedience, would never have been withdrawn from them; as surely as,—when

* Sermons, vol. i. p. 17. The third edition is referred to. The reader is referred to the first four sermons of this late learned Prelate's published sermons. Any iteration of the public opinion of these invaluable discourses were a presumption in the author, of which he shall not incur the imputation.
they wilfully and perversely disobeyed God, and were uncorrected by successive chastisements, and finally filled up the measure of their iniquity by the rejection of the Messiah,—they were destroyed as a nation, and scattered over the face of the earth; as surely as all these things have happened to this people, will the great day of Judgment arrive, when the things which are promised, and the judgments which are denounced in the Scriptures, will happen to the Christian world. The wonderful history of this people forms a link in the scheme of Divine Providence. The destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews are but the beginning of a series of events—all laid down in the Scriptures, particularly of the New Testament—which will end in the final day of Resurrection and Judgment: and these mighty events will open a yet wider realm of Divine wisdom and love to the blessed on that great day; while to those who have, like the infatuated Jews, blinded their eyes to these stupendous truths, they will unfold a world of misery, fearfully more great and more terrible than the destruction of Jerusalem to the Jews.

SECTION II.

THE WISE HOUSEHOLDER, THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT, AND THE EVIL SERVANT.

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man 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. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 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, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* †

The above parable, though connected in all its parts, and therefore one, distinguishes three characters:—The wise householder, who, had he known in what hour the thief would come, would have been watchful, and have thus prevented the breaking up of his house;—the faithful and wise servant,

† Slaves, who were grievous offenders, were often condemned to work in the mines or quarries, where the groans and lamentations were excessive. We are told in Josephus, B. I. lib. vi. 44. that this happened at this time to many of the Jews. In a higher and second sense it relates to a future life. Le Clerc. Valpy's Annot. vol. i. p. 391.
whom, for having fulfilled the duties of the wise householder, his Lord hath made ruler over his household;—and the evil servant, who, because his Lord delayeth his coming, abuses his trust, is guilty of cruelty and injustice to his fellow-servants, and commits excess with profligate strangers. These separate characters are beautifully distinguished from each other, and are yet so insensibly united, that the same individual may, in his own person, represent the three; and of this liability is the warning given at the commencement, as an awful preparation for the day of Judgment:—"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

By all the commentators, mentioned in the last Section, who confine the interpretation of the foregoing parable of the Fig-tree to the destruction of Jerusalem, the same interpretation is of course applied to the present parable. Bishop Porteus, who adopts the common interpretation, calls this parable "the moral of the prophecy,"—which is contained in the preceding part of the chapter, and especially in the parable of the Fig-tree,—and allows that it "alludes no less to the final judgment than to the destruction of Jerusalem, and applies with at least equal force to both."* Were the prophetic denun-

* See his XIXth Lecture on St. Matthew, Works, vol. v. p. 222. But the sense in which this prelate supposes it to apply to the day of Judgment is the typical or secondary sense, which is common to almost all the prophetic writings. He thus expresses himself at the commencement of this Lecture:—"The prophecy is that which our blessed Lord delivered respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, to which, I apprehend, the whole
ciations of this sublime chapter to apply in but a secondary sense to the day of Judgment, they would lose much of their force when applied to Christians. By all commentators it is agreed that they do apply equally to all Christians, as to the Jews to whom the discourse was immediately addressed; "not only," says the Prelate just quoted, "to his immediate hearers, but to his disciples in all future ages." We are all therefore included in the awful admonition contained in these words—"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."*

of the Chapter, in its primary acceptation, relates. At the same time it must be admitted, that the forms of expression, and the images made use of, are for the most part applicable also to the day of Judgment; and that an allusion to that great event, as a secondary object, runs through almost every part of the prophecy. This is a very common practice in the prophetic writings, where two subjects are carried on together, a principal and subordinate one." But Bishop Horsley sets the matter in its true light by showing that the events of the Jewish war are the signs (not the types) of the day of Judgment; and thus the prophecy becomes direct; whereas, as he observes, by the common exposition, it is doubtful whether there be in the New Testament any clear prediction of the day of Judgment.—"Our Lord gives a minute detail of those circumstances of the war, which to that generation were to be the signs of the last advent; not the thing itself, but the signs of it; for the beginning of a completion of a long train of prophecy is the natural sign and pledge of the completion of the whole." (Horsley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 33.)

* Ver. 42—44. It is probably conjectured by Dr. Lightfoot, that the discourse of Christ ended here, as in St. Mark and St. Luke; and that the words following, as in Luke xii. 39, were spoken at another time, and upon another occasion; but because they well accord also with this place, and with this occasion, St. Matthew hath added them to this chapter. See Whitby in loc. vol. i. p. 188.
"But know this, that if the good man 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. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods."

The duty of watchfulness, and of perseverance in the faith of Christ, so strongly inculcated by this parable, is supposed to be now pressed upon his hearers by our Lord; because punishment was about to be inflicted on the slothful unbelievers in the destruction of Jerusalem. The suddenness of judgment is certainly indicated by the image of the thief breaking up a house; and that this image is used by the inspired penmen of the New Testament to denote an unexpected judgment is indisputable.*

* The following is Whitby's note on the place:—"The metaphor of Christ's coming as a thief, i. e. unexpectedly, doth not prove, that those words must respect Christ's coming to the final judgment only, they being used touching his coming unexpectedly to execute any judgment on a church or nation; as when Christ saith to the Church of Sardis, Rev. iii. 3. 'Watch,—I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know the hour when I will come upon thee;' and some probably conjecture, they are used by St. Paul, 1 Thess. v. 2, with a particular relation to this judgment inflicted on the Jews; which being the most signal prelude to, and proof of that final judgment which
But it may be added that this image is generally employed to indicate the coming of the Son of man to the final judgment.

The first text, which is appealed to in the third chapter of the Apocalypse,* "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee," may be understood in the general sense of the following paraphrase:—"If they disregard this direction, they are to expect some sudden and unforeseen judgment, as a thief is used to surprise a house in the night."†

But the passage of the Epistle to the Thessalonians‡ can apply to no other event than the day of Judgment, when the Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven. In the previous chapter the Apostle describes that awful day in these animating words:—"The Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them shall be exercised on all the enemies of Christ's kingdom, may well be represented in a similitude used by St. Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 10, and by our Lord, Luke xii. 39, 40, with relation to it." See Whitby ut supra. See likewise his commentary on 1 Thess. v. 1. 2, in which he refers that text to both judgments—the destruction of Jerusalem, and final day of Judgment; but he acknowledges in the outset, that the former "is not once hinted at by the ancients, who all interpret these words προ τὴν καταστασιν του Θεος of Christ's general advent." Whitby's Comm. vol. ii. p. 375. 4to.

* Rev. iii. 3. † Lowman’s Paraphrase, p. 31. 4to.
‡ 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. v. 1, 2.
in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The next chapter continues the subject, and makes a practical application of the fact of the general judgment, and of the uncertainty of the time, which had been revealed to no created being. "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." If the images in the preceding chapter, and the positive mention of the resurrection of Jesus as being the sure basis of our resurrection at the last day—if these cannot apply consistently to the destruction of Jerusalem and the ending of the Jewish polity, awful as that judgment was,—"the day of the Lord," illustrated by "the coming of a thief in the night," must refer to the final advent of Christ.*

The text from the second Epistle of St. Peter, which is referred to by all expositors on this text, is allowed, by many of the best commentators and critics, to refer to the final advent of our Lord to judgment. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall

* Upon this passage to the Thessalonians, as well as other passages of the New Testament, particularly 1 Cor. xv. &c. has been founded the supposition that the Apostles believed that they might be alive at the second advent of Christ. Grotius has this note on 1 Thess. iv. 17. "Then wc which are alive, &c. Nos inquit, quia putabat fieri posse, ut inter eos esset, sicut modo diximus." The last words allude to a similar opinion expressed on 1 Cor. xv. 52. Grotii Opera, vol. iii. p. 826, 943. fol. See note in p. 432.
pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."* Lightfoot and Hammond do indeed interpret this text of the destruction of Jerusalem, and attach the same meaning to all texts wherein "the day of the Lord" is mentioned. But Grotius, Whitby, Macknight, and others, understand it of the general judgment. The universal deluge, which is very skilfully employed by the Apostle to warn believers of the certainty of the advent of Christ to the general judgment, bears not the same analogy to the destruction of Jerusalem, which, however it may bear upon the great scheme of Divine Providence in the redemption of man, is nevertheless, strictly speaking, a partial judgment upon one nation.†

* 2 Peter iii. 10.
† "Η δὲ ημέρα του Κυρίου, Άδρενιη autem Dies Domini. Ila ultima, quâ Christus homines judicabit; cujus arrhabo sunt judicia illa in Judæos, Lucæ xvi. 24; 1 Cor. i. 8. v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14; Philipp. i. 10." Grotii Opera, tom. iii. p. 1123. fol.

Whitby takes the same view of it, as may be seen in the preceding note, p. 442. Hammond has a very long note upon this text, in which he endeavours to apply it to the destruction of Jerusalem. See his Works, vol. iii. p. 819. fol. The following remarks of Macknight on the place are worth the reader's attention:

"The day of the Lord. See 2 Thess. Pref. Sect. 4, (of his own Commentary,) where it is shown, that although Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem is sometimes called the coming, and the day of the Lord, these appellations are given to various other events, and therefore Hammond, Lightfoot, and others, who argue that the Apostle is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem because he calls the event of which he speaks the day of the Lord, build their opinion on a very weak foundation."
In the parable of St. Luke,* which is allowed by Whitby to refer to the final judgment, the Evangelist uses the same similitude of the thief, and seems to refer more peculiarly to those who are entrusted with the cure of souls. Grotius thinks that the parable, which had gone before,† had relation to all the people; and that this more specially applied to the pastors of the church.‡ If this be correct, the whole must refer to the judgment of the last day. Our Lord had been exhorting his hearers to watchfulness, which he illustrated by a parable of the

"As a thief in the night. Because thieves commonly break into the house in the night-time, and occasion great fear to those who are within, any sudden unexpected event, especially such as occasioned terror, was compared by the Hebrews to the coming of a thief in the night. The suddenness, therefore, and unexpectedness of the coming of the day of the Lord, and the terror which it will occasion to the wicked, are the circumstances in which it will resemble the coming of a thief, and not that it will happen in the night-time. Yet the ancients, from this and other passages, inferring that Christ's coming to judgment should happen in the night-time, instituted their vigils. But as Beza says, leaving the uncertainties, let us rather watch day and night, with minds raised up to him, that we may not be lulled asleep by the intoxications of the world." Macknight's Epistles, vol. iv. p. 196.

‡ Luke xii. 41. "Rectè hinc colligi puto, cum prior fabula ad omnes pertinuisset, unde et apud Marcum ei subjicitur, ἀ δὲ ὑμῖν λέγω, πατὶ λέγω, γρηγορεῖτε, (Quod tóbis dico, omnibus dico, vigilate) alteram a Christo adjectam, quæ Pastores Ecclesiarum propriè tangeret." Grot. Oper. tom. ii. 408. fol. "By the parable of the two Stewards, Jesus showed Peter, that though his exhortations were directed to all, they had a more especial relation to those who are entrusted with the care of the souls of others." Macknight's Harmony, vol. ii. p. 433.
good Servants who waited for their Lord, when he returned from the wedding. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."* Then follows the parable of the faithful and the unfaithful Stewards or Servants, in nearly the same words as that of the Evangelist St. Matthew. The following verses are added by the Evangelist St. Luke, and respect the different proportion of punishment which awaits the ignorant and the better informed servant:—"And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."†

That this parable, which we are now considering, is the same with that of St. Luke, which is generally understood to speak of the final advent of Christ, and therefore that the present parable of St. Matthew refers to the same great event, it has been my endeavour to show in the foregoing remarks. The image of the "thief in the night" is used in three texts already examined, two of which can have

no possible relation to any other event than the last judgment.* The same comparison is used in another part of the Apocalypse than that to which we have already referred; but perhaps the application is more general, and can hardly be applied to the second advent of Christ to judgment, and cannot possibly refer to the destruction of Jerusalem.†

This parable, though addressed to the disciples, is equally applicable to all Christians:—"What I say unto you I say unto all."‡ Watchfulness and perseverance in the faith of Christ are inculcated, and enforced by the assurance of a great and final day of judgment, when the good and evil servants will be rewarded and punished. The faithful servant shall be made ruler over his Lord's household; that is, he will receive the highest reward in a future state; while the evil servant shall be cut asunder, and have his portion appointed with the hypocrites; in other words, he will be infinitely miserable in a future state.

The best practical application may be found in the language of St. Luke:—"Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."§

* 1 Thess. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. † Rev. xvi. 15.
CHAPTER IX.

PARABLES DESCRIPTIVE OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

SECTION I.

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.

"Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 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. 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. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."*

We are now come to those parables which our blessed Lord delivered but a short time prior to his death, and which are descriptive of that awful time when men and angels will be assembled before his judgment-seat. To understand these parables, the preceding chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel should be attentively considered. The last week of our Lord's life, which we designate Passion Week, begins at the twenty-first chapter, which describes his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. From this period all his discourses are evidently calculated to prepare his disciples for that consummation of his earthly labours which he knew to be at hand. His parables of the Vineyard let out to husbandmen, and of the Marriage Feast, which we have examined in a previous portion of this work,† predict the death of the Redeemer, the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. His severe reprehension of the hypocritical Pharisees, whom he forewarns of their approaching destruction, and his pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem,‡ so soon to be in desolation, tend to the same conclusion.

The twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of

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this Gospel contain our Lord's discourses, which were delivered on the evening of the third day, which is Tuesday in Passion-week, after his entry into Jerusalem, and but three days before the last passover. He had departed from the temple, and sat upon the Mount of Olives, when "His disciples came unto him privately," and inquired when the things, predicted respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, should come to pass. He refers them to the prophet Daniel, and warns them that when they should see the signs, "the abomination of desolation," spoken of by that prophet, they should flee from Jerusalem, and avoid the impending ruin which would overtake the Jewish nation. At the same time he predicts the Day of Judgment, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was the sign, which will be the second Advent of the Son of man, who will "come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." He exhorts them to prepare for both these great events by the parable of the Fig-tree,—which is examined in the preceding chapter of this work,—and by a comparison of those awful seasons,—or rather, as I have already observed, of the second advent of Christ,—with that great judgment of God, the universal deluge in the days of Noah. "As the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. 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, and knew not until the flood came, and took them away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."*


2 G 2
THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.

The ten virgins who, according to the parable, “went forth to meet the bridegroom,” go forth to meet the bride likewise. Hence the Syriac and Vulgate read “bridegroom and bride.”* Marriages were called by the Jewish doctors “the introducing of the bride” into the house of her husband.† According, therefore, to the custom of the East, the virgins, who are the relations and friends of the husband, go forth to meet her and the bridegroom rejoicing, to introduce her into her husband’s house, and to partake of the marriage feast along with them.

The bridegroom and the bride signify Christ and his church. Hence St. Paul makes use of this figure when he exhorts husbands to ‡ “love their wives as their own bodies.—For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.” St. John uses the same image in the Apocalypse:§ and the Song of Solomon, in a secondary sense, can be no otherwise interpreted.

“And five of them were wise, and five of them were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”||

‡ Eph. v. 28, 29.
§ Rev. xix. 7. xxi. 2, 9.
|| This parable, or something very like it, is to be found in the Jewish Records. In Reschith Cochma, we read thus: Our
The wise virgins represent those who had not only nominally embraced the religion of Christ, but who likewise persevered in that profession, and brought forth fruit accordingly, of which the oil in their lamps was a token. But the foolish virgins are those—and, alas! how many are of this character—who outwardly profess themselves Christians, but whose religion is nothing but form; who approach God with their lips, but their heart is far from him; and who, while they assume the external demeanour of Christians, have neglected every opportunity to invest themselves with those graces which can entitle them to a seat at the marriage feast, a portion of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is signified by their having no oil in their lamps.

The wise virgins are said to “take oil in their vessels with their lamps;” which alludes to the custom of the East. In many parts, particularly in the Indies, instead of torches and flambeaux, it is cus-

wise men of blessed memory say, “Repent whilst thou hast strength to do it, whilst thy lamp burns, and the oil is not extinguished: for, if thy lamp be gone out, thy oil will profit thee nothing.” Another parable of theirs is:—“This thing is like to a king, who invited his servants, but appointed no set time: those that were wise adorned themselves, and sat in the porch of the palace; those that were foolish went about their own business. The king on a sudden called for his servants; the first went in adorned, the second undressed. The king was pleased with the wise, and angry with the foolish, and said, They who are prepared, shall eat of my banquet; they that are unprepared, shall not eat of it.” Kimchi in Isa. lxv. 13, 14. Midrash. Cohel. ad c. 2. 9. Whitby’s Commentary, vol. i. p. 191. Lightfoot’s Works, vol. ii. p. 247. fol.
THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.

They all, both the wise and the foolish, slumbered and slept, while the bridegroom tarried. This holds out a very important lesson, not only to the foolish and indifferent, but likewise to the wise and the good. The very best Christians are not always on their guard against the temptations of the world, nor watchful, with their lights burning, for the hour when our Lord will arrive,—when death and judgment will overtake them. The antediluvian world—the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha—the Jews in and after the time of our Lord's sojourn upon earth—and the inhabitants of this earth until the day of Judgment, have all, and will all in like manner slumber and sleep until the awakening cry—until the time that Noah entered the ark, and the waters began to be poured forth; until the fiery deluge began to fall on the devoted cities; until fire and sword commenced their mortal havock among

* Chardin apud Harmer, vol. ii. p. 431. Valpy's Annot. vol. i. p. 395. "It is the fashion in the country of the Ismaelites to carry the bride from the house of her father to the house of the bridegroom; and to carry before her about ten wooden staves, having each of them on the top a vessel like a dish, in which there is a piece of cloth with oil and pitch. These, being lighted, they carry before her for torches." Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 247. fol.

the Jews when their city was destroyed, and thousands of her inhabitants slain; and until the blast of the archangel's trump shall be heard, and the dead shall rise from the grave to judgment.

"In many things we offend all."* Every man's conscience is too faithful a monitor not to inform him that however strong his conviction of the truth of his religion,—however firm his faith in the threatenings, however confident his hope in the promises of the Gospel,—there are times when he remits his vigilance, when he is open to temptation, and when the enemy would have the fullest advantage over him, were it not for the grace of God, which often shields us when we do not merit protection. Hence probably the saints in Scripture are designated "burning and shining lights," because they are ever on the watch. Hence were the first converts to the faith warned by the Apostle that it was "high time to awake out of sleep; that the night was far spent, and the day was at hand."† By the same words the parable warns all Christians to "watch; for we know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

"And at midnight there was a cry made. Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

The circumstances of the story require that the cry shall be at midnight. In the East marriages are celebrated in the night: and the custom of going abroad and returning with musical instruments is still retained by some tribes of Indians.

* James iii. 2. † Rom. xiii. 11, 12.
The suddenness with which the day of Judgment will come on all those who are unprepared—who have not their loins girt and their lamps burning—is beautifully and strikingly indicated by the midnight cry. The same suddenness and alarm are indicated by a similar image in our Lord's account of this great day in the preceding chapter. When the Son of man shall be seen “coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, 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.” * St. Paul repeats the same thing with great animation:—“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” †

“Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 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.”

The cry awoke them all from their slumber; as the sound of the archangel's trump will arouse the dead from the sleep of the grave, and those, who are alive at that day, from the slumber of the soul. The virgins arose to trim their lamps. The wise who

* Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. † 1 Thess. iv. 16. ‡ This ellipsis is frequent in the Hebrew, understanding either denial or refusal. See the various commentators on the passage, Le Clerc, Grotius, Whitby, Beza, and Valpy's Annot. vol. i. p. 395.
had provided oil, had little to do, though they were culpable in slumbering. Many good men will be found remiss and slumbering on their post when the books of judgment are opened: but their unextinguished faith and their imperfect obedience will be accepted through the merits of the Redeemer; for all men's mere works of virtue will be found totally unable to support them. But imperfect and infirm as we are, if we are in earnest, we have power to "redeem the time," for we have no hard taskmaster, and shall be admitted, like the five wise virgins, to the marriage of the lamb.

But the foolish and sluggish virgins, who perhaps had despised their more prudent sisters when the bridegroom was afar off, now craved their oil. They were, however, justly refused, and were told to provide oil for themselves. "Our lamps are gone out," is the sole plea for their desiring to be possessed of the oil of their more wise sisters. But this is not available; because they had the same opportunities to keep them burning.

We find this allusion very frequent in the Scriptures, a circumstance which renders the parable the more striking. The lamps used in the service of the Temple were required "to burn always." "Thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always."* The lamp is therefore used in a spiritual sense by the inspired penmen of both the Old and New Testament. "The

* Exod. xxvii. 20.
light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle (or lamp) shall be put out."* "Thou," says the Psalmist, "wilt light my candle (or lamp:) the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." † St. Paul uses the same figure:—"Quench not the Spirit."‡ §

The Jews let the eleventh hour pass by, and would not go into the vineyard. They are yet in exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven as it is in the visible Church upon earth. But the Kingdom of Heaven, indicated by this parable, is the final consummation of all things at the Day of Judgment; and Christians, who never think seriously of their religion until the hour of death, will at that great day, it is to be feared, find themselves in the situation of the five foolish virgins in the parable.

"And while they—the foolish virgins—went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

The meaning of this part of the parable is so very plain that we need do no more than apply it to the Christian world. The patience and long suffering

of God may be taxed too far. Great as they were in respect of his chosen people Israel, yet there were limits set to them. Their murmurs, sensuality, idolatry, and every species of wickedness and sin, had been endured by Jehovah for many ages, until they crucified the Lord of life, the Redeemer of fallen man, the Saviour of the world. The Divine patience and forbearance became at length exhausted. "The Kingdom of God was taken from them, and given to a nation—the Gentile world—bringing forth the fruits thereof."*

This great event, the destruction of Jerusalem, is by Grotius considered as a type of the day of Judgment. We have followed the interpretation of Bishop Horsley, who considers it rather as a sign than a type of this great day, the first of a series of events which shall terminate in the general judgment. To reveal this day is the object of the three parables which comprehend the present Chapter.

The patience and long-suffering of God have been extended to the Christian world for upwards of eighteen centuries. The wickedness and cruelty of the professors of Christianity have been abundantly shown in the murders which have been perpetrated against the holy army of martyrs, whose blood cries up to Heaven against their murderers: for Christians, as well as Jews, have beaten, and persecuted, and killed the servants and the ministers of God. But will the patience of God last for ever? Will He not visit us for the apostacy of nations and indi-

* Matt. xxi. 43.
individuals from the religion of his Son, purchased by his blood;—for the gross sins and wickednesses which defile whole nations and communities who call themselves by, though they grievously dishonour, the blessed Name of Jesus Christ. Yet we all acknowledge, by our very profession of the Christian religion, that “there is no Name under heaven, in whom and through whom men may be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

But besides these gross sinners and awfully impious and apostate spirits, how many thousands and ten thousands are there among professed Christians, whose lives are not stained with any gross sins or grievous impieties, and whose minds are fully convinced of the eternal truth of the Gospel, and, when properly awakened, of the awful responsibility of every soul for the things done in the body; and yet how few will be like the five wise virgins, who, though they slumbered awhile, arose at the cry, and trimmed their lamps, and when “the bridegroom came, were ready, and went in with him to the marriage.”

But how many will imitate rather the unwise conduct of the foolish virgins, whose oil was exhausted, and whose lamps could not be replenished before the bridegroom came, and the door was shut. How many, instead of having “their loins girded and their lights burning,” will have wasted their lives, and neglected the light of their souls, so that they have become spiritually dark, as the foolish virgins’ oilless lamps; who have talked of religion, but have never striven to understand it with the faculties of
the mind, nor to feel it, as a source of happiness and consolation, by the moral perceptions of the heart. Can such persons contemplate without fear the approaching day of final retribution? Can they hear, without the most unutterable feelings of alarm and apprehension, the midnight cry—"the Bridegroom cometh;"—the voice of the archangel, the trump of God, the shout of the descending Judge!"

When the foolish virgins said, "Lord, Lord, open to us, he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." Our Lord, in his sermon on the mount, says the same thing, and in more explicit terms, which he now repeats in this parable from another mountain, within so few days of the termination of his ministry upon earth.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have cast out devils? and in thy Name have done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

All, therefore, that work iniquity;—all who commit sin, and do not repent of it—and no man, save Jesus Christ, was ever without sin;—all who neglect their salvation, as a matter of indifference, instead of "working it out with fear and trembling;"—all who are not ever on the watch lest their oil

* Matt. vii. 21—23.
be expended,—lest they fall into a state of neglect of religious things so as to lose sight of religion altogether,—all such persons will have cause to tremble when the midnight cry of the bridegroom is heard, when the trump of an angry God sounds terribly in their ears.

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

These words evidently apply to that day when the Son of man shall come upon the clouds of heaven to judge the whole world. The coming of the Son of man is indeed by many critics interpreted of the destruction of Jerusalem,—an interpretation which has not been followed in the foregoing pages. But even some of these expositors understand this text of the day of Judgment.* Of that day and hour we know not, but that it will happen; we know not when it will happen: but there are critics

* In this parable our Lord has taught us, that unless we persevere in grace, having it always at least in habit, and ready to be brought into exercise as occasion requires, we shall be excluded from the abodes of the blessed without remedy, though we may have expressed considerable alacrity and diligence for a while. Also that the grace of other men, and their good works, shall stand us in no stead at the day of Judgment. To conclude, as the parable represents the suddenness of Christ's coming to call every particular person off the stage, it shows us both the folly and danger of delaying religion to a death-bed, and powerfully enforces habitual watchfulness, both in the acquisition and exercise of grace, upon all men in every age, from the consideration of the uncertainty of life. Accordingly the application of the parable is, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Macknight's Harmony, vol. ii. p. 665.
who presume to point out the exact period when
these awful things shall come to pass.* The cer-
tainty that such a day will arrive is frequently
declared by our blessed Lord; and the proceedings
of that day are intimated by this and the two fol-
lowing parables. The principle, on which we shall
be judged, is shown in the parables of the Ten
Virgins, and of the Talents; the method is shadowed,

* The wild speculations on the Apocalypse, which have ap-
peared in different periods of the Church, and have been falsified
by time, which has shown the inaccuracy of the various calcula-
tions, are once more revived by such writers as Mr. Hatley
Frere, the Rev. George Croly, and the Rev. Edward Irving.
The following extract from one of the writers about the era of
the Reformation, will serve to show the accuracy of the observa-
tion in the text:—"Although it is said in Mark,† that the
day of Judgment, and hour thereof none doth know, yea not the
Sonne, but the Father only; yet let none be so base of judgment
as to conclude thereby that the yeare or age thereof is also un-
known to Christ, or unable to be known any ways to his serv-
ants. That mystery was justly, by the Providence of God,
closed from our predecessors; but certainly, so soon as that day
beginneth to approach, God, by his Scriptures, shall make the
age and yeares thereof to be manifested, as a spur, in his mercy,
to move the elected sinner to repentance, and a testimonie in
God's justice, against the hard-hearted misbelievers, continuing
in sinne." Lord Napier's 'Plaine Discovery of the whole Re-
velation of St. John,' A.D. 1593. The ingenious arguments of
this writer have been followed by all succeeding writers. But
the failure of their predecessors in these speculations might af-
ford some warning to those who follow. See an able article on
the Apocalyptic writers, from whence the above extract is taken,
in the 3d number of the British Critic, Quarterly Theological
Review, and Ecclesiastical Record, for July 1827.

† Mark xiii. 32.
for it can be no otherwise conveyed to our apprehensions, in that of the Sheep and the Goats. But "the mystery" is more plainly "shown" to us by St. Paul in these sublime words:—"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump—ἐν αὐτῶν, ἐν ριπη ὀφθαλμον, ἐν τῇ εἰσχατῆ σαλπίγγι. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."*

The glowing description of the resurrection, in this eloquent discourse of the inspired Apostle, respects rather the destiny of the faithful and righteous, than that of the wicked, impenitent, and unbelieving. This same Apostle is elsewhere more general in his admonitions to all persons to prepare against the coming of this great day. Thus, to the vain and sophistical Athenians, he says—"The times of ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."†

The Son of Sirach gives us this golden advice:—"Humble thyself before thou beest sick, and in the time of sins show repentance; and defer not till death to be justified."‡

* 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. † Acts xvii. 30, 31. ‡ Eccles. xviii. 21, 22.
SECTION II.

THE TALENTS.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called unto him his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 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. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money. After a long time the Lord of these servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 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. 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. 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. 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. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I know thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not straowed. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 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 straowed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 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. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

The parable of the Talents unfolds an instructive lesson to every rational being; for according to natural equity we must believe ourselves accountable for that which is committed to us. Every Christian is expressly told, in the oracles of his faith, that he must one day give account for the use or abuse of his talents at the throne of his Maker and Redeemer. Such a parable, therefore, as this of the Talents, comes home to every man’s business and bosom. It does not merely respect the visitation

* Matt. xxv. 14—30.
upon the Jews, to whom had been so long committed the oracles of God; but it extends further—it reminds us that we must all give account of the things done in the body at the final judgment of the quick and the dead by our Redeemer and Judge. The use or abuse of our natural endowments, and of the opportunities afforded us by the grace of God for their improvement, must form a great and chief portion of that solemn account.

There is a parable in St. Luke's Gospel,* delivered at the house of Zaccheus the publican at Jericho, of a nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom, and to return; and that, before he went, he delivered ten pounds to each of his ten servants, to negotiate until his return. This appears to have been similar to, but not the same as, the parable of the Talents. That of the Nobleman was delivered before our Lord entered Jerusalem, and the gifts are equal. This of the Talents was delivered but three days before the last Passover, and the gifts are various, implying, as it is thought by some, the extraordinary powers bestowed on the apostles, the seventy disciples, and other inspired teachers: but the other denotes the general assistance, to every Christian, of the Holy Spirit. The one, delivered in the house of Zaccheus, was a warning to the Jews of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, and of the end of the Jewish polity, as a just judgment of their impious unbelief in their Messiah. But the parable of the Talents is a general warning of the last judgment. If it refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, it is as the

beginning of that scheme of Providence, which should terminate in the general judgment, as we have already explained it in the exposition of the second parable of the Fig-tree.* But if this interpretation be allowed—though I rather incline to that which refers it wholly and directly to the general judgment—the immediate judgment upon the Jews seems almost absorbed in the greater and more distant judgment which must pass upon all nations. But we will now proceed to the more particular explanation of the present parable.†

* Chap. VIII. Sect. I.
† Whitby would show that this parable also respects the Jews; and the return of the king in both, the return of Christ after taking possession of his kingdom at the right hand of God, to take vengeance on the Jews; or, after going by his apostles and disciples to erect a kingdom among the Gentiles, and then coming back to punish them, Matt. xxiv. 14.: applying the talents to his servants; as, to the apostles, ten; to the seventy, or those of lesser spiritual gifts, five; to the Jews themselves, one talent, i. e. the Law and the Prophets; and holding, as all are agreed, the destruction of Jerusalem to be a full emblem of the final judgment. Whitby ad loc. and note on Luke xix. 12. Valpy’s Annot. vol. i. p. 396.

But this parable, and many other passages which Whitby and other expositors interpret of the destruction of Jerusalem, were much more consistently interpreted of the day of Judgment, of which they become immediate, not secondary and typical, revelations. The following note of Lightfoot is therefore more to our purpose:—"You have a like, and almost the same, parable, Luke xix. Yet indeed not the very same; for (besides that there is mention there of pounds being given, here, of talents,) that parable was spoke by Christ going up from Jericho to Jerusalem, before the raising up of Lazarus; this, as he was sitting on Mount Olivet three days before the Passover. That, upon this account, "because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and
“The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered to them his goods.”

St. Luke adds the circumstance that he travelled “into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom;” and it has been ingeniously supposed, that Christ took the rise of this parable from the custom of the kings of Judea, Herod the Great, and Archelaus his son, who usually went to Rome to receive the kingdom of Judea from Caesar, without whose permission and appointment they durst not take the government into their hands.

By the man travelling into a far country, is here represented the Son of God leaving this world, and ascending into heaven, where he sat down at the right hand of God the Father, after he had finished the great work of man’s redemption. The delivery of his goods expressly to his own servants may mean, that he left the gifts and strengths of the Holy Spirit with the apostles, and seventy disciples, and other gifted men, for the performance of the commission of “going into all the world, and preaching the Gospel to every creature—to the Jew first, and also to the Greek,” or Gentile.* But as every Christian, con-

because they thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear,” Luke xix. 11. and that he might show, that it would not be long before Jerusalem should be called to an account for all the privileges and benefits conferred upon it by God. (See ver. 14 and 17.) But this, that he might warn all to be watchful, and provide with their utmost care concerning giving up their accounts at the last judgment.” Lightfoot’s Works, vol. ii. p. 247. fol.

* Mark xvi. 15. Rom. i. 16.
verted and baptized by these servants, becomes himself the servant of Christ, and every one must give account of his single talent, we must extend the application to all who name the Name of Christ, when they shall appear before his tribunal to give an account of their lives upon earth.

"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."

The talents are distributed according to the ability of each of his servants; and we find the master satisfied with an increase proportionate to the gift. Origen thus explains it:—"According to each man's ability he gave his talent; to one man five, as being able to traffic with them; to another two, as being not sufficient to manage more; and to a third one, as being still more infirm."

The immediate application being, in the first place, to the apostles, and other inspired men of the apostolic age, St. Paul best explains this, by saying that to these favoured servants, "there were diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." He thus enumerates these spiritual gifts—"wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues."


† 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.
and interpretation of tongues:—All these, he concludes, worketh one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every one severally as he will."

"Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money."

The disciples, who were the Lord's own servants, had, as the Apostle says, "the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal."* We all, in our several degrees, have the same Spirit manifested in us, and we must improve these precious talents. They therefore, who traded with their talents, we find, are rewarded; while he who hid his talent, and never attempted to make any "profit" by it, is justly punished. The parable thus goes on:

"After a long time the Lord of these servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 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. 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."

The same account was given by him who had received two talents, to which he had added two others, and the same answer was returned.

"Then he which had received the one talent

* 1 Cor. xii. 7.
came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sowed, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid my talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 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: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.”*

* The Lord did not deliver the talents to his seventy with that intent that they should receive the increase and profit of them by usury; but that by merchandize and some honest way of trade, they should increase them. He only returns this answer to the slothful servant, as fitted to what he had alleged:—You take me for a covetous, griping, and sordid man; why then did you not make use of a manner of gain agreeable to these qualities, namely, interest or usury, since you would not apply yourself to any honest traffic, that you might have returned me some increase of my money, rather than nothing at all? So that our Lord in these words doth not so much approve of usury, as upbraid the folly and sloth of his servant. Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 247. fol.

The argument lies thus:—Though it were true, as you say, that I reap where I sow not, and you durst not risk the money in merchandize; you ought to have put it out to the public money-changers to interest: some exertions should have been made. Properly speaking, God only requires service in proportion to the means and to the degree of grace granted by him. Lightfoot. Le Clerc. Valpy's Annot. vol. i. p. 398.

The exchangers, ἑρμικεῖται, are so designated from the table before them. Thus in Plautus: “Quantillum argenti mihi apud trapezitam siet.” Grotius.

Thus also Mensarius in the Latin; Suet. in August, c. iv. “mensarius collybo discoloratus;” and הַמִּשְׁבֵּה the man of the table,
fore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 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. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The reward of the two profitable servants is, that they “enter into the joy of the Lord.” The meaning of the word, rendered “joy,” is a feast or banquet.* And they who are called “servants,” it should be noticed, are slaves, which is the meaning of the word servant, both in the Old and New Testament.† The good and faithful servants, or slaves, therefore,

among the Jews, is a money-changer. “An exchanger,” say the Talmudists, “sells money; and because a table is always before him, upon which he buys and sells, therefore he is called mensarius, one that stands at a table.” Lightfoot, ut supra, p. 248.—Galba cut off the hands of a fraudulent money-changer, and nailed them to his own table. Suet. in Galb. c. ix. They are named κολλυβισται, from the collybus, a species of silver money with the impression of an ox, which appears in the above quotation. See Scapula, voc. κολλυβος. Vide Valpy’s Annot. ut supra.

* Because banqueting and nuptial feasts were still attended with great joy, insomuch that the Hebrew word פֵּאָה, which signifies a banquet, and a nuptial feast, is by the LXX. rendered sometimes δοξη, a banquet, Gen. xxvi. 30. Esther i. 3. v. 4. 8, 12, 14. sometimes γαμος, a marriage-feast, Gen. xxix. 22. Esther ii. 18. ix. 22. and once χαρα, joy, Esther ix. 17: therefore the entering this marriage-feast, or supper, prepared for this Lord, is styled “entering into the joy of his Lord.” Whitby’s Com. in loc. vol. i. p. 192. 4to.

† See Note p. 131. on Chapter III. Sect. I.
according to the story of the parable, are made freemen; and though slaves were not, freedmen were admitted to their master's table: which privilege, as a distinction for their good conduct, is allowed to the faithful servants in the parable:—"Enter ye into the joy;"—partake of the feast of your Lord: for ye are no more slaves, but freedmen.

Those who were his own immediate servants may be referred to the apostles, the seventy disciples, and other gifted servants of our blessed and divine Master: but the slothful and faithless servant finds no parallel among these immediate servants. Judas was a traitor, who had abused many talents; his crime was not of the nature of this servant in the parable. The whole parable indeed is general in its application, but especially this portion of it; for the one talent is the common distribution of human gifts.

The faithless servant may indeed apply, in the first place, to the great body of the Jewish people, from whom were selected the twelve apostles. They obey their Lord and Master merely in outward observances; but they take no care to improve the talent committed to them. They do not entreat forgiveness for their negligence, but, like him in the parable, present themselves boldly before God, and boast of their services, as he boasted of the care he took of the one talent. But this will not satisfy their Judge, who will demand a strict account of his opportunities, and of the use of his faculties, which is expressed by "putting his money to the
exchangers,” who would at least have given interest, or money, for the use of that talent which the slothful man wrapped in a napkin.

The application, however, of this passage, and of the whole parable, is more general. The general responsibility of all men was never, even by inspired writers, more happily illustrated than by the parable of the Talents. Every man is endowed by the Divine Providence with what the Apostle terms “gifts differing according to the grace which is given to us,”* or, as in the parable, “talents according to his several ability.” Of these gifts and talents, be they great or small, we experience the happiness or misery, even in this state, according to our wise or unwise application of them; and this alone should warn men that they must give a strict account of their lives before the righteous Judge of all the earth. “That servant—said Christ on another occasion—which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall he much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”† “Unto every one that hath,—says Jesus in this parable, whether it be much or little—shall be given, and—if he have improved it to the utmost—he shall have abundance:

* Rom. xii. 6. 
† Luke xii. 47, 48.
but from him that hath not—who hath not improved his talent, like the slothful servant—shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Is there not some analogy between the distribution of justice among men in this state, and that which will take place in a future? This is apparent from the nature of things as ordained by the Divine Providence. Man is a social being; and in whatever state he is placed,—whether in earth or heaven, whether in the company of frail men here, or of the spirits of just men made perfect hereafter,—he is so framed by his Creator as to be a member of society. There must therefore exist some analogy between our present and the future state of existence, which may be illustrated by the different stages of childhood and manhood in this; for our present life, being probationary, is but the preparation, or the infancy, of our more perfect state of life and immortality in the world to come.

This reasoning is adopted by the late learned Bishop Horsley.* "We are told," says this eminent prelate, "that it is one of the maxims of God's government, 'that to him that hath,’—to him that hath acquisitions of his own, made by an assiduous improvement of his talents, by a studious cultivation of his natural endowments, and a diligent use of the external means of knowledge which have been afforded him—'to him shall be given' the means of greater attainments; 'but from him that hath not'—from him who can show no fruits of his own in-


SECTION III.

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS.

"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: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 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: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, When saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 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. 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: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 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. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." *

* Matt. xxv. 31—46.
In the two preceding parables we have faintly depicted to us the manner and the principle of the proceedings of the day of Judgment: in this we have a vivid scenical representation of the Judge descending in glory, surrounded by his holy angels, and assuming his place on the throne of his glory, the awful tribunal of angels and of men, before which, and in the sublime presence of Him who sits upon the throne, shall be gathered all the nations of the earth—all that have died, risen from the grave—all that are then alive, who are described by St. Paul as caught up to meet the Lord in the air,* and finally the apostate spirits, who fell from the grace of God, and to supply whose place in heaven, it is probable, the human race was called into existence.

The character of a shepherd, which our Lord condescended to assume to himself in the beautiful parable of the Good Shepherd, is preserved in this final and awful scene of the Christian drama. The same character, we have seen, Jehovah—the second person of the Godhead—assumed in the Hebrew scriptures. The unity and consistency of the sacred oracles of our salvation are beautifully preserved by this illustration in the present parable, representing the final judgment, which terminates the scheme of revelation contained in the Bible.

"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; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep

* 1 Thess. iv. 7.
from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

The power and majesty of the Judge of heaven and earth are described with the regal magnificence which is characteristic of Scriptural representations of the Divine Judge. The prophet Zechariah and the apostle St. Jude describe the Divine Being in his judicial character, as coming with his Saints, or angels, surrounding him. "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."* "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all."† Thus likewise is he described by St. Paul:—"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."‡ But what is still more to our purpose is, that it is the usual description by which our Lord designs himself in the Gospels, as the Judge of the world. "The Son of man," said he on another occasion, "shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."§

* Zech. xiv. 5. † Jude 14, 15. ‡ 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. § Matt. xvi. 27.

Even Whitby at once expounds this parable as directly referring to the day of Judgment. He says—"It is to me a wonder, that men should imagine this refers not to the general day of Judgment, but either to the time of exercising judgments on the Jewish nation, or to the setting up a triumphant kingdom here on earth; seeing here is a more clear description of Christ's coming to judgment, in words and circumstances elsewhere acknowledged to relate to the great and final judgment." See his Commentary, vol. i. p. 192. 4to.
The figure of the Shepherd dividing the sheep and the goats is as beautiful from its pastoral simplicity, as it is in perfect keeping with the Scriptural designation of Jehovah in reference to the people of Israel, who were a race of shepherds. Whoever visits a mountainous country, and sees for the first time the sheep and the goats feeding together, can hardly fail to call to his mind this beautiful similitude of Scripture. The allotment of the right side to the sheep as worthy of reward, and of the left to the goats as worthy of condemnation, is in allusion to the Jewish Sanhedrim, where the Jews placed those to be acquitted on the right, and those to receive sentence of condemnation on the left hand.*

"Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them,

* "Maimonides saith, 'They that stand on the right hand are the just: they on the left, the guilty.'—Kimchi on 1 Kings xxii. 19. 'On his right hand is life, on his left death.' So R. Eliezer, cap. 4. sec. 4." Whitty in loc.
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."

The whole of this scene appears to be adapted to the notions and doctrines of the Jews. Their learned Rabbis hold that God prepared Paradise from the beginning, even before the earth was made. This opinion they found upon the passage of the book of Genesis,* in which the inspired penman records that the Lord God planted a garden, which, say they, was from the beginning.

Grotius however,—and he is followed by many other expositors,—gives the passage another, and perhaps a more direct and dignified interpretation. He explains "the kingdom prepared for you," to be that kingdom which was originally appointed, or assigned by God, assignatum nobis Divinitus; and he refers to several passages of the New Testament, and the Septuagint, in which the original word rendered "prepared" is unquestionably used in this sense. Thus when the sons of Zebedee urge their mother to demand of our Lord that they might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom, he tells them that this preeminence is not at his disposal; "but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."† The Apostle to the Corinthians, in a passage very similar, in which he speaks of the inconceivable happiness of the blessed in a future state, says—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the

* Gen. ii. 8. Vide Whitby on Matt. xxv. 34.
† Matt. xx. 23.
heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."* The same Apostle to the Hebrews, speaking of the patriarchs who had died in faith of a future state of glory, says—"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."† When, in the book of Genesis, Abraham sends his servant to Haran to select a wife for his son, and he meets Rebecca at the well, there occurs the following passage:—"Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; and she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed out,—or prepared,—ητοιμασθε, for my master's son."‡§

In all these passages, most of which are very similar in their meaning to the passage under consideration, the original Greek word for "prepared" is used in the sense of divinely appointed, or assigned by God. But this is not in the least irreconcilable with the interpretation of other expositors, that the

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.  † Heb. xi. 16.  ‡ Gen. xxiv. 43, 44.
phrase was adapted to the opinions of the Jews; for our Lord seldom departs from the known phraseology of that people; and in either or both these senses the expression is perfectly intelligible.

Again, that species of charity, which is termed almsgiving, was a virtue on which the Jews set the highest value,* though they by no means observed it in their practice in the time of our Lord's sojourn upon earth. This grace therefore is made as it were the sole passport into his kingdom. But we are not hence really to suppose that this one virtue, and none other, would admit the disciples of Christ into a portion of his heavenly kingdom. But this mode of speech—whereby the vices of the wicked were lashed, while to the obedience of the righteous was assigned the reward,—is not uncommon in the Scriptures, especially in the Gospels which record the life and the sayings of Christ, who frequently, and indeed commonly, spoke in this manner. To express the whole by a part, is a figure of speech in frequent use

* The Jews enforced the duties mentioned in the parable with great earnestness; but it is to be feared they confined the practice to those of their own nation. Thus, on Deut. xiii. 4. "Ye shall walk after God," Rabbi Chama in Vedarim thus comments: "He clothed the naked, Gen. iii. 21. He visited the sick; he comforted those that mourn, Gen. xxv. Do thou also these duties." Rider.—It is a question, however, if these Rabbis did not live after the time of Christ. Valpy's Annot.

Zaccheus was influenced by these national feelings when he thus recommended himself to Christ:—"Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Luke xix. 8.
by all good writers, sacred and profane. But that almsgiving and the kindred virtues should alone constitute that perfection of character which will procure for the person such a reward as to be declared "blessed of the Father," and to be summoned to "inherit the kingdom prepared" for such "before the foundation of the world," is in contradiction to Scripture itself.*

A man may be an infidel, and may nevertheless possess that natural or constitutional benevolence which impels him to assist his fellow-creatures in distress. He may be a profligate both in principle and practice, and yet possess this solitary virtue, which he owes rather to the constitution given him by his Maker than that it is the result of a volun-

* "It is an observation of the utmost importance, that although charity to our neighbour, and indeed only one branch of that comprehensive duty, viz. liberality to the poor, is here specified, as the only Christian virtue, concerning which inquiry will be made at the day of Judgment; yet we must not imagine that this is the only virtue which will be expected from us, and that on this alone will depend our final salvation. Nothing can be more distant from truth, or more dangerous to religion, than this opinion. The fact is, that charity, or love to men in all its extent, being the most eminent of all the evangelical virtues, being that which Christ has made the very badge and discriminating mark of his religion, is here constituted by him the representative of all other virtues; just as faith is, in various passages of Scripture, used to denote and represent the whole Christian religion. Nothing is more common than this sort of figure (called a Synechdoche) in profane, as well as sacred writers; by which a part, an essential and important part, is made to stand for the whole." Bp. Porteus's Lectures on St. Matthew. Lect. xx. Works, vol. 5. p. 255.
tary obedience to the Divine law. Such a character may, and not very unfrequently does exist. But such a character is condemned at once by the words of our Lord himself, who attaches salvation to faith, and damnation to unbelief. "He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* To the practical bad man the same fate is assigned as to the unbeliever. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."† St. Paul moreover declares that "though we bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth us nothing."‡ Charity to the poor, therefore, is not that charity which excels faith and hope. One grace of universal benevolence to our brethren in faith is mentioned as a characteristic distinction, among many others, of those who are declared "blessed of the Father." But we may conclude from the whole tenor of Scripture, which can never contradict itself, that unless with this grace be united faith, hope, charity in its extended sense, and every other practical fruit of the religion of Christ, blended indeed, as our best works will be, with the infirmity of our nature,—for at best we shall be unprofitable servants,—we cannot hope to inherit that glorious consummation of the blessed, "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world."

* Mark xvi. 16. † Matt. vii. 19. 21. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 3.
The kingdom, said in Scripture to be prepared for the blessed or elect, seems to be that state of higher existence, into which, when the foundations of the world were laid, the Divine Author of our being ordained that those, who fitted themselves by a voluntary obedience to his will, should at a proper season be removed. "Mankind," says Archbishop King, "believes from the light of nature, that God will translate good men into a better state; but it is necessary they should be prepared here, as plants in a nursery, before they are removed into the garden where they are to bear fruit. God has, therefore, decreed this life to be as it were the passage to a better. Thus the earth is replenished with inhabitants, who being educated under discipline for a while, till they have finished their course, shall depart into another state suited to their deserts." The opinion of this learned and thinking Prelate, that men could, by the light of nature, have believed in the existence of a future and a better state into which good men will be translated, may perhaps admit of a question; but that, being revealed, we easily accede to a doctrine so natural to the hopes and aspirations of our nature, will, I think, be disputed by no thoughtful and religious man. Into these habitations, evacuated perhaps by the Apostate Spirits, will the blessed—when, before the end of the world, a certain and sufficient number of the elect shall be completed—be translated by the sound of that heavenly voice, described so magnificently in the parable,—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit
the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*

* King's Origin of Evil, by Law, second edition, p. 446. The following remarks on the subject of the future state of the elect, by his ingenious editor, may be worth the reader's attention:—“Men were created at first upon the earth, because there was no other place for them; all others had their proper inhabitants, and were full; and therefore man must either be here or nowhere. Now this earth is part of the universe, and of such a nature that it was impossible the animals in it should be freed from all inconveniencies, that is, exempted from all natural evils: But our good and wise God so contrived it by his peculiar care and favour, that man, the only intelligent being in it, should be exempted from the greatest of these evils, that is, absolute extinction by death, and be capable of translation to a better place when it should become void, and accordingly the fall of the angels made room for man. This is so easy a thought that I find many are of opinion that man was created with a design to fill the place from whence the angels fell, and that these angels are not sent to hell till there be men enough to fill their place in heaven.

"This seems to be the intent of what the Scripture declares concerning a certain number of the elect, which must be completed before the end and consummation of the world. A better reason could scarce be given why a certain number was to be filled up before the last day, than that this earth was designed to prepare as many inhabitants to be translated into heaven as were wanting; nor how any should be wanting but by the fall or departure of some of the inhabitants placed there by God at first. But it was reasonable that this should be proposed to mortals by way of reward, and that as many as God vouchsafed his favour to should be at liberty by trial of their virtues to show themselves worthy to succeed the fallen angels. This seems to offer a reason why God permitted men the use of free will, viz. to show himself just and equitable to his creatures, so that those of a lower class cannot complain of God since he has put it in their power to better their condition, if these will use
The judge next passes sentence on the wicked. “Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 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. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous in to life eternal.”

As the kingdom of heaven was prepared for the blessed; so we find a place of punishment was prepared for the devil and his angels, into which the wicked among men, who had followed their example, will be plunged.* It is worthy of remark, that their faculties ari:ght: nor those in a higher to be too proud of the Divine favour and despise their inferiors, since if they abuse that favour they shall be obliged to quit it to such of those inferiors as shall better deserve that station. Nor could there possibly be a more equal distribution of things, supposing it was necessary that there should be an inequality among beings, and different degrees of happiness among rational agents.” Ibid. p. 451.

* The dogmas of Calvin, respecting the predestination of certain individuals to eternal damnation, are obviously refuted by this parable from the lips of Christ himself. Calvin’s words are these:—

“Prædes-
though it is expressly said that God had prepared a kingdom for the blessed, he did not prepare a place of punishment for the wicked. God designed the happiness of all mankind from the beginning; and if they do not obtain the desired end, it is by the abuse of the grace of God and of man's free will. The fire was designed for evil and rebellious spirits; but if man will reject the offer of peace and pardon upon the easy conditions of repentance, faith, and obedience; if he sink himself to the evil minds and propensities of fallen spirits, and with them rebel against the laws of his Creator, he incurs the awful punishment which was not originally designed for his nature, but which was prepared for the devil and his angels.

"When God did create and prepare that place, he did not intend it for man; it was prepared for the devil and his angels: so saith the judge himself, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, ὁ ἠτώμασεν ὁ πατήρ μου τῷ ἔιςβολῷ, which my Father prepared for the devil,' so some copies read it: God intended it not for man, but man would imitate the devil's pride, and listen to the

whispers of an evil spirit, and follow his temptations, and rebel against his Maker; and then God also, against his first design, resolved to throw such persons into that place that was prepared for the devil: for so great was the love of God to mankind, that he prepared joys infinite and never-ceasing for man, before he had created him; but he did not predestinate him to any evil; but when he was forced to it by man's malice, he doing what God forbad him, God cast him thither where he never intended him; but it was not man's portion: he designed it not at first, and at last also he invited him to repentance; and when nothing could do it, he threw man into another's portion, because he would not accept of what was designed to be his own.”

*Bishop Taylor's Sermon on Christ's Advent to Judgment. Works by Heber, vol. v. p. 44.

The fathers, as Origen, Chrysostom, Euthymius, and Theophylact, observe, that Christ saith not of the punishment, as of the kingdom, that it was prepared for man from the beginning; that God designed man's happiness; he alone is the author of his misery; that the fire was prepared, not for man, but for the evil spirits; but man, rejecting the double offer of reward on obedience and repenting grace, submits to their thralldom, conforms to their evil minds, joins in their rebellion, and incurs the punishment not originally designed for his nature. Whitby from Grotius. Valpy's Annot. vol. i. p. 400.

This parable, in which Christ as the judge represents himself as a shepherd, strongly infers His Divinity. He is the Good Shepherd in the former parable, which we have traced up to Jechoniah the Shepherd of Israel. As the second Person of the Godhead, it is the opinion generally of the fathers, Christ judged the first guilty pair in the Garden of Eden. He now judges their countless posterity, and those fallen angels who
wrought the fall of our first parents. St. John, whose Gospel was written to prove the Divinity of Christ, relates one wonderful circumstance, after his Resurrection, which I cannot but subjoin to this work, and especially to this last parable which so strongly infers the Divinity of our Saviour; this is, the infidelity of St. Thomas as to the Resurrection of Jesus, in which the Divinity of our Lord is at once acknowledged by the convinced Apostle. The infidelity of Thomas was of the most common and vulgar sort, which is governed by the senses. When he was informed by the disciples of the Resurrection, who "said unto him, We have seen the Lord; he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." When our blessed Lord graciously gave his doubting disciple the signs he required, and said, "Be not faithless, but believing;" Thomas, struck with the Divine appearance of his Lord, convinced by the evidence of his senses, and smitten probably with remorse for his previous unbelief, instantly exclaimed, in acknowledgment of Christ’s Divinity, "My Lord and My God." The reply of Jesus is remarkable, both as it points out the danger of infidelity, and as it shows his full acceptance of the Divine title. "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John xx. 24—29.) The faith of the disciples, who accompanied our Lord during his ministry, was by sight of his wonderful miracles, and by the Divine discourses which they heard. But after the death and resurrection of Christ, faith was to be acquired by other means,—by meditation and by reflection on what was heard and read; faith was henceforth, as defined by the Apostle, "the evidence of things not seen." There were those who doubted among the disciples, who had the opportunity of seeing and hearing; and there are those who doubt the Divinity, if not the Resurrection, of Christ among his disciples now, who cannot see with the outward senses. St. Thomas was convinced at once of the Resurrection and the Divinity of his Lord; and though we have not the ocular demonstration whereby we can say "My Lord and my God," we have the Scriptures, which to the mental eye demonstrate this doctrine most convincingly; and
that the *Resurrection and Divinity are inseparable*, is proved by this fact of St. Thomas's conversion. While therefore his infidelity holds out a salutary warning to all disciples to "be not faithless, but believing," it encourages Christians to persist in their faith of the *Divinity*, as well as the Resurrection of Jesus: for "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Beza, and Whitby's Last Thoughts are referred to in the "Improved (Unitarian) Version," to prove that the confession, "My Lord and my God," of Thomas, was merely an exclamation. The reader is referred to Whitby's *Commentary*, which was the fruit of the greater part of his life, and of his most vigorous faculties, for a refutation of this opinion; which begins in these words: "Let it be noted from Woltzogenius the Socinian, that they are not to be hearkened to, who say, Thomas spake these words, not to Christ, but by way of an exclamation to God the Father; for the Apostle could not say, that Thomas answered, and much less that he answered and said to him, unless he had directed his words to him who said unto him in the precedent verse, 'Be not faithless, but believe:' and if he said to him, 'Thou art my Lord and my God,' he must acknowledge him as fully and as truly to be his God, as his Lord." Whitby's Comment. in loc. vol. i. p. 512. 4to.
CONCLUSION.

One object of the foregoing work has been to arrange the parables of the New Testament according to their subjects and purposes, and, with the least possible violation of their chronological order, to point out their connection with the several parts of our Lord's ministry. The other, and greater object is, to show that the parables form a series of the most important prophecies and revelations respecting Christianity, which gradually develop the Gospel Dispensation from the first preaching of Christ to the day of Judgment.

With this view the first chapter contains the exposition of those parables which are introductory to the more direct promises and descriptions of the kingdom of God. The first section of this chapter treats of a conversation of our Lord which took place in the house of Simon the Pharisee, during which he delivered the short parable of the Creditor and Two Debtors. This happened before he began regularly to teach the multitude by parables; and the whole is intended to introduce to us the personal character of the Redeemer. But the second section, the parable of the Sower, is the first parable which was spoken by our Lord with the purpose of unfolding
the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and contains a prophecy of the effects of the doctrines of the Gospel when preached among men.

The second chapter comprizes various parables, all of which are descriptive of the kingdom of Christ, and prophetic of the rapid increase, and wide diffusion of the blessed tidings of salvation in the world. The first parable of the Tares, expounded in the first section of this chapter, describes very particularly the state of the spiritual world, and of the Church of God contending, as it were, with the elements of this world and the wiles of the Enemy of man, until its final conquest at the Day of Judgment. The second of this series of parables, the Grain of Mustard Seed, and indeed all the smaller parables, which follow those of the Sower and the Tares, and which are comprized in this chapter, describe, with as much minuteness as is consistent with the nature of allegory and prophecy, the wonderful increase of the Gospel from the smallest beginnings, and the invaluable nature of those blessed tidings which it would spread abroad over the whole earth. Nothing can more vividly represent the wonderful increase of the word of God, when once sown by the Divine Sower upon the earth, than the parable of the Mustard Seed, which is the least of all seeds, but when planted in the earth becomes the greatest among herbs, and a tree so umbrageous as to lodge the birds of the air in its branches. The imperceptible nature of this increase and diffusion of the Gospel is as finely depicted by the Leaven hidden by a woman in three measures of meal, which silently and imperceptibly
leavened the whole. The Gospel, in like manner, from small beginnings and by insensible degrees, was diffused through the nations of the earth, and by its own Divine power silently and imperceptibly effected a total change in the character of the world.

The two next parables,—the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price,—describe the invaluable nature of the Gospel Dispensation. It is as the treasure which gives the field all its value, and as the pearl of great price which exceeds in value all other pearls and precious stones. It exceeds the price of all the grandeur and wealth, and every attraction of this world, in the eyes of the Christian, who looks upon it as the passport to a higher and nobler state of existence.—The parable of the Net sets forth the danger of those who reject this precious treasure, as well as the happiness of those who shall embrace and be governed by the heavenly doctrine of our Redeemer. And the Householder, with which our Lord concludes this beautiful series of parables, shows the necessity of the chosen disciples being well "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," before they presume to unfold the blessed tidings of salvation to the people.

The Patched Garment and the New Wine is placed among the smaller parables, and is the last section of this chapter. It was delivered about the same time, or at no great distance from the delivery of the parables in the 13th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel; and the subject is very similar—especially to that of the Householder; for they both contain
rules for the conduct of our Lord’s disciples, and are therefore appropriately arranged with parables descriptive of his kingdom.

Next to the doctrines of our holy religion, the duties, incumbent upon us as Christians, require to be considered; and those, which are predictions of the moral changes to be effected in the world by Christianity, are the subject of the third chapter of this work. Those parables, therefore, which set forth the graces which are necessary to, and the vices which exclude from the kingdom of God, are expounded in this chapter. The object of these parables may be summed up in a few words, though their exposition is spread over many pages. For this purpose I need only repeat the preliminary paragraph to the first section of the chapter.

The design of the parables of our Lord was to indicate the progress of the Gospel, and gradually to unveil the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The moral changes are therefore exhibited by several parables, which are now become the finest lessons of practical Christianity. The character of the Jews is strongly depicted in the several parables which are expounded in this chapter, while the great moral change to be effected by the Gospel is as powerfully displayed. The cruel temper of that people, especially of the Pharisees, is shown in the Unmerciful Servant; their want of compassion in the Good Samaritan; and their worldliness, pride, covetousness, unfeeling luxury, and avarice, in the four last parables,—the Rich Glutton, the Highest and Lowest Rooms, the Unjust Steward, and Dives
and Lazarus: while the opposite temper of compassion, humility, heavenly-mindedness, generosity, temperance, charity, and contempt of riches, are declared to be the characteristics of the Gospel-dispensation, the virtues and graces which alone can render us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Among the greater duties of Christians, which are indispensable to their salvation, are repentance and prayer. As therefore the last chapter treated of those parables which set forth the particular duties and graces which respected the characters of individuals, and fitted them for heaven; so the two following, the fourth and fifth chapters, explain those parables which enforce the general duties incumbent upon all the disciples of our heavenly Master, and without which we cannot be admitted into his Kingdom.

The fourth chapter treats of the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Money, and the Prodigal Son, which are successively related in the 15th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. These parables, while they enforce the duty and efficacy of repentance upon all Christians, do nevertheless retain a more direct character of prophecies than those comprised in the preceding chapter. The Lost Sheep, and the Lost Piece of Money, are prophetic of the conversion of the Gentiles. The Prodigal Son is a more comprehensive prophecy of the same blessed end of the Gospel. It contemplates, as I have endeavoured to show, the vast scheme of Redemption from the calling of the Hebrews to their rejection, and the call-
ing of the Gentiles,—until, in process of time, the Jews will be converted from their apostacy, and will again become the means of diffusing the truth among the yet unconverted heathens; as those of that nation, who first received Christ, were the instruments, under God, of converting the Gentiles after the death and resurrection of their Divine Master. The parable does not indeed express all this; but, like other passages of Scripture, it may contemplate something more than it expresses, which can be discovered only by other Scriptures; for Scripture is its own interpreter.

The fifth chapter contains two parables,—the Importunate Widow, and the Publican and Pharisee,—which set forth the true nature of prayer; preliminary to which are prefixed some remarks on prayer, as the means of communication between man and his Maker. In this chapter, however, as well as in the last, the prophetic character of the parable is sustained, while it teaches us the great practical duty of prayer. The parable of the Importunate Widow predicts by what means the church of Christ will be supported; and the unjust judge,—in whose character the rapacity of the Pharisees, who were members of the Sanhedrin, is reproved,—carries our thoughts to that just Judge of all the earth, by whom our prayers, when offered in a proper spirit, will ever be heard,—while the parable intimates that the unjust judges of the Jewish nation will be no longer ranked among God's people. The Publican and Pharisee allude more obviously to the different portions of the Jews and Gentiles. The humble pub-
lican is justified, and the Gentile world, which he represents, is elected into the church of God, from whence the proud and disdainful Pharisee is rejected.

The sixth chapter contains a very important series of parables, which are, in fact, in continuation of the most signal prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures. These parables foretell, in the plainest terms of which this species of composition will admit, the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of Jewish polity, and the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

In the first section is examined the first parable of the Fig-tree. There are two parables of the Fig-tree, which were delivered by our Lord, and are recorded by the Evangelist. The first, which is the first of this chapter, is a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem: the second, which will be found in the eighth chapter, foretells the Day of Judgment. As the Lord of the Vineyard, in this parable, recommended the fig-tree to be "cut down," on account of its unfruitfulness; so, Christ declares to his hearers, who appear to have been the multitude, shall the Jews have the like sentence passed upon them for their infidelity and unfruitfulness, which shall be seen in the destruction of their city and temple, and the final downfall of their church and polity.

The Labourers in the Vineyard, the subject of the second section, applies to the calling of the Gentiles who were last, and their election into the Christian church; and to the rejection of the Jews who had been first, the only true church upon earth, and the children of Abraham in whose seed the families of
the earth were to be blessed, from the kingdom of God, and of Christ whom they had rejected.—The next short parable of the Two Sons, which is the third section, was obviously spoken in reproach of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and of their obstinate rejection of the doctrine of John the Baptist. John being the forerunner of Jesus, the rejection of the Messiah was the natural consequence of their rejection of his appointed messenger. The Gentiles are therefore predicted, in this parable as in the last, to be elected into the place of the Jews in the kingdom of God.

But the Vineyard, in the fourth Section, is by far the most important parable in this chapter. Many of the preceding parables, in this and the foregoing chapters, have been traced to the Rabbinical writings of the Jews, to whom frequently, and perhaps always, the particular parable, as well as this peculiar mode of instruction, was familiar. Some of them however, which we have examined in different parts of the present work, were taken from the Hebrew Scriptures, and hence became not only very familiar to the Jews, but much more striking in their application to that misguided people. Of these the parable of the Vineyard is the most important. Our Lord adopts the very language and figures of preceding prophets respecting the destruction of Jerusalem and the rejection of the Jews. He spoke to them in the language of a prophet, and by the well-known allegory of the Vineyard, by which the Hebrew prophets, particularly Isaiah and Solomon, reproved their countrymen, and predicted their downfall. For the particular examination of these facts, the reader
is referred to the exposition of the parable. But I cannot but repeat one other important result of the comparison of this, and some other parables—especially the True Vine, the Good Shepherd, and the Sheep and the Goats which is the conclusion of the whole—with the prophetic parts of the Hebrew Scriptures. This is the Divinity of Jesus Christ, who must have been the Jehovah of the Old Testament. In the exposition of this parable this is proved, I think, to demonstration; and that the present state of the Jews is the most unquestionable evidence of the Godhead of Christ. It is shown that the Jews are, to the present hour, suffering the judicial penalty, repeatedly threatened in their own Scriptures, of traitors from their lawful King, of apostates from their Messiah, and of impius infidels of Jehovah their God; and that wheresoever we see a Jew, we not only behold a living monument of the Divine origin of our religion, but we have the strongest possible evidence, which carries along with it the analogy of the whole Bible, of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

In the last section of this chapter is expounded the Marriage Feast, which in a very striking manner predicts the final excision of the Jews for their apostacy from Christ, the Spouse of the Church, a title which he appropriates to himself in several passages of the Gospel, and particularly in the subsequent parable of the Ten Virgins.

The seventh chapter contains two very remarkable parables, wherein Christ designates himself: these are the Good Shepherd, and the True Vine,
the only parables recorded by St. John, and these, like St. John's Gospel generally, set our blessed Redeemer in the most amiable light. But these parables retain the same character of prophecies, which marks the rest of these simple and beautiful compositions. The Good Shepherd, which is the frequent title of Jehovah in the Old Testament, declares that he has other sheep, which are not of the fold of Israel; them also he must bring, and they shall hear his voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd. This clearly refers to the calling of the Gentiles, which is predicted. He describes the rapacity and insidelity of the rulers of the Jews in preceding ages up to the time of the appearance of the Messiah, whose death, for the sins of the world, is plainly prefigured in the good Shepherd that lays down his life for the sheep; and the Divinity of Christ is the necessary inference from a comparison of the several texts of the Old Testament, in which Jehovah, as for instance in the twenty-third Psalm, assumes to himself the office of the good Shepherd, whom our Lord declares himself to be, and in the precise sense of the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The True Vine, by which title likewise Christ designates himself, is the continuation and enlargement of the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, which represent Judah and Israel under the allegorical figures of the vine and vineyard. This parable, therefore, bears a close resemblance to that of the Vineyard, already noticed, in the sixth chapter. As that referred more particularly to the prophecy of Isaiah, this coincides with the predictions of Jeri-
miah and Ezekiel, and the exquisite allegory of the Vine in the eightieth Psalm. The Hebrew people had hitherto been God's peculiar care, the noble vine which was brought out of Egypt, and planted by the Divine hand in the fruitful soil of Judea. But notwithstanding that it had been so "noble a vine, so wholly a right seed," it was now become a "degenerate plant of a strange vine"—it was to be cast into the forest, as no longer the stock from whence the Church derived its nurture. Instead of the Church of Israel, on which the worship of the true God had been grafted, the profession of Christ was henceforth to be the source and well-spring of all our future life, of all our knowledge of the true God.

The sixth and seventh chapters contain parables which are predictive of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion and excision of the Jews. The eighth and ninth chapters consist of parables which are preparatory to, and descriptive of the day of Judgment. The first section of the eighth chapter is expository of the second parable of the Fig-tree, which is significant of the last day, though it applies in the first instance to the destruction of Jerusalem.

The destruction of Jerusalem was one of a chain of causes in God's Providence, which should gradually conduct to the Judgment of the Great Day, and the end of the world, of which it became a sign, in the same manner as 'the tender branches of the' fig-tree, and its vernal buds and blossoms, are the signs of approaching summer.

The short parable of the Wise Householder, the Faithful and Wise Servant, and the Evil Servant,
which forms the second and last section of this chapter, is beautifully connected in all its parts, and therefore one; and yet it distinguishes three characters:—The wise householder, who, had he known in what hour the thief would come, would have been more watchful, and have thus prevented the breaking up of his house; the faithful and wise servant, whom, for having fulfilled the duties of the wise householder, his Lord had made ruler over his household; and the evil servant, who, because his Lord delayed his coming, abused his trust, was guilty of cruelty and injustice to his fellow-servants, and committed excess with profligate strangers. These separate characters are beautifully distinguished from each other, and are yet so insensibly united, that the same individual may, in his own person, represent the three; and of this liability is the warning given at the beginning of the parable, as an awful preparation for the Day of Judgment:—"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Watchfulness and perseverance in the faith of Christ are inculcated and enforced by the assurance of a great and final day of account, when the good and evil servants will be rewarded and punished. The faithful servant shall be made ruler over his Lord's household; that is, he will receive the highest reward in a future state; while the evil servant shall be cut asunder, and have his portion appointed with the hypocrites; in other words, he will be infinitely miserable in a future state.

The reader is now conducted, in the ninth and last chapter of this work, to three parables—the
Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Talents, and the Sheep and the Goats—which are descriptive of that awful period which will be the consummation of the Christian Scheme, when angels and men will be assembled before the Judgment-seat of Christ. These are indeed prophecies and revelations,—particularly the last, which describes the proceedings of the last day as far as we can comprehend it in this state, and quite as plain as the description of this awful day in the mysterious Apocalypse of St. John. These parables were delivered during Passion week, the last week of our Saviour's earthly life.

The first of these parables is that of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. The five wise virgins describe those Christians who persevere in the faith which they have embraced, and who, though they are sometimes off their guard,—which is indicated by the circumstance of the parable that they, in common with the foolish virgins, "slumbered and slept,"—are nevertheless generally prepared for their Lord's coming. The midnight cry, though a necessary circumstance of the story, predicts, or rather prefigures, the suddenness with which the Day of Judgment will come upon all, especially upon those who, like the foolish virgins, are unprepared for that great event, though they know that it must happen. When, therefore, these virgins craved admittance to the marriage feast, they were disowned by the bridegroom, who declares that he knows them not. This circumstance our Lord declared more plainly, at an earlier stage of his ministry, in his sermon on the mount.* To such

* Matt. vii. 21—23.
persons,—who have neglected to clothe themselves with the appropriate graces of Christianity,—he will profess that he never knew them, and dismiss them from his presence as workers of iniquity. By this beautiful apologue we are warned to be on the watch, for we know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh to judgment. This alone should set at rest the somewhat wild speculations of those who profess to point out the exact period of the Day of Judgment.

The next parable of the Talents, which, like the former, lays down the principle on which we shall be judged at the final account, unfolds an instructive lesson to every rational being; for according to natural equity we must believe ourselves accountable for that which is committed to us. Every Christian is expressly told in the oracles of his faith, that he must one day give account for the use or abuse of his talents at the Throne of his Maker and Redeemer. Such a parable, therefore, comes home to every man's business and bosom. It does not merely respect the visitation of the Jews; but it reminds us that we must all give account of the things done in the body at the Great Tribunal of our Eternal Judge. The use or abuse of our natural endowments, and of the opportunities afforded us by the grace of God for their improvement, must form a great and chief portion of that solemn account. This parable cannot be supposed to represent an exact account of the proceedings of the Day of Judgment; but we may infer from it very clearly the principle by which we shall be judged. There may be some analogy be-
tween the distribution of justice among men in this state, and that which will take place in a future. This is apparent from the nature of things as ordained by the Divine Providence. Man is a social being; and in whatever state he is placed, whether in earth or heaven, he is so formed by his Creator as to be a member of society. The principle, therefore, upon which we shall be judged in a future state, is illustrated by the manner in which we should judge persons upon earth.

In the two preceding parables of the Virgins and the Talents, we have faintly depicted to us the manner and the principle of the proceedings of the Day of Judgment. In the last parable of the Sheep and the Goats,—the last which was delivered by our Lord, and therefore the last parable examined in this work,—we have a vivid scenical representation of the Judge descending in glory, surrounded by his holy angels, and assuming his place on the Throne of his Glory, the awful Tribunal of angels and of men. Before him are gathered all the nations of the earth,—all that have died, and all that shall be alive on that great and solemn day. The character of a Shepherd is preserved in this final and awful scene of the Christian Drama. The same character was, as we have seen, assumed by Jehovah in the Hebrew scriptures; so that this parable adds another proof to the demonstrations, afforded by the Scriptures, of the Divinity of the Redeemer. The unity and consistency of the oracles of our salvation are thus beautifully preserved by this illustration of the Divine Shepherd at the last Judgment, which terminates the
scheme of revelation contained in the Bible; an outline of which, from the appearance of the expected Messiah upon earth to the final consummation of all things at the Great Day, is, I think, furnished to us by these exquisite compositions, the parables, which I have endeavoured, in the preceding work, to arrange and expound upon this principle.

Having thus given a brief summary of the whole, little more remains to be said. The attentive reader will have discovered that, in addition to the arrangement of the parables according to their subjects and purposes, and as chronologically as possible in connection with the several parts of our Lord's ministry, and expounding them as prophecies; I have endeavoured to trace them, as far as I was able, to the Rabbinical writings of the Jews, when they were not evidently taken, as in several instances which have been fully insisted on, from the Hebrew scriptures. Had I obtained access to more books of this description than I can command, this part of the work would have been more perfect. But enough has been traced to those favourite writings of the Jews to show that the stories of our Lord's parables were generally, if not universally, familiar to those to whom they were addressed; and there was therefore no excuse for their rejection of their Messiah.

Another object has been, as I went along in this exposition, to make the parables evince, which some of them that have been pointed out in this summary Conclusion do most strongly, the Divinity of Christ. Without the belief of this cardinal point of our faith, it cannot be too often repeated.
the Bible, from the beginning to the end, is totally irreconcilable with itself. The nature of the proof of this catholic doctrine, afforded by the parables, has this recommendation,—that it removes the controversy from the ground of verbal criticism into the more extensive field of undeniable facts, which, such as the present state of the Jews, create a stronger and more immoveable basis of this doctrine than verbal criticism, which then comes in aid as a powerful auxiliary, rather than as a principal. This route is not a new one; but it has perhaps been followed up in this exposition so as to furnish fresh materials. The author adopts the language of one of the most ingenious, and at the same time humble-minded Bampton Lecturers, when he ventures, with much humility, to say in conclusion, that "under such impressions he has been led to think, that one of the best chances (humanly speaking) of contributing—not new, but fresh support to the cause of truth, is likely to be found—in the 'confessions' (if this term has not been too much desecrated by some irreverent applications of it) of a believer, who, after following, with only his original clue given him, a track and progress of his own, so far as to have gained his convictions by reflection, rather than by much study, has in the end found himself in the highway where others are, and where he believes established truth to be."*

*Preface to Miller's Bampton Lectures—"The Divine Authority of Holy Scripture asserted, from its adaptation to the real state of human nature." These ingenious and original lectures are not perhaps known so much as they deserve. This
author looks upon the Parables,—partially at least, as expounded in this work,—to be prophecies. "We seek," says he, "a further exemplification of an argument from our Saviour's parables: some of which, he continues, may be in part considered as prophetic, by reason of their describing the exact progress, or treatment, of the Gospel in the world. But are these, predictions of the historical march of truth only? records merely of the past, which have spent their strength in a solitary effort, and remain now but as heralds who have told their message? or does not experience even constrain us to invest them with that perennial life, which heathen piety could attach to only supposed divine utterances? Surely, he concludes, they are a sort of standing prophecy—permanent chronicles of human nature." See his Bampton Lectures, p. 140.
APPENDIX.

Note to p. 18.


THE END.

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