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P R E F A C E .



THE four Gospels, as they are called, bearing the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, contain narratives of the birth, the life, the sayings, doings, and sufferings of Jesus Christ. Luke was a physician. The three others had no claim to human learning. They were men of humble position and occupation. Yet these narratives have successfully challenged the attention of men of all classes, of all professions, and of all grades of talent and learning, through many centuries; and large numbers of men of great erudition have devoted much time and labour to writing commentaries and discourses on these books. In regard to style, whilst the different writers exhibit their individual peculiarities, their narratives and their reports of the sayings and discourses of Jesus

Christ are characterized by an inimitable simplicity; and yet, the principles they state, and the great subjects they bring to view, evince extraordinary wisdom.

These narratives contain no description of the personal appearance of Jesus Christ. On this subject they are absolutely silent. Nor do they contain any particular delineation of his character; and yet, when we have carefully read them all, and compared the different parts of the several narratives, we do find his character fully and perfectly drawn. The writers have made us acquainted with him, not by any description of his person or of his character, but by simply stating what he said, and what he did. And his sayings and doings, as recorded by them, not only exhibit a complete, but an absolutely perfect character. During his public ministry, he was placed in many very trying circumstances—circumstances which, if he had any weaknesses or imperfections, must have brought them strongly to view; and yet, in all that he said, and in all that he did, we find no intellectual weakness, no moral delinquency, no defect in temper. On the contrary, in his discourses, as recorded by these writers, and in his answers to questions propounded by

sincere inquirers and by cavillers, there is a dignity, a knowledge of human nature, a truthfulness, a majesty, that commands our respect and admiration; and they are pervaded by a spirit that prepares us to appreciate the statement, that on a certain occasion, those who heard him, "all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." Nay, we are prepared for the declaration of the officers sent by the priests and Pharisees to arrest him—"Never man spake like this man."

And whilst we admire the character thus drawn by the Evangelists, and feel the irresistible conviction that Jesus Christ was more than man, we cannot but wonder how it was possible for such men to write, with such inimitable simplicity, and how they came thus indirectly, but perfectly, to portray a character of such wisdom and purity—so absolutely perfect. There is no kind of composition more difficult than this; and there is no more difficult work than to portray correctly the character of a man, and correctly to record his sayings and discourses, especially if they relate to great subjects, and embody great wisdom. If these men were under the guidance of the Holy

Spirit, as Christians believe, all is plain. We can easily admit, that under such direction they might prepare such narratives. But if they had no such assistance, then these four books are a profound mystery.

But throughout these narratives, we find many acts and occurrences related, which, if true, prove beyond a question, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of men—that Christianity is worthy of all acceptance. He is said to have instantly restored sight to persons born blind, and without using any means adapted to such a result. He is reported to have healed all manner of malignant diseases instantly, by a touch or a word. He is represented as raising the dead to life. Places and circumstances are mentioned, and sometimes the names of the persons. It is impossible to deny or to doubt, that the facts stated are such as would be palpable to the senses, and, therefore, are susceptible of being proved by testimony. Nor can it be doubted, that men capable of writing these narratives, were possessed of sufficient intelligence to know whether they themselves witnessed those things.

Were they, as witnesses, honest and truthful, as well as intellectually capable? We might

contend that they were so, because they had much to lose, and nothing to gain, by publishing those things, if they were not true. We might say that their firm adherence to Christ and his cause, through the temptations and sufferings of a life-time, demonstrate their sincerity. We might contend that bad men could not write what is contained in these four Gospels; and would not if they could. But the author of the following work places the Evangelists on the stand, as before a civil court, and subjects them to the most rigid scrutiny; and he demonstrates that they exhibit such and so many evidences of sincerity and truthfulness, that in any court of justice their testimony would be admitted.

The book is the more interesting, as coming from the pen of an educated layman. The discussion of such subjects has been mainly left to ministers of the Gospel; and they have ably and conclusively demonstrated the truth of Christianity. But we read, with peculiar interest, the views and arguments of men who, though Christians, have been chiefly engaged in secular callings; who have mingled, more than ministers have, with men of all classes, and have thus become more familiar with their

objections and cavils. Such works are adapted to arrest the attention of worldly men; and their arguments are likely to have peculiar weight with many. Quite a sensation was produced in England, when Wilberforce published his *Practical View of Christianity*; and by the blessing of God, it accomplished what no book from the pen of a minister could have accomplished.

Major Hill has not written hastily and superficially on this great subject. His previous training, and his position as Professor in one of our first Literary Institutions, have enabled him to give the subject very thorough investigation; and the reader will be convinced before reading many pages, that every point has been carefully weighed. The many coincidences, evidently undesigned, in these four narratives, the remarkable fact that each not only corroborates, but completes the narratives of the others, afford evidence of the most conclusive character. The work is very much on the plan of Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*; and it fills a place not so well filled by any work known to us.

The style of our author is remarkable for its clearness and simplicity; and his arguments

are so clearly stated, and are so conclusive, that we find not only advantage, but pleasure in the perusal of the book. Without endorsing every sentiment in this book, I can earnestly recommend it as a work of great merit—a work specially needed in this day, when infidelity is putting forth its cavils in every part of the country, with so much zeal and success.

N. L. RICE.

CHICAGO, *August*, 1859.

INSCRIBED
TO
DR. JOHN T. CABEEN,
THE BELOVED BROTHER OF MY MOTHER;
THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF A FAMILY
WHO LOVED THE LORD JESUS
IN SINCERITY AND
IN TRUTH.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.



CHAPTER I.

PRINCIPLES OF EVIDENCE.

IN courts of justice, the substantial agreement of four independent witnesses is more than sufficient to establish any fact. The only question with the jury is as to the honesty and competency of the witnesses. When satisfied on these two points, they are bound to give their verdict in accordance with the testimony; but should the evidence come up for revision, long after the witnesses had passed away, and their characters were then unknown or forgotten, there are still two tests by which the truth of their statements can be tried. The first is to be found in the character of their narratives. It is a strong *prima facie* evidence of the veracity of witnesses, when their statements differ in language, manner, and form, but agree in the main in regard to every essential particular. This presumption, in favour of their honesty and

impartiality, is further confirmed, when the narrative of each one is incomplete in itself until filled out by that of the others; when there are apparent discrepancies on the first examination, which disappear on a closer inspection; when the witnesses do not suppress facts which are discreditable to themselves, but which are important in their bearing upon the occurrence under consideration; and when, especially, each witness relates that which, from his opportunity of observation, from his tone of thought, from his temperament, or from his profession in life, he would be most likely to notice and to speak of.

Inasmuch as we attach great importance to the last point made, and as our argument will rest chiefly upon it, we will explain our meaning more fully. Suppose that a professed eye-witness of a battle described only such movements of the troops as we, from our knowledge of the ground, knew that it was possible for him to see from the place at which he stood. This fact alone would most likely satisfy us that he was a reliable man. And especially would this be so, if the observer gave a professional cast to his remarks on what he had seen. Suppose, for instance, that the observer was an army-tailor, a maker of uniforms, and that in his description of the troops, he noticed particularly their rich dresses, gaudy decorations, and gay trappings; our faith in the man would be greatly strengthened by his natural trade-like observations.

We have seen an anecdote of a shoemaker, who was shown a portrait by Apelles. He had not a word to

say about the faultless figure and the noble countenance that seemed instinct with life and intelligence, but remarked, that the *shoes were not a neat fit*. The criticism was perfectly natural, because strictly professional. Every one has noticed a similar effect exerted by the business in life, upon the manner of observing things. We will mention an instance that came within our own knowledge. A soldier and a merchant were conversing about the humour of Falstaff. The former thought that the most laughable incident was the doughty Jack's soliloquy over the dead Percy; but the merchant thought that the richest thing was the penniless knight sending to buy a satin cloak, and offering for security Bardolph, whose credit was worse, if possible, than his own. Both merchant and soldier had read Shakspeare with their professional spectacles on, and neither had noticed that which had amused the other. The same sort of criticism is made every day, not only of the writings of authors, but also of the events and transactions in common life. The writer of this once spent a night in a lumber-camp in Maine, and found that the conversation of the woodmen was about nothing but felling timber. With them it was literally true, that "a man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees." Psa. lxxiv. 5.

We propose to show that all the marks of honesty and truth, given in our first test, are to be found in the writings of the four Evangelists. We will find a want of finish, and an occasional obscurity, in the

account of each by itself, until completed and made clear by that of the others. We will find seeming contradictions, that can only be reconciled after thorough investigation. We will find the narrators relating, with the utmost candour and simplicity, things which are by no means honourable to themselves. We will find their statements modified by personal knowledge, by their mode of thinking, by individual characteristics, and by professional bias.

A second test of the truth of evidence is one in regard to the time at which the occurrence purports to have taken place. We are strongly impressed with the truth of any testimony, when we find it consistent with the character of the age in which it was given; consistent with the language, manners, and customs then prevailing; and consistent with the form of government and national institutions then existing. The spuriousness of many books has been detected by their want of one or more of these marks of genuineness. In this way, some of the alleged plays of Shakspeare, and Plautus, and alleged odes of Horace, have been proved to be apocryphal. A simple illustration will make this subject clear. Suppose that a book was discovered, which claimed to have been written on this continent one hundred years ago; but, upon examination, it was found to contain allusions to republican institutions as then existing here, and also spoke of railroads, telegraphs, daguerreotype pictures, &c., as common objects of observation. We would know at once that the claim of antiquity by

such a book was absurd and preposterous. There are almost numberless instances on record, of the detection, by anachronisms of this sort, of the most carefully contrived frauds. No writer of fiction has ever yet been found, whose portraiture of a previous age was faithful in all its minutiae. Scott, with all his genius, failed here. Even a cursory examination of "The Betrothed," and "The Crusaders," will satisfy any impartial reader of this fact. If, then, we find that the four Evangelists have made no mistakes in their allusions to local circumstances, to the character of the people then living, to the geography of the country, to the language spoken, and the manners and customs prevailing there; if in all these and other particulars we find their narratives in strict harmony with the character of the age in which they profess to have been written, we may be sure that the claim is trustworthy and reliable.

If, then, the conditions of the second test be complied with, it is demonstrated that the four Gospels were written at the very time they purport to have been written. If the conditions of the first test be complied with, it is demonstrated that there was no collusion among the writers; and, therefore, their substantial agreement without collusion, proves that their independent statements must be, cannot be otherwise than true.

CHAPTER II.

THE EVANGELISTS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS.

WE will now consider the character and personal history of the writers of the Gospels. Matthew was a Jew of Galilee, and had been a Publican, or tax-gatherer, when called by our Lord to be his disciple. There are many marks about his narrative, which show it to have been written for his countrymen, the Jews. Thus the manners, customs, peculiarities, cities, towns, and localities of this people are always spoken of as well known to his readers. The narrative is careful to trace back the genealogy of Jesus to the tribe of Judah and house of David, because the Jews knew that such would be the lineage of the Messiah. It mentions particularly the birth of our Redeemer in Bethlehem, because the Jews well knew that the prophets had pointed it out as his birth-place. It gives more fully than the other narratives, the public discourses of our Lord, because the readers to whom it was addressed would recollect and identify them. It is supposed to have been written about A. D. 41, that is, eight years after the ascension of Christ.

Mark was the son of a pious woman, named Mary, who dwelt at Jerusalem. He was a Jew, but not one of the twelve disciples. Mark seems to have been the name which he received from the Romans, while by

his own countrymen he was called John. He was "sister's son to Barnabas," and for a time travelled with his uncle and Paul. Afterwards he became the intimate friend and companion of Peter, and wrote his Gospel about A. D. 64, under the direction of that apostle. Many of the early Fathers thought that he was merely the amanuensis of Peter, and wrote only what he dictated. This gospel was especially intended for the use of the Christians at Rome, then the mistress of the world: we find, accordingly, few quotations from the prophets, and few allusions to Jewish customs and localities; and when these are made, they are always accompanied by such explanations as gentile readers would need. Thus, when the Jordan is first spoken of, the word "river" is prefixed, to show what it was. The word "corban" is explained to mean a "gift." So "talitha, cumi," is interpreted to signify "damsel, arise." "The preparation day," is shown to be "the day before the Sabbath." In speaking of washing of hands, Mark says, "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding to the traditions of the elders." This single sentence is sufficient to show that this Gospel was not intended for the Jews, to whom such an explanation would have been superfluous.

Luke was either a Jew or a Jewish proselyte. The former opinion seems to have the weight of authority on its side. His Roman name is easily accounted for, upon the supposition of his Jewish origin; for it was not uncommon for the Jews to have a Latin cognomen.

From the fact of Luke alone alluding to the commission of the seventy disciples, it has been conjectured that he was one of that number. It is also supposed that he was one of the two whom Christ met on the way to Emmaus. This conjecture is founded upon the fact that Cleopas is named, whilst the name of the other is suppressed. Luke was a physician by profession, and probably to that circumstance is due the minuteness and particularity with which he enters into details. Physicians, of all men in the world, acquire a habit of exactitude. The nicety required in weighing and apportioning medicine, the nice discrimination required in distinguishing allied types of disease, the careful watching to detect the slightest change in the symptoms of a patient, the circumstantial orders given to nurses and watchers by the sick-bed—all these things give medical men keen powers of observation, and a proneness to notice little matters, which would escape the attention of others. We find, accordingly, that the narrative of Luke is more circumstantial than those of the remaining three Evangelists. We must not forget, too, that Luke was the companion of Paul in most of his travels, and that, according to a tradition among the early Christians, he wrote under the supervision of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. His Gospel is supposed to have been written in Greece, a little later than Mark's, and for the edification of the Gentile converts. Its purity and classical character prove the scholarship of the author, while the Hebrew and Syriac idioms confirm the impression that he was

a Jew. He was not one of the disciples, however; and though it is probable that he was an eye-witness of many of the occurrences which he relates, the most of his facts were doubtless derived from the conversations of Paul and the apostles.

John was a Jew of Galilee, the son of Zebedee and Salome. This Salome is supposed to be a daughter of Joseph, the reputed father of our Lord, by a former marriage. If so, she was the step-sister of our Saviour, and John was his nephew. The calling of John and his brother James, together with that of Matthew, Andrew, and his brother Peter, is particularly mentioned in the Gospels, while the other seven apostles are not thus honoured. John was the only apostle at the crucifixion, and to him our Lord committed the care of his mother, when he was about expiring on the cross. As John was the only apostle who stood by his suffering Saviour, so he was the first of them at the sepulchre, and the first to believe in the resurrection. He was of a loving and lovable disposition, and was emphatically the beloved disciple. Owing probably to his intimate communion with our Saviour, he loves to dwell upon and recount the precious private conversations of his glorious Master. These he treasured up with as much care as did Matthew the public discourses. It is thought that John wrote his Gospel about A. D. 97, or more than twenty-five years after the destruction of Jerusalem. By this time many heresiarchs had crept into the Church, and some had boldly denied the divinity of our Lord. The great

burden, then, of John's narrative is to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was "God manifest in the flesh." He introduces his narrative with this sublime doctrine, and he never loses sight of it from beginning to end. We must not suppose, however, that he taught this glorious truth more clearly or more emphatically than our Saviour himself had done in the Sermon on the Mount. (See Matt. vii. 21-24.) Nor yet much more explicitly than John the Baptist had proclaimed it before the assembled multitudes of Israel, on the banks of the Jordan. The Evangelist sought merely to restate, reaffirm, and impress upon his readers a doctrine so essential to vital Christianity, but which had been ignored by a large body of professed believers.

Briefly, Matthew wrote especially for his countrymen, the Jews, and it is probable even that he wrote in Hebrew. He gives us the public addresses of our Saviour more fully than the other three Evangelists. Mark wrote under the direction of Peter, especially for the Romans. Luke wrote under Paul's direction, especially for the edification of the churches that this apostle had planted in Greece and Asia Minor. He is distinguished for his attention to minute particulars in regard to time, place, and events. John attends more to doctrine than to facts, and dwells more upon the private character and social conversation of the Saviour with his disciples, than upon his public acts and speeches.

CHAPTER III.

JESUS WARNS HIS DISCIPLES—TESTIMONY OF THE FOUR
EVANGELISTS.

HAVING made these preliminary remarks, we are now prepared to compare the statements of Luke with those of the other Evangelists; and for the convenience of the reader, we propose to place a figure on the margin, whenever we discover a mark of truth in the narrative, made by an incidental and undesigned coincidence, or in any of the modes above indicated. These marginal figures will show when a point is made, and will at the same time give the number of points made up to the place under consideration.

We will begin our investigation with the 31st verse of the twenty-second chapter of Luke. We there read, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat," &c. To this Peter replies, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death." The abruptness and evident incompleteness of our Saviour's address show plainly that we have reported here the mere fragment of a conversation. The singularity too of Peter's reply proves the same thing. Why does he speak of *going* with his Master? Had Jesus spoken of going anywhere, that it was thus necessary to show his attachment by avowing his determination to go with him? On turning to the

parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, we find a partial explanation of what seems strange in the language of Christ, and the answer of his disciple. We there learn, that our Saviour had introduced the conversation by telling his disciples that the prophecy was about to be fulfilled, in reference to the smiting of the shepherd and the scattering of the sheep. We might have inferred from these statements, that the ardent and impetuous Peter had, in reply to this announcement, solemnly expressed his determination to abide with the shepherd, and go with him whithersoever he went, and not be scattered with the flock. But John leaves us no room to doubt how Peter got the idea of *going* into his mind. We read in this Evangelist, "Whither I go, ye cannot come. . . . Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I am ready to lay down my life for thy sake."

1. We have in these corresponding statements, just that sort of agreement which would weigh most with an intelligent jury. One of the witnesses uses an expression which needs some explanation, two others throw some light upon it, while a fourth relieves it entirely from all mystery and strangeness.

Christ replies to the strong profession of attachment by Peter, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." As it was already night when this

was said, it is plain that the word *day* is here used in the sense of shortly, in a little while. John does not specify any time at all. Matthew says, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." And Mark makes plain what was meant by the word "day." His account is, "This day, even in this night, before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny me thrice."

2. An apparently objectionable phrase in Luke furnishes thus the occasion of showing that the gospel narratives agree in regard to the fact, but employ different language to relate that fact. And this is just the sort of testimony that carries with it the most sure conviction of its truth.

But we notice here an apparent discrepancy, which makes another point of greater importance in favour of the reliability of the witnesses. Matthew, Luke, and John mention but one crowing of the cock: "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Mark, on the other hand, says, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." Now, remembering that Mark wrote under the direction of Peter, and that poor Peter would be more likely than the other disciples to recollect the very words of our Saviour, we will have no difficulty in reconciling the seeming differences. Suppose that in a case of assault and battery, three of the witnesses swore that they saw a man struck, without saying whether he was struck once or twice; but the man himself, when put upon the stand, swore to having received two blows.

3. Would not the difference in evidence confirm the truth of the fact of the man having been struck, by showing that there had been no previous understanding between him and the other three?

By turning to the epistles of Peter, we find numerous incidental allusions to his fall; and we may probably learn from them, too, what our Saviour meant by saying to him, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The word "converted" means, literally, turned. Peter needed to be converted or turned from his overweening self-confidence, and needed to learn the great lesson, to trust in God alone for power to resist temptation. His writings show that his fall did turn him from self-boasting and self-reliance, and did teach him to lean for support upon the Almighty Arm. Hear his language: "Who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." "That your faith and hope might be in God." "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever." "He that believeth on him (Christ) shall not be confounded." "Commit their souls unto him, as unto a faithful Creator." "For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." "According as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." "The

Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." How different is all this from the proud and boastful exclamation, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Ah, Peter had found out, that "He who trusteth in his own heart is a fool." And how feelingly does the recollection of the victory won by Satan, by playing upon his false trust, make him warn us against the wiles of the great adversary of souls: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour." "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ."

4. These incidental allusions of Peter to trial and temptation, are strong proofs of the truth of the narrative in regard to his denial of his Master; and their deep-toned humility shows, too, that he had learned to "put no confidence in the flesh," and to rely solely upon the sustaining grace of God.

The honesty of Matthew is made apparent by his relating a circumstance not noticed by Luke and John, and one by no means creditable to himself. Mark tells us, that when Peter had solemnly declared that he would die rather than deny his Master, "all the disciples said so likewise." Matthew records this fact

also; and it is remarkable that he and Mark alone tell us of the flight of all the disciples at the time of the arrest of our Saviour. We thus have shown the great candour of Matthew in mentioning his disgraceful desertion of his Master, notwithstanding his voluntary promise to cling to him.

5. We need scarcely say, that a like candour in a witness would strongly impress the court with the fairness and impartiality of his testimony.

The omission by Luke and John, of the joint declaration of all the disciples, is readily explained. Luke not being a disciple, nor yet writing under the direction of a disciple, may never have heard of it; and even if he had, he naturally would not attach so much importance to the declaration as those who made it. John, in common honesty, could not have recorded the declaration, without also recording how little it was regarded. And the latter he could not do without self-praise; for it appears from his narrative, that he fled but a little way and then returned, and accompanied our Lord to the palace of Caiaphas. We find, accordingly, that he mentions neither the profession of devotion by the whole body of disciples, nor yet their flight at the first appearance of danger.

6. It may be well to notice here, that though neither Luke nor John expressly mentions the flight of the disciples, they allude to it incidentally as a fact. Luke says, "And Peter followed afar off," when they were conducting Christ to the high-priest. John says, "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so

did another disciple." Of course it would be absurd to call attention to the following of one or two disciples, if all had followed. The special allusion of Luke to Peter following, shows that he had in his mind the absence of the other disciples, though he does not mention it in so many words. So in like manner, the reference of John to himself and Peter as following in the distance, would be wholly unmeaning, if others had followed as well as they. We have then here the very strongest sort of proof of the integrity of the witnesses. Two of them speak of an incident as having occurred; while the other two, without making any direct allusion to it, employ such language as satisfies us that they were fully apprized of it.

We propose to give, at the proper place, an explanation of the omission by three of the Evangelists, to notice John following the mob that arrested his Lord and Master. In the mean time, we will pursue the order of events as recorded by Luke. With his usual particularity, this writer relates in the 35th and three following verses, a conversation not recorded by Matthew, Mark, or John. We read, "And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." As we understand these verses, the Saviour did not refer to any present exigency, but meant nothing more than to tell his disciples that they had

hitherto been under his special care, and had been preserved by him from temporal want and personal danger; hereafter, however, they must expect to be thrown, in a measure, upon their own resources, and must learn to provide for their own subsistence, and their own security, by their individual prudence and courage. Perhaps his caution was not meant so much for them as for the ministers of the gospel after the apostolic age, when miraculous interposition should cease altogether. These "children of the light" are here taught to be "wise in their generation," like "the children of this world;" and are exhorted to practice that economy, that prudence, and that indifference to danger, which secures success in all avocations in life. But from the reply of the disciples, it is plain that they totally misunderstood their glorious Teacher, and supposed that he was directing them to prepare for an impending attack. "And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords;" and he said, "It is enough." The answer of Christ ("It is enough") ought to have convinced them, when they saw the immense host that came out from the chief priests and elders, that he did not mean for them to resist his arrest. What could two poor swords effect against an armed band, which included in it some of the trained warriors of Rome? But it seems that the delusion was kept up to the last, and that Peter actually drew his sword, and cut off the right ear of one of the assailants. The point to which we wish to call the reader's special attention is this: all the Evangelists record

Peter's mad assault upon the guard sent to seize Christ, while there is but one of them (Luke) who throws any light upon an act, apparently so singular and so absurd. The conversation related by Luke explains Peter's conduct most satisfactorily, and shows that he believed he was acting under his Master's order, and doubtless expected aid from the Almighty arm of Him whom he had declared, a little while before, to be "the Christ of God." Now suppose that Luke's Gospel had never been written, would not Peter's abortive defence seem a most unlikely and incredible thing? Would it not seem not merely foolish in itself, but utterly inconsistent with the character of a disciple of him who constantly taught, "I say unto you, resist not evil"? But, blessed be God, the transaction which seems so strange in the records of three of the Evangelists, appears in the annals of the fourth as nothing more than the obedience of a good soldier of the cross to an order from the Captain of his salvation.

7. We can scarcely conceive of a stronger form of argument than is presented here by a comparison of the four narratives. Three of the witnesses depose to a fact which seems highly improbable; but a fourth lets fall, as it were by accident, a remark which changes its entire aspect, and makes it seem reasonable, right, and proper. Now it is to be observed, that the explanation of Luke is just of the character here described. He does not relate the conversation above quoted, as a solution of the mystery of Peter's foolish

attack. It is not even mentioned in the same connection. Surely we hazard nothing in saying that such a nice adaptation, fitting in, dovetailing, as it were, of testimony, would satisfy any court in Christendom, of the perfect credibility of the witnesses. Ought not infidelity to hide its head, and, at least, *affect* a blush of shame?



CHAPTER IV.

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE.

THE next verses in order read thus: "And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

We have a topographical agreement between the Evangelists, in regard to the place of Christ's suffering, which is both curious and interesting, as showing that they made no mistakes, even in unimportant matters of locality. The Mount of Olives, it is well known, was a hill of considerable height, on the east of Jerusalem and separated from it by the valley of Jehoshaphat, through which flowed the brook Kedron. This elevation derived its name from the luxuriant growth of olive trees, which covered it to its very summit. Now we notice in the verses above, that Luke spoke of Christ and his disciples coming to some

place, whose name is not given, but which must have been on or near the Mount of Olives. Matthew and Mark both tell us that Christ, on the memorable night of his betrayal, went with his disciples to this mountain, and that they "came to a place called Gethsemane." We have now the name of the place, but still we do not know what sort of a place it was. John however supplies the needed information; "He went forth with his disciples over the brook Kedron, where was a garden." We thus learn that a garden was the spot chosen by our precious Redeemer, for his conflict with the powers of darkness. As the first Adam sinned and fell in a garden, may not the agony of the second Adam in this other garden have been specially intended to atone for original sin, the natural depravity of our natures, while the suffering on the cross was to atone for our actual transgressions? His mysterious struggle in Gethsemane with the invisible spirits of hell, would then seem to purchase for the child of God, strength for secret wrestling with those dark and malignant passions and appetites, which he has inherited from his great progenitor. And his dreadful anguish on the cross in the broad face of day, in the presence of a multitude of beholders, may have gained for the believer, ability to overcome open temptation in his intercourse with a sinful world. However, the object of our attention just now is the substantial agreement of the Evangelists in regard to the place of the betrayal, without their employing the same words to designate it. The first

three mention the walk towards the Mount of Olives. John, on the other hand, says nothing about this mountain; but tells us of their crossing the brook Kedron; which perfectly harmonizes with the other narratives, because the mountain could not be reached from Jerusalem without crossing the brook. Again, we notice that Luke mentions a particular place visited, Matthew and Mark tell its name, and John what it was.

8. The omitting by some of the witnesses and supplying by others, in such a manner as to make the whole intelligible, ought to impress us most forcibly with the honesty and truthfulness of them all.

But the verses above present another point worthy of consideration. We learn from Matthew and Mark that Judas left our Saviour and his disciples eating the passover, and went straight to the chief priests and elders. It was then night; how did he know where to find his victim when he returned? Matthew and Mark give us no hint whatever upon the subject. Luke tells us that Christ "went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives." That is better, but still not quite satisfactory. It designates no particular place, where Judas might expect his much injured Master. John, however, is very explicit. "And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place, for Jesus often resorted thither with his disciples."

9. And thus we find one witness supplementing a deficiency in the testimony of the rest, and giving a satisfactory answer to a very natural question, which

might have arisen after hearing their evidence. And yet John does this in such an off-hand manner, that it is impossible to suspect him of being conscious of the vacuum, which he was filling up.

Before closing this part of the subject, it may be well to remove a difficulty in the minds of some. Why was it necessary to hire a traitor at all? Since Christ so often taught in the temple, and openly everywhere, why not arrest him in public? Why employ a villain to track him in the darkness of the night, to some secluded spot, away from the busy haunts of men? By going a little back in the narrative, all difficulty will be removed. Matthew and Mark tell us that the chief priests and elders sought to kill Jesus, "but they said, not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people." And Luke tells us in like manner, that these malicious wretches "feared the people." Hence they sought opportunity to slay him in private. To accomplish his arrest, "they had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him." John xi. 57. Failing of procuring from any one such information as would enable them to make a secret arrest, they gladly accepted of Judas's proffered services as a traitor. But they exacted from him the promise to betray Christ "in the absence of the multitude." It would seem, too, that they were afraid to attempt to take Christ in the city, even at night, thinking probably that his disciples would stir up a tumult, and have him rescued.

The great thing with them, then, was to lay hands upon him at night, beyond the walls of Jerusalem. Their hope of accomplishing this object was strengthened by their knowledge of Christ's habit of retiring into the country to pray. For

“Cold mountains and the midnight air,
Witnessed the fervour of his prayer.”

And it would seem from John, that he often visited Gethsemane at night, for purposes of devotion. We now see how admirably fitted Judas was to carry out the hellish designs of the Jews. Being a disciple, he would excite no suspicion of a spy by his presence, and he could watch every movement of his Master, and steal off to tell the chief priests and elders, when he was going out of Jerusalem by night, attended only by his eleven disciples.

10. The hiring of Judas, it will thus be seen, constitutes an argument for the credibility of the Gospels. It is a fact referred to by all, and explained by none; and which can only be understood by a careful collation of their joint testimony.

The next verses (41st and 42d) are in these words: “And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.”

By examining the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, we ascertain that Christ took with him Peter, and James, and John, apart from the other eight dis-

ciples. We also ascertain that his withdrawal "about a stone's cast from them," refers to his separation from the three disciples, and not from the eight, who must have been at a still greater distance from him. Peter, and James, and John were honoured on two other occasions in the same special manner as on this. They alone of the twelve disciples were permitted to witness the raising of Jairus's daughter, and the transfiguration of our blessed Redeemer. We know no reason why Luke omits to mention the selection of the three disciples to attend their Master in his agony in the garden; and the omission is the more remarkable in so circumstantial a writer, who too had promised, at the very beginning of his narrative, "to write in order." We know, however, good reasons why Matthew and Mark did not omit to mention this selection. Matthew was one of the eight not distinguished by this mark of favour, and of course he would not be likely to forget the occasion. It is a strong proof of his integrity as a witness, that he adverts to a slight upon himself with so much candour and simplicity. And as to Mark, it is plain that he could not pass over an occurrence which he had doubtless heard Peter speak of so often, and which, being of such peculiar interest to his guide and preceptor, would almost appear personal to himself.

11. We thus have fulfilled one of the tests of the credibility of evidence, viz. the relation by some of the witnesses, of a fact in which they had a personal

interest, and the omission of it by others who had no such interest.

But to this it may be objected, that John was one of the three honoured by our Saviour at Gethsemane, and that he makes no allusion to it whatever. To this we answer, neither does he mention the other two occasions in which he enjoyed the gracious preference of his Master. His complete silence in reference to these tokens of approbation may have been due to his modesty. Or we may find an explanation in the scope and design of his Gospel, which, as we have seen, was to record the private conversations, rather than the public speeches of our Saviour—the doctrines taught, rather than the deeds performed by him. But whatever the motive for silence may have been, here is the fact of one witness (Matthew) giving the details of a circumstance to his own disparagement, and of another witness (John) suppressing three which redounded to his honour.

12. Would not this honesty on the part of one, and absence of self-seeking on the part of the other, convince any court that it was dealing with true and reliable men?

But there is another point of greater importance in this connection, which deserves our consideration. John says not one word about the agony in the garden, nor about the mocking and buffeting in the palace of the high-priest, nor yet about the fearful anguish on the cross, which found utterance in the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

Why is John silent in regard to these momentous occurrences? The answer is to be found in the character of the witness. The writings of John, and the testimony of the early Fathers of the Church, show him to have been a man of the nicest and tenderest sensibilities, full of sympathy with the sufferings of others, burning with love to his fellow-creatures, and ardently attached to the Master who loved him so well. How could a man with such a temperament, and such a disposition, dwell upon the bloody sweat in the garden, the cruel scenes in the house of Caiaphas, and the hiding of the Father's face upon Calvary? O no! he could not have written upon these subjects without doing violence to his feelings, violence to his nature, and violence to his loving heart. A record from him of these dreadful things would be utterly inconsistent with all that we know of his writings, preaching, conversation and life. It was sufficient for him to tell us of the essential, glorious truths, that "Jesus Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." And so we have, in the very omissions of John, the strongest possible proof of the credibility of his narrative. The numerous books of travels in Europe furnish a happy illustration of the point we are attempting to make. One writer abounds in statistics; another describes works of modern art; a third, the monuments of antiquity still existing, or the ruins that are left of them; a fourth, the geological formations and natural scenery of the country through which he passed. And when

we have read the book of one of these travellers, we will have no difficulty in recognizing in a second work from him, not only the same style and manner, the same peculiarities of expression, but also attention to the same class of facts. These all show the idiosyncrasy of the man, the particular bent of his mind, and his way of looking at things. And unless the man undergo an entire change in his own character, the characteristics of his writings will be unaltered. And in fact, we find that the earliest and latest productions, even of those writers who have lived long, and written at long intervals apart, bear the same distinctive peculiarities.

If we were shown a book of travels, claiming to be from the pen of the great traveller and physical geographer, Von Humboldt, but which, upon examination, proved to be full of maudlin sentiment and romantic legends concerning the places visited, we would at once pronounce the book to be spurious. We know that Humboldt does not deal in such stuff as this book contains, and therefore it is not his. But if, on the other hand, the book was replete with just that class of facts which we know receives the attention of the illustrious German, then we would receive it as his production, though we had never heard of it before. Now apply this test to John's narrative. We find it containing just those things we would expect it to contain, and suppressing just those things we would expect it to suppress.

13. The authenticity of John's Gospel is thus

established, and its establishment by internal evidence is a virtual demonstration of its credibility.

Did the design of our argument permit, we would love to dwell upon the submissive, uncomplaining prayer of the Man of Sorrow, "Not my will, but thine be done." It may be permitted to us however to say, that if the second Person of the adorable Trinity, the Creator, submitted to mocking, buffeting, and a death of shame at the hands of his own creatures, in order that the will of the Father might be fulfilled, surely it becomes the child of God to bow with equal submission to all trials, afflictions, and bereavements sent upon him by the glorious three in one, Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

The prayer of Christ is given in nearly the same words by the first three Evangelists, but is left out by John, since he does not allude at all to the agony in the garden. But John mentions the prayer of our Saviour on another occasion, which is substantially the same as that in Gethsemane. "Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, deliver me from this hour." John xii. 27. Here is the same troubled soul, the same shrinking back from expected suffering, the same appeal to the Father for help, the same recognition of a duty to perform. The prayer, as recorded by John, was uttered some time before the feast of the passover, and it thus appears that the touching language in the garden was not then, for the first time, upon the lips of the precious sufferer. It may have been repeated thousands upon thousands of

times. How little do we understand the sufferings of our blessed Redeemer. God has, in much mercy, hid the future from us. Who, in the morning of his days, would not be appalled with horror if the veil were lifted up, and he were permitted to gaze upon the dreadful scenes through which he had to pass in after life? Now standing by the pale corpse of a loved mother, then hanging over the bed of a dying child; one while writhing under the sharp arrows of envy, malice, and detraction; at another, convulsed with bodily pain or stupefied by some paralyzing disease. But thanks to our gracious Father, the future has been revealed to but one man of our race. With him, the terrible conflict in Gethsemane was an ever present reality, from the moment that he could lisp his mother's name in Nazareth, till he cried, "It is finished!" upon Calvary. Well might it be said of him, that he was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." But we quoted the above passage in John, not with the design of moralizing, but for the purpose of showing the beautiful consistency of the gospel narratives. The prayer in Gethsemane is a very remarkable one; it has no parallel in any language; nothing like it was ever uttered before by any human being. Now, suppose that three witnesses swore that a certain man, on some occasion, used an expression so unusual as to attract the attention of the court, and even to excite their doubts as to its reality; but suppose that a third witness, being called upon to testify in regard to a totally different matter,

put this identical expression in the mouth of the same individual, would not the court be satisfied by this undesigned coincidence, that the man had really used the expression as stated by the first witness, and that it was a habitual one with him?

14. The case supposed is entirely parallel with that under consideration. Three of the Evangelists record the most wonderful prayer ever uttered, and which, but for our familiarity with it from childhood, would excite our most profound astonishment; the fourth Evangelist, writing upon another subject, and with reference to another occasion, gives in substance the very same prayer.

But in the case contemplated, the court would be still better satisfied if the fourth witness, without aiming to explain how the man acquired such an unusual phrase, let fall incidentally some hints from which the court itself could gather how he acquired it. Now, this is exactly what John has done. He does not give us the prayer in Gethsemane, neither has he said anything directly in explanation of it; but he records here and there in his narrative certain sayings of Jesus, which show the very spirit that dictated it. He tells us of Christ using these remarkable words, early in his ministry, "I came down from Heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." Blessed be God, he did not forget the object of his mission, when he lay stretched in anguish upon the ground beyond the brook Kedron. Again, we hear him saying, "The Father hath not

left me alone, for I do always the things that please him." John has not told us, but the other Evangelists have, how he sought to please that Father even on

"That dark and doleful night
When powers of earth and hell arose."

Again, we hear him saying, "But I honour my Father and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not my own glory." And this desire to honour the Father, and this disregard of self, triumphed in his prayer, over the natural shrinking of the man from suffering and death. And when he set his face to go up to Jerusalem, knowing all things that would befall him there, he said: "But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." Now, can there be nicer harmony than is exhibited in the Gospels, touching the wonderful scene in the garden? Three of the writers record a prayer, breathing the most perfect submission to the will of the Father: the fourth does not make any allusion to the prayer, but relates many expressions of Christ made on different occasions and at wide intervals apart—all professing the most perfect subordination to the wishes and commands of his Father. And thus the Evangelist, who is silent in regard to the language of resignation in Gethsemane, tells us far more explicitly, more fully and more frequently than the other three Evangelists, of the habitual subserviency of the Son to the Father. And so John, without giving the prayer, gives the

most complete explanation of it, by showing the spirit which prompted it.

15. Now, suppose that three witnesses testified to a will in which A left a legacy to B. This is, of course, sufficient to establish the validity of B's claim to the legacy. But suppose that the character of these witnesses has been impugned, and that while the question was in abeyance, a different trial came on, in no way connected with the preceding. And suppose that another witness, in the new case, mentioned incidentally in his testimony, certain ardent expressions of attachment on the part of A towards B. Would not this incidental evidence satisfy any reasonable jury, that A had really left the legacy in dispute to his cherished friend B? They would be satisfied of this fact, because they now understand the spirit which prompted the gift. The case under consideration is exactly like the one supposed. Three witnesses depose to a certain occurrence in Gethsemane. Their character is impugned, and the occurrence discredited: but a fourth witness, testifying about a different thing altogether, lets drop undesignedly certain expressions, which show us exactly how the occurrence was brought about. We say undesignedly, for it is preposterous to suppose that when John wrote the sayings of Christ, which we have quoted, he did it in order to explain the prayer in the garden. These sayings come in too naturally in the connection in which they are found; they harmonize too well with the context, to admit the wild

conjecture that they have been thrust in, with the design of throwing light upon another matter.

Luke xxii. 43, is in these words: "And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him."

This angelic visitation is not mentioned by the other Evangelists. How shall we account for so singular an omission? We must again seek an explanation in the character of the witness. It is a remarkable fact, that Luke tells us more of the agency of angels, than does Matthew, Mark, or John. Thus he alone mentions the visit of Gabriel to Zacharias, announcing the birth of John the Baptist; and to Mary, announcing the birth of Christ; and the visit of the angel to the shepherds, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem; and of the heavenly host that sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will to men." In the Acts of the Apostles, written by him, there are no less than thirteen allusions to angels. The ministry of angels seems then to have been a favourite subject with Luke; and it would have been unnatural and wholly out of character for him to have failed to notice the strengthening of Christ by one of these messengers of light. We account for the proneness of Luke to speak of these mysterious beings from another world, by the nature of his profession, and his intimacy with Paul. Surely, the pious physician, who stands so often in the dark hour of night by the dying bed, watching the glazing eye, the failing pulse, and the waning life, must, of all men, be most likely to

think of invisible spirits hovering near, to convey the released soul to the God who made it. Again, not only was Luke the constant companion of Paul in his travels, but it is highly probable that he was also the kinsman of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. (See Rom. xvi. 21.) And it is well known that almost all the information that we have about the nature and offices of angels, is derived from the writings of Paul. (See Heb. chap. i., &c.) And in addition to his explicit instruction on these points, there are in his epistles some twenty-four or twenty-five allusions to these heralds of the Most High. But however we account for the marked characteristic in Luke as a writer, of the existence of that characteristic there can be no doubt. And so, in recording an incident passed over by the other witnesses, he has preserved his own individuality.

16. We have seen that it is the preservation of individuality in a witness which gives the greatest weight to his testimony.

We have, in the 44th verse, another circumstance recorded by Luke alone. This verse reads thus: "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

So remarkable a phenomenon as a bloody sweat would be more likely to attract the attention of a physician than any one else. It was more natural then for Luke, than for the other Evangelists, to record this singular occurrence. Matthew and Mark

may not have been aware how unnatural it was; or taking the opposite view, they may not have known that the medical books contained any similar cases, and might therefore fear that their statements would be discredited. Luke, however, from his knowledge of physiology, would most likely be aware that such a sweat, though unusual, was not unprecedented. Aristotle, who was born 384 B. C., makes mention of bloody sweats. So does Diodorus Siculus, who wrote his history a little before the birth of Christ. It is highly probable that Luke was familiar with these renowned authors. His style and composition prove him to have been a scholar; and it is not at all likely that he was unacquainted with the most celebrated writings existing in his age. It would be indeed strange, if an educated man like Luke were ignorant of productions so highly esteemed by his contemporaries. It is not strange that uneducated men, like Matthew and Mark, knew nothing about them. The bloody sweat has been observed occasionally since the Christian era. Galen, who wrote less than two centuries after Christ, says: "Cases sometimes happen, in which, *through mental pressure*, the pores may be so dilated, that the blood will issue through them; so that there may be a bloody sweat." The biographer of Pope Sextus V. alludes to this phenomenon. So does Sir John Chardin, in his history of Persia. Thuanus also mentions the case of an Italian who was affected with a bloody sweat. And God has so ordained it, to silence the cavils of infidelity, that Voltaire himself, in his life of

Charles IX., tells us that the blood oozed out of every pore of that most guilty and most unhappy monarch. In every case recorded, the affection has been the result of great mental emotion. This singular visitation upon Charles IX. has been attributed most generally to his remorse for the massacre on St. Bartholomew's day. We see, then, that the bloody sweat has not happened so often as not to be regarded as a notable phenomenon by an intelligent physician like Luke; and yet not so seldom as for him to be afraid of being discredited for the mention of it.

Now we think that it would be very difficult to find a more sure mark of the credibility of evidence, than is afforded by Luke alone alluding to the bloody sweat in Gethsemane. If Matthew and Mark had mentioned it, and Luke failed to do so, scepticism would have raised an objection which it would have been impossible to answer. But as it is, the phenomenon has been recorded by the very man whom we would have pronounced, *a priori*, the suitable person to make it.

17. In courts of justice, the testimony of a witness carries more weight with it, when perfectly consistent with the known character of the man, when perfectly in harmony with his known habits of observation and his profession in life. Should not the same force accompany the evidence of Luke, which so completely satisfies the foregoing conditions? If a physician were called upon to testify in regard to an affray in which a dangerous stab was inflicted, the court would expect from him a description of the wound, and of the

symptoms of the patient. Other witnesses would be simply required to give information about the blow, and the causes that led to it, without noticing the condition of the wounded man. This is exactly what Matthew and Mark have done, while Luke, with professional accuracy, has described the condition of the illustrious Sufferer.

The 44th verse furnishes another point, to which we attach no little importance. Matthew tells us, that Jesus "fell on his face, and prayed;" Mark, that he "fell on the ground, and prayed." Luke, however, in the 41st verse, says he "*kneeled down*, and prayed." Now we observe, that there is perfect agreement between Matthew and Mark, while Luke differs from both. There is but one way of reconciling these apparently discrepant statements, and that is by supposing that Christ both kneeled and fell on his face. And we think that we can show at what precise time he changed his posture from kneeling, and fell flat on the ground. Let it be borne in mind, that falling on the ground denoted, with the Jews, great earnestness, and the very extremity of anguish and distress. Thus, at the time of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Moses and Aaron "fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" Num. xvi. 22. Thus, when "Israel turned their backs" before the men of Ai, Joshua "fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the even-tide, he and the elders of Israel."

Josh. vii. 6. Thus, when Job heard of the death of his children, and the destruction of his property, he "fell down upon the ground, and worshipped." Job i. 20. Thus, after Nathan's message to David, the penitent king "fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the earth." 2 Sam. xii. 16. Thus, when the Ammonites and Moabites came up against Judah, in the days of Jehoshaphat, that monarch "bowed his head, with his face to the ground; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord." 2 Chron. xx. 18. In all these cases, the prostration of the body indicated great agony of mind, and the casting of the supplicant upon the mercy of God. It was, with the Jew, the distinguishing outer act by which he signified the deep earnestness of his soul within. Keeping this in view, we find the most beautiful harmony in the accounts of the three Evangelists. Jesus first "kneeled down," as Luke relates, in the 41st verse; but when he "prayed more earnestly," in his agony, as recorded in the 44th verse, he fell upon his face on the ground. Here there is consistency between the three writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke; but this consistency only becomes apparent by a remark in the 44th verse, which was made in the most natural manner, and evidently without any design to remove a difficulty.

18. Now, suppose that in a suit at law, the statements of the witnesses had seemed to clash in like manner, but were reconciled by a casual observation from one of them. Would not more importance be

attached to the testimony, than though there had been no seeming disagreement? Would not the discrepancy prove the absence of collusion, and its reconciliation establish, beyond controversy, the truth of the witnesses?

Luke xxii. 45, reads thus: "And when he rose up from prayer and was come to the disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow."

Matthew and Mark both tell us of our Saviour finding the disciples asleep. But neither of them attempts to give any explanation of it, unless we take as such the statement that "their eyes were heavy." Luke, however, not only mentions the remarkable manner in which the disciples were affected, but he also gives us the pathology of the affection, just as any other medical man would do in similar circumstances. It is, of course, the province of the physician to tell the cause as well as the nature of the disease. This Luke has done. He says that the cause of this heaviness of eyes, oppression, and most unnatural drowsiness was sorrow. Has he assigned a sufficient cause for the effects produced? Does overwhelming grief produce a tendency to sleep? Those who have been accustomed to observe the intimate connection between mind and body, need not be told that what prostrates the one will often overthrow the other. Extraordinary mental emotion of any kind frequently produces extreme lassitude and debility of body, exceedingly favourable to the approaches of "tired nature's sweet restorer." Thus military men

have often noticed that after a day of exciting manœuvring, preparatory to a great battle, the soldiers sleep soundly and heavily. So, too, nothing is more common than for prisoners to enjoy refreshing slumbers the night before their execution. That close observer and profound judge of human nature, Sir Walter Scott, has put into the mouth of Ratcliffe—the turnkey of the Tolbooth at Edinburgh—the following words: “I hae never heard o’ ane that sleepit the night before trial, but of mony a ane that sleepit sound as a tap the night afore their necks were straughted.” Barnes, in his notes on Matthew, quotes from Dr. Rush, as follows: “There is another symptom of grief, which is not often noticed, and that is *profound sleep*. I have often witnessed it even in mothers, immediately after the death of a child. Criminals, we are told by Mr. Akerman, the keeper of Newgate, in London, often sleep soundly the night before their execution. The son of General Custine slept nine hours the night before he was led to the guillotine in Paris.” Historians have mentioned frequent instances of persons under condemnation sleeping just before they were put to death; but the fact has always been mentioned by these writers with admiration as an extraordinary proof of composure of mind in the victim. Thus they mention that Mary, Queen of Scots, slept several hours after midnight, on the morning of her execution. Thus they tell us that Charles I. of England, slept four hours the night before he was beheaded; and that Louis XVI. of

France, slept for the same length of time the night before he was brought to the guillotine. Thus they speak of the Duke D'Enghien taking a brief repose in the little interval of time left him between his condemnation and his being led out to be shot. We suppose that not one reader in a thousand has taken a different view of these cases from that presented by the historians. But Dr. Rush has taken an entirely different view, and has regarded the sleep not as a healthy function of nature, but as a stupor resulting from great mental emotion. And just as Dr. Rush has taken a different stand-point from the historians and the majority of readers, so the physician, Luke, has taken a different stand-point from that of Matthew and Mark. An examination of the original tongue in which these authors wrote, will bring this out more fully. Matthew and Mark employ the same Greek word to express this sleep—a word which signifies deep, profound, intense sleep. But Luke uses a word which literally means “put to sleep.” And it is remarkable that it is the same word (*koimao*) from which physicians have derived their technical term *coma*, a swoon, or state of stupefaction; and *comatose*, an adjective applied to the condition of insensibility, which immediately precedes death.

It is an impressive fact that Luke alone gives an explanation of the sleep of the three disciples under circumstances seemingly so well calculated to keep them awake. It is still more wonderful that he employs a nice technical term to express the cause.

Taking the two facts together, it is difficult to see how the credibility of his testimony can be impugned. It is strictly professional, and yet so delicately discriminating that it requires the closest inspection to detect the shade of difference between it and that of Matthew and Mark.

19. It is ever regarded as a strong proof of the reliability of a witness, that his evidence bears marks of his observation having been influenced unconsciously by his occupation in life. And the more finely drawn are the marks, the stronger is the conviction of the honesty of the man. And when (as in the case before us) these traces are attenuated to the last degree, the integrity of the witness is completely and irresistibly established. No testimony was ever given in court which bore stronger internal proof of the truthfulness of the witnesses than is presented in the seemingly disagreeing, yet really harmonizing accounts in regard to the awful scene in Gethsemane.

Again, we have another point furnished by the 45th verse. It is to be observed that though Luke attributes the stupor of the disciples to sorrow, he had not said one single word about their being grieved and distressed previous to this time. We are not then prepared for the announcement from him that the disciples were stunned and stupefied by the magnitude of their grief. If the testimony of Luke, therefore, stood by itself, we would be constrained to say that he had assigned a wholly inadequate cause for the marvellous effect produced. But on turning

to the other three Evangelists, we find abundant corroborations of the statement of Luke. We find that the disciples were greatly troubled from the time that their Master announced his betrayal and death; and that their alarm and anxiety were so great that Jesus found it necessary to make a special address to them, in order to allay their agitation. The primary design of the discourse of our Lord, (recorded in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John) was to console the disciples in their heavy affliction at the thought of losing their well-beloved Friend and Leader. This tender and sympathizing address has brought such comfort to millions of mourners; it has fallen so much like the music of heaven upon the ears of those who were bereaved or crushed by some heavy calamity, that we have almost lost sight of the object for which it was delivered. It is so wonderfully adapted to the condition of those who have trouble of any kind, that we have almost ceased to remember that it was intended, first of all, to cheer and encourage the hearts of the disciples, in their great and overwhelming sorrow.

But a full examination of Matthew, Mark, and John, will show how well Luke is supported in his averment that the disciples were stupefied with sorrow. Matthew tells us that when Christ had told the disciples that he would be betrayed by one of their number, "they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one to say unto him, 'Lord, is it I?'" Mark says: "And they began to be sorrowful, and to

say unto him, one by one, 'Is it I?' and another said, 'Is it I?' " John, who says nothing of their distress at the supper, tells us most explicitly how "sorrow filled their hearts" on their way to Gethsemane. The conversation of our Saviour, which he alone has recorded, is full of allusions to this sorrow. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter." "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your hearts." "And ye now, therefore, have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice," &c., &c. And we learn from John, too, that our Saviour, after his affectionate talk with his disciples, offered up a prayer well calculated to dissipate their gloom and to teach them reliance upon the protecting care of God.

Now observe the perfect fitting in of part to part, in the gospel narratives, so as to make one harmonious whole. Matthew and Mark tell us how the sorrow of the disciples began at the paschal supper. John tells us how it increased in their walk to the garden, so that Jesus felt constrained to comfort them; and, finally, Luke tells us, that it was carried to such a degree as to produce a lethargic slumber. And this nice adjustment of statement to statement, not only enables us to form a single consistent account, but it also removes all difficulties that arise in the accounts,

taken by themselves. Thus an objection might be urged against the cause which Luke had assigned to the sleep, because he had made no previous mention of that cause; but the allusions of the other three Evangelists to it are most copious and satisfactory.

20. Now, suppose that a witness testified abruptly in court, to the fact that he saw three men absolutely stupefied from the effects of great mental emotion. We might be inclined to discredit him, for the simple reason that such a result would require a cause operating for some time, and he had not spoken of it in this manner. But if two other witnesses, without alluding to the stupor, adverted casually to the *beginning* of the mental excitement, and if a third witness in the same casual manner spoke of its *continuance*, we would be entirely satisfied by this unintended harmony, that all three had spoken "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

There is still another point here, which we are not disposed to pass by. Matthew and Mark, who do not pretend to excuse the disciples for their sleep, upon the ground that it was caused by their distress of mind, have however given us the excuse offered for them by Christ himself. They tell us, that he, finding them asleep for the third time, said to them, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And this, as we understand it, is equivalent to saying, "I know that your heart is right, and that you wish to watch with me, but your frail human nature is too much jaded and worn out to stand the fatigue." Now,

would Christ have furnished an insincere excuse? Would he have looked with allowance upon a sleep which seemed to manifest such heartless want of sympathy with him in his agony, if there had been nothing preternatural in that sleep? The language of our Saviour is strongly confirmatory of the declaration of Luke, that the lethargy of the disciples was the result of sorrow. And it is a noticeable circumstance, that Luke, who gives his own independent reason for the sleep, does not mention at all the excuse offered by Christ.

21. It would be difficult to find stronger proof of the credibility of evidence than is afforded here. Matthew and Mark have not a word to say in defence of the three disciples; they have no explanation of the sleep; they see nothing preternatural in it: they tell us, however, (although all unconscious of its important bearing,) of the view taken of it by Jesus himself, and that is in perfect harmony with the opinion expressed by Luke.

Luke xxii. 46, reads thus: "And said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

A comparison of this verse with the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, reveals several points which are worthy of our attention. First of all, we notice, that as Luke had omitted to mention the selection of James, and John, and Peter, to watch with their Master, so he has also neglected to mention that Christ prayed three times, and returned at the

close of each prayer to the drowsy watchers. Our explanation of the failure to allude to the three prayers is the same as that already given for the failure to allude to the selection of the three disciples. Luke evidently knew less than Matthew and Mark, of the agony in the garden, and he therefore has given us fewer of its details. However, his very omissions prove the trustworthiness of the Evangelists. In addition to the fact that Matthew and Mark had superior opportunities of knowing of the sufferings in Gethsemane, there is a peculiar propriety in the mention by them alone, of the choice of the three disciples, and of the minute particulars in the garden. As we understand this choice, it was not merely out of preference for James, and John, and Peter, but it was intended to rebuke their presumption, and to teach believers in all time to come, that "the heart is deceitful above all things."

Let it be borne in mind, that James and John had declared their ability to drink of the same cup of suffering with their Lord, and to be baptized with the same baptism of anguish and distress. Let it be borne in mind, that when Christ spoke of the smiting of the Shepherd and the scattering of the flock, Peter was the very first to proclaim his unswerving allegiance; "though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Let it be borne in mind, that Matthew and Mark alone record the boast of James and John. Matt. xx. 22; Mark x. 39. It was then obviously proper for them alone to show

the emptiness of that boast. Let it be borne in mind, that though Luke tells us of the confident language of Peter, yet he relieves it greatly of its presumption, by making it seem to be in self-defence in consequence of a special charge against him alone for want of faithfulness. Whereas, we learn from Matthew and Mark that Christ had prophecied his desertion by all of the disciples, and thereupon Peter audaciously and vaingloriously professed his superior attachment and devotion. It was eminently suitable then, for these Evangelists to show how completely he falsified his profession, when the Master he claimed to love so dearly came to him three times, in vain imploring him to watch a little while, in vain imploring his sympathy and prayers to support the glorious Sufferer, in his awful conflict with the powers of darkness.

The point we make here is this. The rebuke of our Saviour recorded in the 46th verse, seems addressed to all of the eleven disciples; but we learn from Matthew and Mark that it was addressed only to the three boasters—James, and John, and Peter. Now, we affirm that there is a fitness in this, which ought to excite our admiration. It was right that the writers, who had made special mention of the pride, self-seeking, and self-laudation of the three disciples, should also record their fall. The gospel narratives are thereby made consistent with the whole scope and teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus the latter tell us that “every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.” “Pride goeth before

destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." "An high look and a proud heart, and the ploughing of the wicked is sin." And pride is spoken of as the sin which keeps men from God. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God." And there are numerous examples given us in the Old Testament Scriptures, to show the displeasure of the Lord against pride, arrogance and boastfulness. How signally did he rebuke his own servant David, for numbering the people from a vainglorious motive. Nebuchadnezzar was driven from among men, and his dwelling was appointed with the beasts of the field, because of his boastful exclamation: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty." Sennacherib, king of Assyria, elated by his victories over many nations, invaded Judea and wrote blasphemous and presumptuous letters, saying: "As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people out of my hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of my hand." God, however, put his hook in the nose of the boaster, and his bridle in his lips, and turned him back by the way he came. But one hundred and eighty-five thousand of his warriors returned not with him,

"For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed,
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill
And their hearts but once heaved and for ever were still.

* * * * *

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal,
And the might of the Gentile unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!"

Hezekiah, who had been so miraculously delivered from impending destruction, fell soon after into the same sin of pride, which had ruined the haughty Assyrian. For he boastfully exhibited to the messengers of the king of Babylon, "the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious raiment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures." But the Lord was sore displeased with him for this vain display, and the prophet came with the stern message: "Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord." Jehu exultingly exclaimed, "come with me and see my zeal for the Lord." But Jehu became a worshipper of "the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan." And God permitted Hazael, king of Syria, to ravage his territories. Uzziah was greatly prospered while he was humble. "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense." And God smote him with leprosy, for presumptuously attempting to do that which the priests alone had a right to do.

We are now prepared to see that Matthew and

Mark have written in the same spirit as “the holy men of old;” and just as the writers of the Old Testament never record a boast, without also telling of its punishment, so the two Evangelists who record the presumption of the three disciples, tell in like manner of its rebuke. And yet Matthew and Mark have done this in the most natural manner conceivable, without breaking in upon the unity of their narrations, and doubtless without being conscious themselves that they were making their accounts harmonize with the whole scheme of Providence, from creation down. In fact, this harmony has only been brought out by a careful examination of their testimony, and is so delicate, that the great majority of readers do not perceive it at all.

22. Now, suppose that after a trial had been pending for years, two witnesses had been called upon to give their evidence; and this was found to agree in spirit and substance with all preceding evidence, and yet that the agreement could only be discovered after a rigid scrutiny and critical inspection—is there a court in Christendom which would not pronounce the two witnesses to be honest, and the whole testimony from the beginning to be true? How then is it possible for us, on seeing the wonderful harmony between Matthew and Mark and the writers of the Old Testament Scriptures in regard to the manner of God’s dealing with men, to resist the conclusion that the two Evangelists are honest, and that the whole Bible is true?

But there is a collateral point here, which merits our consideration. Mark, writing under the direction of Peter, not only designates that apostle as one of the sleepers, but he also tells us of Christ's pointed rebuke to him personally: "And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?" Observe, that Christ does not call him Peter, a rock—an honourable surname given him—but by his old name, Simon. There is more of censure in the name by which Christ addressed him, than in aught else. It would seem, that when Simon acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, his Master not only blessed him, but also bestowed upon him the cognomen, Peter. Matt. xvi. 17, 18. Now, it is remarkable that Mark, who relates Christ's personal rebuke of Peter in the garden, says not one word about the benediction. (Compare Mark viii. 29, with Matt. xvi. 17, 18.) Peter felt too much humbled after his fall, to permit Mark to tell how he got a surname, which he so much dishonoured.

We have said, that Christ offered an excuse for the sleeping disciples. It is easy to reconcile the excuse with the rebuke, if we take Luke's view of the sleep. Christ could consistently excuse them for sleeping, in the condition in which they were, and yet rebuke them for getting into that condition. There was something preternatural about their sleep; but if they had watched and prayed, as they were directed to do, they would have been enabled to resist temptation, and

would not have fallen into a state of stupor. Christ could then, with perfect propriety, make allowance for them in being overpowered by a lethargy which had taken full possession of them, and yet at the same time, blame them for not resisting the first approaches of that lethargy. The censure and the excuse can thus be readily harmonized, with the aid of the explanation afforded by Luke; but they would be wholly irreconcilable without it.

23. However, the point we now make is, that Peter's modesty and honesty entitle him to be believed as a witness. He was too modest to allow his amanuensis, Mark, to record the blessing, and the title conferred upon him. He was too honest to permit his secretary to pass over the pointed rebuke which he received in the garden. Had he kept silence about it, the other ten disciples and the world most likely never would have known it; for it is not probable that James and John, in their drowsy condition, heard it at all.

Now, the boastfulness of pride has ever been regarded as a mark of untruthfulness. "The proud have forged a lie against me," said David, in a time of sore persecution. Solomon has associated together "the proud look and the lying tongue," as two of the six things which the Lord doth hate. Paul's classification of the wicked runs thus: "Proud, boasters, inventors of evil things." Here the bragging tongue and the mischief-working hand are coupled together. To this agrees the declaration of the Psalmist: "The

workers of iniquity boast themselves." If boasting, then, be joined with falsehood and wickedness, surely modesty ought to be with truth and righteousness. In fact, the experience of all mankind confirms the teaching of God's holy word. Bragging and lying have ever been found associated together; modesty and veracity have ever been inseparable. The traitor, Arnold, was one of the greatest braggarts and most unblushing liars of his age. Washington was as much distinguished for his modesty as for his scrupulous regard for truth. Peter's modesty, in suppressing the praise which he had received, ought then to prepare us for the honesty he has manifested in allowing a severe rebuke of himself to become known. And as he has exhibited both traits of character, we are at a loss to imagine how any witness could give stronger proofs of rectitude and integrity.

Before passing on to the 47th verse, it may be well to notice a matter which has given considerable trouble to the most judicious commentators. Matthew tells us, that when Christ came to the disciples for the third time, he said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." Adam Clarke and Whitby suppose that the direction, "Sleep on now," was spoken interrogatively. "Do ye sleep on still? Will no warning avail? Will no danger excite you to watchfulness and prayer?" Campbell, Doddridge, and Matthew Henry, take a still stranger view of the language of our Saviour. They regard it

as ironical, and equivalent to, "Now sleep on, if you can; sleep, if you dare. I would not disturb you, if Judas and his band would not." Even the judicious Scott perceives a grave sarcasm, in the permission granted to the disciples to sleep. He says, that "Christ bade them sleep, and take their rest, that is, if they were able; for though his agonies and exhortations had failed to keep them awake, there were those coming who would do it effectually." The last two views are utterly improbable; the meek and lowly Jesus could not employ the language of irony and sarcasm, under circumstances of such peculiar solemnity. And so thinks Dr. J. A. Alexander, though he has by no means removed the difficulty in the passage, which consists in the apparent contradiction of Christ's telling them in one sentence to "sleep on," and in the very next, to "rise" and "be going." (See Matt. xxvi. 45, 46.) Mr. Barnes takes the interrogative view suggested by Whitby and Clarke, and gives as a reason for it, that the 46th verse of Luke is interrogative, and points to the same time as that indicated in the 45th and 46th verses of Matthew.

We believe that most expositors, and the clergy generally, entertain a like opinion. But an examination of the original shows clearly that the interrogative hypothesis is wrong, and that the "Sleep on now, and take your rest," of Matthew, and the "Why sleep ye?" of Luke, are not equivalent expressions. The literal rendering of the Greek in Matthew is, "Sleep intensely what remains, and refresh yourselves;" that

is, take your repose for what time yet remains, before you will be disturbed. This demonstrates the incorrectness of the interrogative view of Whitby and Clarke. "Why sleep ye what remains," is absurd phraseology. Moreover, it is entirely inconsistent with the pity manifested, and the excuse offered by our Saviour for the disciples, in their deplorable condition. We are then constrained to conclude, that Luke has condensed in the 46th verse, the first and last addresses of Christ. Matthew and Mark agree, that on his first visit, his language was interrogative; that on the second, he said nothing; and that on the third, he spoke pityingly, and directed them to sleep awhile, and then added, "Rise, let us be going." To make Luke's statement harmonize with that of Matthew and Mark, it is only necessary to suppose that the words recorded in the 46th verse were not all spoken at the same time; that Jesus said, "Why sleep ye?" when he first came to the disciples, and, "Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," when he roused them, to go forth with him to meet Judas and his band.* A close inspection of the parallel passage in Mark establishes our position. He says, "And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come. . . . Rise up, let us go: lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand." These words explain away

* Since writing the above, we have been gratified to find that Dr. Jacobus also refers the address, "Why sleep ye?" to the first visit of Christ.

the whole difficulty in Matthew. Jesus, in tender compassion for his suffering disciples, permitted them to sleep until he saw his persecutors coming, and then said, "It is enough." You have slept long enough, the betrayer is at hand. Nor was it a slight indulgence, which Christ granted his disciples, for several hours may have elapsed from the time he told them to "sleep on," until he aroused them saying, "It is enough." And this we will now attempt to prove. The paschal supper was most likely eaten just after sunset, (at that season between six and seven o'clock) and allowing ample time for all that occurred at the table, we may safely suppose that Christ did not reach Gethsemane later than ten o'clock. And, indeed, at a later hour, the gates of the city would most likely have been closed. To ascertain how long he was in the garden, we have then only to fix the time at which the betrayer came. A comparison of the Evangelists will settle that point.

The third denial of Peter was evidently at what the Jews called cock-crowing, that is just before daylight, (*Kitto* and *Brown*.) Because, we know from a comparison of John with Mark, that immediately (straightway) after the third denial of Peter, the Jews hurried Jesus to Pilate's Hall; and from Matthew we learn that it was just then daylight. Now, if we can determine when the first denial took place, we will be able to determine also pretty accurately, when Christ was arrested in the garden. And this we hope to do by a careful examination of the Evangelists. Mark says

that the cock crew at the first denial of Peter: Luke, that the second denial was "a little while" after the first, and that the third was "about the space of one hour" after the second. Hence there was an interval of something like an hour, more or less, between the first denial and the last. John, (as we will see hereafter) gives an account of the several denials, in their connection with the trial before Caiaphas, as it progressed, and from him we learn that Peter first denied his Master before the high priest had propounded any questions, or, in other words, before Jesus was arraigned at the bar. And the last denial John places after the condemnation of Christ by the Sanhedrim. Therefore, it appears that the Jews hurried through the trial in the palace of Caiaphas, in about an hour. There were three powerful motives urging them to despatch. First, the malignity of their hate was such that they wished to execute Jesus as speedily as possible. Second, it was the preparation-day, and they had certain religious rites to perform, after they had gotten through with their bloody work. Third, they were exceedingly anxious to get Jesus under the charge of the Roman governor and soldiery, before the city should be awake, and a rescue attempted. These three motives were sufficiently cogent to prevent unnecessary delay in the mock trial before Caiaphas, and we may therefore safely say that it did not exceed an hour. Supposing, then, that daylight, or the second cock-crowing was about half after five

o'clock at that season; the first crowing could not have been at midnight, as commentators generally teach. The interval of an hour, according to Luke, between the denials of Peter, forbids any such vague hypothesis. Besides, it is a well known fact that the cock does crow at dawn and about one hour before it, and that not until after three o'clock in the morning, is there so short an interval as one hour between any two successive crowings. Assuming, then, that the arraignment before Caiaphas began at half-past four o'clock, and allowing half an hour for the band to return from Gethsemane, the arrest was most probably made about four o'clock. Assuming, moreover, that Christ's agony lasted for more than an hour, (and that is a long period to assign to such extremity of suffering,) he must have come for the third time to the three disciples at about eleven o'clock. There was then a space of five hours from his saying, "Sleep on now," until the coming of the "great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests, and the scribes, and elders." It will now be seen that the whole difficulty, in reconciling the 45th and 46th verses of the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew, has arisen from not perceiving that it was some hours from the third visit of Christ to his disciples, until the arrival of Judas. And if our estimate of time be correct, he could and did indulge them in sleep from eleven o'clock, P. M., till four A. M.

What an exalted view does this give us of the perfect unselfishness of our precious Redeemer! He

graciously permits those to sleep, whose sympathy and support he craves so ardently, and watches alone those five dreary hours in the darkness of the night. And yet how little fitted is his body for such a task, already enfeebled as it is by the terrible ordeal just gone through! And what awful and appalling subjects of contemplation come crowding upon his mind; the betrayal by one disciple, the denial by another, the desertion by all, the crowning with thorns, the spitting of contempt, the mocking, the buffeting, the taunting, the hanging in agony upon the cross, the hiding of his Father's face! How he shrinks in his loneliness from these dreadful thoughts, and yet he allows his chosen three to sleep on, and sleep on! With all his own need of repose, he stands watching over the slumbers of his grief-stricken followers, with all the tenderness of a mother watching by the sick-bed of a loving and beloved child. Hear how earnestly he prays for them, while the spirits of darkness stand pointing to them in derision, taunting him with their desertion, and exulting in the cruelties and death awaiting him. Still, he does not arouse the sleepers and implore one word of comfort and consolation: "a little more sleep for my beloved—the murderers are coming, but they are not yet here—rest a few moments longer." But hark! He is praying for you and for me! "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word."

We thank thee, O Father, that the merciful, the

compassionate, the unselfish, remembers even the chief of sinners. But look! the lights are flashing through yonder olive-trees. Ah, that is the measured tread of Roman soldiery—see the gleam of their spears; and that roar of vengeance—it is from the fierce rabble of Jerusalem. Mark that malicious-looking wretch, gliding stealthily before them. It is Judas himself—*the traitor is here*. Now Christ gently touches the sleepers, and awakes them. Still loving his own, he loves them to the end; still thinking of them, and not of himself, his words of awaking are words of admonition for their benefit: “Rise, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”

Never man spake, never man acted like this man. Son of God! inspire us with some of thy own magnanimity, thy own generosity, and thy own unselfishness of character. Disciple of Jesus! you have often to bear the cross of Calvary before a sinful world; exhibit also the tenderness of Gethsemane, in your intercourse at home, with relations and friends.

24. It sometimes happens, in actions at law, that the testimony seems a jumble of contradictions, dark, confused, inexplicable, until the key is discovered, which unlocks the mystery, and brings everything out in the broad light of day. Such was the case, we remember, in a celebrated murder trial in England. And it is plain, that after all seeming contradictions have been reconciled, the jury will accept the whole evidence as true, with more readiness than though there had been no difficulty. The discrepancies show

the absence of collusion, and their removal demonstrates the truth of the testimony.

The key to the difficulty in Matthew is the time spent in Gethsemane. The truth was locked up, and remained concealed, because no search was made for the key.

If we have gotten the right solution to the problem which has puzzled the world so long, we have also gotten an unanswerable argument for the credibility of the Evangelists. The truth has been elicited by a close cross-questioning of the witnesses at different times, on different occasions, and under different circumstances.



CHAPTER V.

THE ARREST OF JESUS.

THE next verse (47th) is in these words: "And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him."

The first thing to be inquired about here is the composition of this multitude. Whence did they come, and how were they armed? Luke says nothing directly on these points; his allusions are only incidental. In regard to their equipment, John says, in general terms, that they carried weapons, (xviii. 31.) Matthew is very explicit. He says, that Judas came

“with a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief-priests and elders of the people.” Mark uses nearly the same words. We now know that these men came from the chief-priests and elders, and that a part of them were armed with the best military weapon then known, and were therefore most probably regular soldiers; while the rest were provided only with staves, such as a civil posse would carry. Still we do not know whether the multitude came from the Jewish rulers, on their own responsibility, or in obedience to orders; nor can we account for their difference of equipment. John, however, says plainly, that Judas *received* his band from the chief-priests and elders; and we therefore are put in possession of one more fact. Furthermore, while the first three Evangelists speak of a multitude, or rather mob, (as the word *ochlos* truly means,) John employs a Roman term to designate the band—*speiras* in Greek, *manipulus* in Latin—a force of about one hundred and thirty men, the third part of a cohort. (See *Olshausen*.) We have now gained another item of information: those who carried swords were Roman soldiers. The next thing to be ascertained is, who were those who carried staves. Luke furnishes the necessary information in the 52d verse of the chapter under consideration. He there tells us incidentally, that “the captains of the temple” came with the crowd. These were the officers of the Jewish police guard, kept at the temple to preserve order, especially on great festival occasions. Josephus frequently alludes to this body; and it is reasonable

to suppose that the members of it carried only staves, just as such constabulary forces are accustomed to do even at this day. We now understand the whole transaction. Judas went to the Jewish rulers, and informed them that Christ meant to leave the city by night, to pray at Gethsemane. An opportunity would then be afforded of taking him, when no rescue would be attempted—the very thing, as we have seen, that they had long desired. They therefore hastened to the temple, and got part of the police force to go with them to arrest him; and for additional security, took with them some of the Roman guard, which kept the tower of Antonia. It appears, too, from what is related a little further on in the narrative, that the servants and retainers of the Jewish rulers attached themselves to the party, thus giving to the promiscuous assemblage the character of a mob. Hence the three first Evangelists could appropriately designate the *whole collection* by that epithet, while John, with equal propriety, could apply a military term to the *organized portion* of them. Observe, that we take neither side of the disputed question, whether Roman soldiers were mixed with the police guard, under the control of the chief-priests. We think it however exceedingly improbable, that the proud Roman would submit to the orders of the despised Jew. It is not necessary to make any such unnatural supposition, to account for the presence of the military in the arresting party. The chief-priests had only to charge Christ with sedition, before the Roman officer commanding

at the tower of Antonia, (as they afterwards did before Pilate,) and he would despatch some of his soldiers to aid in the arrest of the supposed rebel. These troops would wear with them their swords, while the civil posse, under charge of "the captains of the temple," would carry only their staves of office.

25. If we now sum up the evidence, as courts of justice do, we will have as fine a specimen of independent, yet concurrent testimony, as was ever exhibited. Matthew and Mark tell us of Judas going to the chief-priests and elders, and of the different equipment of the mob which arrested Christ. John tells us, that the Jewish rulers sent this body of men, and at the same time employs a military term, which shows that the Roman manipulus was part of the force. Luke agrees with all three, in an incidental reference to the swords and staves, and to the chief-priests and captains of the temple.

The question may now be raised, Why did Judas betray his Master? What was his motive for so nefarious a deed? We can get an intelligible answer only by a close examination of the witnesses. Matthew tells us, that on a certain occasion, Simon the leper gave a supper to Christ, and that "there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." From Mark we learn, that

“Some of them (the disciples) had indignation within themselves,” when they witnessed the devotion of the woman. So then it appears, that only some of the disciples were angry; and of these, all did not give vent to their anger in words. Who then was it who expressed indignation? Luke gives us no explanation; for the anointing mentioned by him, in the seventh chapter, was doubtless by a different person, and on a different occasion. (See *Trench on the Miracles*.) John, however, is very explicit. He tells us, that the woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. He informs us, moreover, that it was Judas who objected openly to the waste of the ointment: “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare (or *stole*, as the word may mean,) what was put therein.” Hence it seems, that Judas was the only one who expressed *aloud* his disapprobation of the woman’s conduct. His words, however, served to inflame some of the other disciples, but they prudently kept their indignation within their own bosoms. The extract from John is important, inasmuch as it shows that Judas was a money-loving, money-grasping wretch; and it prepares us to expect any villany from him, for which he was paid. Now, it so happens that John, the only Evangelist who speaks of the avaricious nature of Judas, is the only one silent about his bargain with the Jewish rulers. Luke informs us, that when “the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh,”

Judas “communed with the chief-priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.” Mark uses nearly the same words. Matthew specifies more particularly the details connected with the bribery. He tells us, that Judas went to the chief-priests, “and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.”

26. Now, let us combine the testimony of the four witnesses, and we will see that it is of the very kind which carries with it the strongest marks of truth. Had John said nothing about the covetous character of Judas, his betrayal of his Master for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver (about eighteen dollars) would seem very improbable. And had not the first three Evangelists told of Judas’s bargain with the chief-priests, we could not gather from John that the traitor had any conceivable motive for his infamous crime. It would seem to have been an act of gratuitous and unmeaning wickedness. The four parallel accounts furnish as nice an example of the harmony of testimony, without collusion, as was ever exhibited. John leaves unexplained the motive which led to the betrayal. The first three witnesses tell that motive, while John, in speaking of another matter altogether, shows that this was of the very kind to operate most powerfully on the sordid and mercenary soul of the traitor.

But was avarice the only motive which prompted Judas to his hellish act? The first three Evangelists, in the most careless and unguarded manner, reveal the fact, that there was a still darker and more infernal feeling at work in his base heart. Luke tells us, that when "the feast of the passover drew nigh, Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve." By a reference to Matthew and Mark, we find out the *precise time* of this Satanic visitation. It was two days before the feast, and *just after Judas had received a rebuke at Simon's table, and had been exposed for his hypocrisy.* Mark, after relating that "some of the disciples had indignation within themselves," gives our Saviour's reply: "And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor always with you; and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good: but me ye have not always," &c. And then Mark adds, without seeming to see the bearing of the rebuke on the transaction, "And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief-priests, to betray him unto them." Matthew also places the visit of Judas to the Jewish rulers, immediately after the exposure of his hypocritical regard for the poor, and then adds these significant words: "And *from that time* he sought opportunity to betray him."

Now, there is a truthfulness to nature in this whole transaction, which ought to satisfy any unprejudiced mind of the credibility of the gospel narratives. All history and all experience teach, that the most malig-

nant fiend in the universe is the exposed hypocrite. Milton has, with great propriety, put the strongest language of scorn and hate, in the mouth of Satan, after the spear of Ithuriel had dissolved his assumed shape, and made him wear once more his own grisly and hideous form.

Men, who make profession of goodness, will generally exhibit some of it too, so long as they possess the good opinion of their fellow-creatures. But if that be lost, and they have no principle of rectitude within them, they are then ready for any species of crime. Joseph's brethren did not meditate murder, until they found that they had forfeited their father's confidence, and thought that their brother was set as a spy over them. Had not Titus Oates been disgraced at the Catholic College of St. Omer's, the world would never have heard of the Popish plot, and England would not have dishonoured herself by shedding so much innocent blood, upon the evidence of that vile perjurer. Had not the peculations of General Arnold been discovered, the name of Benedict Arnold would not be associated with that of Judas, in every American mind. Had not Burr lost the esteem and good-will of his countrymen, he would never have been tried for treason at Richmond. And thus it ever has been and ever will be. The detected villain will become twofold more the child of hell than before. The exposure of his complicity in the Conway conspiracy against Washington, made Gates still more

bitter and rancorous towards "the father of his country."

27. The correspondence of the gospel narratives with the records of history, and the common observation of mankind ought to convince us of the reliability of the four witnesses.

A skilful painter can recognize the hand of a master in a few touches of the pencil, or dashes of the brush. We are told that the Cardinal St. Giorgio sent a messenger from Rome to Florence, to discover the artist who made the "Sleeping Cupid." The messenger visited the studios of all the painters and sculptors in Florence, and on pretence of purchasing, requested to see specimens of their work. At length, he came to the *atelier* of Michael Angelo, and as that celebrated man had no finished production by him to exhibit, he took up a pencil and carelessly made a sketch of a hand. The messenger, from this hasty outline, discovered at once the long sought artist. Now, if in works of art, the hand of a master can be recognized in the crudest drawings of his pencil, and the roughest daubs of his brush: surely, the Author of truth and of nature ought also to be recognized, by the truthful and natural touches portrayed in his word.

But the 47th verse furnishes still another point, which we will proceed to notice. Luke tells us that Judas "went before" the band that arrested Jesus, but he does not tell us why the traitor went before. Matthew and Mark are silent in regard to Judas'

leading the van. John is silent also; but in speaking of the taking of Christ he says, "Judas knew the place," (Gethsemane,) and from the connection, it is evident that no one else of the party did know it.

Putting, then, the statements of Luke and John together, we discover that Judas went before in the capacity of a guide, to lead the band to the garden. And, in fact, Luke afterwards explains the reason of Judas' going before, by calling him "guide to them which took Jesus." Acts i. 16.

28. The spectator, standing under the Natural Bridge in Virginia, observes that the projections on one side correspond to the fissures on the other, and therefore rationally concludes that the disrupted mass, in ages gone by, constituted one stupendous, united whole. Shall the observer of spiritual things be more stupid than the observer of nature? Shall he perceive this nice adaptation of part to part in the gospel narratives, and yet fail to perceive the unity of plan pervading them all?

The 48th verse is in these words: "But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

It would seem from this that there was some connection between the kiss and the betrayal. But the verse by itself does not point out what that connection was, and we would be utterly unable to discover it, were it not for the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark. The former of these writers says: "Now, he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, whomso-

ever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast." Mark says: "And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him and lead him away safely." The kiss, then, was the preconcerted sign, by which the arresting were to recognize and identify Christ. And observe, that Luke writes of the betrayal by a kiss, just as one would be apt to do, whose mind was so familiar with it, as to make him assume unconsciously that his readers were as well acquainted with it as himself. The very excess of knowledge in the narrator often produces obscurity in the narrative. How often the traveller, on inquiring the way to a certain place, has been told by one who knew the route perfectly, that there was no road to take him off. And yet it may be, that he has gone but a few rods, when he encounters a broad road diverging from the one he is pursuing. The man accosted did not mean to deceive the traveller, but his own familiarity with the route made him unmindful of the other's ignorance. And so it has often been remarked that men of greatest genius make the poorest teachers. A distinguished English mathematician once occupied the chair of mathematics, in probably one of the very best of our State Universities; and it has been said that the chair was never worse filled. He was incapable of understanding the difficulties that minds, less gifted than his own, were ever encountering. Bowditch, the American translator of the *Mécanique Celeste* of the celebrated Laplace, has said, that when-

ever he saw in that work, "it is plain to see," he knew full well that it would take him three days to understand the thing thus carelessly alluded to. We dwell upon this point, because it is the key to many of the omissions noticed in the gospel narratives. In the case under consideration, Luke evidently neglected to explain the object of the kiss, because he understood it so well himself, that he is betrayed into an assumption of equal knowledge on the part of his reader.

This allusion is just clear enough to show his own understanding of Judas's design, and yet not sufficiently clear to inform the reader.

29. The natural manner in which Luke refers to the incident of the kiss, is in itself no mean proof of his trustworthiness as a witness. And that, together with the concurrent, yet independent statements of Matthew and Mark, constitutes a strong argument for the credibility of the gospel narratives.

We have, moreover, another point furnished by the 48th verse.

Why did not Judas point out his Master, and boldly say, This is he? Why did he approach him with a specious profession of attachment?

We answer, that the hypocritical act was entirely consonant with his hypocritical life and character. There are men to whom deception is so congenial, that they will practice it when candour would be just as serviceable to them. There are men so thoroughly imbued with falsehood, that they will not tell the truth, when it would suit their purpose equally well

with a lie. Judas stands out preëminently as the representative of the former class. None will dispute the extraordinary claims of Bertrand Barère to represent the latter class. Macaulay gives the following account of him: "Whatsoever things are false, whatsoever things are dishonest, whatsoever things are impure, whatsoever things are of evil report, if there be any vice, and if there be any infamy—all these things were blended in Barère." But however atrocious may have been the character of the French monster, the traitor of Judea towers above him, in the loftiness of his wickedness. We know but few incidents in the life of Judas Iscariot. But the little that is known is sufficient to prove him to have been a man who preferred intrigue to fair-dealing, cunning to wisdom, fraud to honesty, a crooked path to the straight broad road. In the first place, he joined himself to Christ from no good motive. His own Master pronounced him a devil, more than a year before his last crowning act of infamy. He began his career then as a hypocrite, in becoming a follower of the Son of God. A devil in heart and life had no right to be in his holy society. We next find Judas pretending pity for the poor in the affair of the ointment, when he truly cared nothing for the poor, but wished the perfume sold that he might appropriate to himself the money resulting from the sale. And then after his bargain to betray his Master, we find him, with matchless effrontery, sitting next that most injured Master at the paschal table, and joining the

other disciples in the question of surprise and consternation: "Lord, is it I?" And, finally, that nothing might be wanting to complete his hypocrisy, he approaches Him whom he had sold to death, with the manner of a tender and sympathizing friend.

Human depravity can go no farther. Treachery and hypocrisy can never exceed this act of baseness. Let it stand without a parallel, with nothing like it in the ages that are gone by, and with nothing like it in the ages that are to come. Others have betrayed goodness and worth; but never were such goodness, such purity, and such worth, betrayed before, and never will such be betrayed again. Others have betrayed their friends and benefactors—Judas alone has betrayed his Maker, Preserver, and Redeemer. It is impossible to do justice to the depth of his wickedness. It is impossible to portray him in too revolting colours. And so felt the immortal painter of "The Last Supper." It is related of Leonardo da Vinci, that he did not attempt the face of Judas for months after he had completed his picture in every other respect. He felt unable to conceive of features with that rare blending of sanctimony and rascality, which he thought belonged to the countenance of the arch-traitor. And to aid his imagination, he visited, day after day, the haunts of the vilest men in Milan, and united the diabolic lineaments of them all in a single hideous face.

30. The point which we make here is this: The faithful portraiture of Judas's character is sufficient

to prove that the portraying hand was guided by infinite wisdom. No writer of fiction has ever been able to represent a perfectly consistent character. Even Shakspeare, the mightiest of uninspired men, mars his most successful pictures by incongruous lines, and injures the effect by too much light or too much shade. Take, for instance, his Lear. The storm of passion which the old king exhibits at the conduct of his daughter, and the intensity of injured feeling which he manifests, are by no means in keeping with the previous delineation of his frivolous pursuits and levity of temperament. We expect depth of emotion in men of strong natures, engaged in manly employments, and not in men of light characters, whose only business is amusement. The apostrophe of the old man to the storm, beating with merciless fury on his bare head, is inexpressibly touching :

“I tax not you, ye elements, with unkindness;
 I never gave you kingdom, called you children;
 You owe me no subscription: why then let fall
 Your horrible pleasure? Here I stand, your slave;
 A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man :
 But yet I call you servile ministers,
 That have, with two pernicious daughters, joined
 Your high-engendered battles against head
 So old and white as this.”

The warfare of the elements without, is less terrible than the warfare of the passions within. The storm beating with savage violence on his white head, but suggests to the poor old man the still more unnatural

treatment of his daughters. The sufferings of the old father, and his nobleness of soul under them, invest him with dignity, and inspire us with awe. And in the tenderness of our sympathy with him, we are prone to forget that he is the same man who disinherited his only true-hearted daughter, from a mere whim, and banished his most trustworthy nobleman, because of his remonstrance in behalf of that daughter. We are prone, too, to forget that the old king was first represented to us as a roystering, boisterous, pleasure-seeking man.

The inspired Evangelists, on the contrary, commit no mistake in their description of the character of Judas Iscariot—not a single inconsistency can be detected in their representation. The picture is as perfect in outline and colouring, as Judas was matchless in villany and hypocrisy.

Before proceeding to the next verse, we may as well finish the melancholy history of the miserable traitor. Matthew gives us the most ample details of his last doings, and death: “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. . . And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief-priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and

bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore, that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day." Matt. xxvii. 3-8.

The things stated in these verses were not done in a corner. If untrue, they were glaringly untrue; and the Jews must have known their falsity. If Judas had no interview with the chief priests and elders, the Jews must have known it. If he did not throw down the thirty pieces of silver in the temple, the Jews must have known it. If he did not hang himself, the Jews must have known it. If no burying-ground was bought with the blood-money, the Jews must have known it. If there was no place near Jerusalem called the "field of blood," the Jews must have known it. Now who was it, who has given the particulars of Judas's fate and the purchase of the potter's field? Was it Mark writing to the citizens of Rome, a great way off, where none could deny or confirm his statements? Was it John, writing after the destruction of Jerusalem, when all that knew anything of the transaction here recorded, had passed away? No! it was Matthew, who wrote on the spot where these things are alleged to have happened, and who wrote for those who knew surely whether they were so. It is ever regarded as a strong presumption in favour of the honesty of a witness, when he enters into minute details. Falsehood deals in generalities, truth in circumstantial statements. An apocryphal writer will not commit himself by an explicit declaration, touching any matter with which his readers are familiar.

But Matthew has committed himself fully and completely in regard to the potter's field. Everybody at Jerusalem must have known whether there was a place for the burial of strangers, and how it came to be bought, and how it came to bear so remarkable a name.

31. The boldness of the statements of Matthew is *prima facie* proof of his veracity: and it amounts to a demonstration of truth in our minds, when we reflect that he tells his story, with all its rigid attention to little matters, in the presence of those who could discredit it, if inaccurate in the slightest respect.

But these verses in Matthew contain so admirable a representation of Pharisaism, that we cannot pass them by, without making an additional point. Our Saviour, in his inimitable sermon on the Mount, gave a faithful picture of the Scribes and Pharisees. He showed them to be remarkably conscientious in little matters of no consequence whatever, and utterly devoid of all conscience in regard to those, which pertained to vital piety and real godliness. He showed them to be great sticklers about forms and ceremonies, the mummeries of worship, while wholly indifferent to holiness of heart and life. Again, in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, he said of them, "Ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." In other words, they had such tender consciences in the matter of tithes, that they assessed and paid a tax even upon those things which were not

taxable in their polity, but notwithstanding this, they were unjust, cruel, and faithless in all their dealings with their fellow-creatures. In the same twenty-third chapter of Matthew, Christ likened them to "whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." They were careful to keep up a specious show before the world, of rectitude and propriety, but their hearts were full of abomination and pollution. Now the verses, which we have quoted, in reference to their conversation with Judas, and to their disposition of the thirty pieces of silver, are in entire harmony with the description given by our Saviour of their hypocritical character. They have no sympathy with Judas in his remorse. They turn away from him with contempt, when he cries out in his agony, "I have betrayed the innocent blood." They answer him, with the scornful "What is that to us? see thou to that." They have no relentings of mercy towards the spotless victim, whom his very betrayer had pronounced to be innocent. They mock him, they spit upon him, they buffet him, they cry aloud, "Crucify him, crucify him." They jeer and taunt him when suffering, bleeding, and dying. They thirst for his blood, and are obdurate to the last, unrelenting, inexorable, implacable. But they are very scrupulous about the disposition of the bribe-money. Their tender consciences will not permit them to defile the treasury of the Lord with it. And how benevolent they are withal! They buy a field to bury strangers

in. How kind and thoughtful they are towards foreigners! They rise superior to Jewish bigotry and prejudice towards the natives of other lands.

What a strange and revolting picture is here presented! Men, with the malice of hell in their hearts, and the blood of the Son of God hot and reeking on their hands, are very zealous for the honour of the temple of the Most High, and tenderly considerate for strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Ah! the picture may be disgusting, but it is true to life. It is a faithful portrait of modern, as well as ancient Pharisaism. Those who reject the Son of God, have benevolence ever on their tongues, while murder is in their hearts. Their consciences are ever keenly sensitive about things of no moment, while they are seared as with a hot iron towards all that is right, and pure, and good. They are ever troubled with a sanctimonious scrupulosity about trifles of supposititious morality, while ignoring the mighty claims of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are ever raising nice points of casuistry, while hating Bible truth, and the Author of all truth.

At the first outbreak of Jacobin fury in France, some of the retainers of the king climbed up the statues in the Garden of the Tuileries, in the vain hope of finding shelter and concealment. The infidel mob would not fire at them, lest the balls should injure the works of art, but pricked them with their bayonets, until they came down, and then murdered them in cold blood. They cared nothing about defacing

God's image, stamped upon his creatures, but they were scrupulous about defacing the handiwork of man. And so the Jewish infidel, the rejecter of Christ, could shed innocent blood without the slightest compunction, but he was too conscientious to defile the temple made with hands. Surely, the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. Surely, there is nothing more ruthless and remorseless than Pharisaism. Surely, the very spirit of the pit of darkness pervades the bosom of him who is ever prating about the law of conscience, while trampling under foot the law of God.

32. We have seen the difficulty attending a consistent representation of character. Now, as the picture of Pharisaism given by Matthew, is entirely in keeping from beginning to end, and is entirely harmonious with its modern phases, we are constrained to regard him as a truthful writer, guided by the unerring inspiration of the Spirit of God.

The next verses in order (49-54) are in these words: "When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered, and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the

power of darkness. Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high-priest's house. And Peter followed afar off."

Luke, as we see from these verses, puts the assault upon the servant of the high-priest, *before* the seizure of Christ. John agrees with him; but Matthew and Mark place this occurrence *after* the seizure. An attentive consideration of the parallel statements of the Evangelists will reconcile a seeming difference. We learn from John, that after Jesus had aroused his sleeping disciples, he advanced towards the band from the chief priests and elders, "and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way. That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high-priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup, which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Then the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him." John xviii. 4-12.

In order that we may arrive at a full understanding of this matter, we must recollect that all the Evangelists speak of the servant of the high-priest, and John even designates him by name. He must, therefore, have stood out prominently from the arresting party, in so conspicuous a position, that he could be recognized as belonging to the household of the high-priest, by his livery or peculiar dress. We must recollect, too, that John makes no mention of Judas's advance towards Christ, nor yet of the kiss bestowed by him. On the contrary, John says expressly, that "Judas stood with them" (the band,) after Jesus had asked the question, "Whom seek ye?" Keeping these things in view, the whole transaction becomes plain—Judas advanced before the band, accompanied only by Malchus, and after kissing his Master, slunk back with shame and confusion to his wicked associates, upon being rebuked for his hypocritical act. Malchus, however, remained and laid hands upon Christ. But though thus humiliated by being in the custody of a servant of the basest of men, and though exhausted by his agony, his bloody sweat, and his long night-vigil, our Saviour addressed himself to the crowd with so much dignity and majesty, he exhibited so much of "God manifest in the flesh," in his bearing and in the tones of his voice, that "they all went backward and fell to the ground: he then asked again the same question, "Whom seek ye?" but intimated at the same time that he would submit to the arrest, provided his followers were let alone. Encouraged

by the display of their Master's power, and by the discomfiture of his enemies, the disciples asked the question recorded by Luke, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" Without waiting for a reply, one of them drew his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus, standing most likely with his hands upon Christ. The meek and gentle Redeemer rebuked his disciple for this act of violence, and stretched forth his hand and healed the wounded ear. And it appears from the statement of Luke, as recorded above, that as soon as the Jews heard the rebuke, and saw the ear restored, they took courage, perceiving that Christ did not intend to resist, and therefore advanced and arrested him.

The whole difficulty, then, in regard to the time of the seizure of Christ, disappears by the simple supposition that he was twice seized; first, by Malchus, and then by the whole Jewish band. Matthew and John, as eye-witnesses, differ just as other eye-witnesses continually differ, because their testimony refers to different transactions. Matthew alludes to the first seizure, which was really *before* the assault upon the servant of the high-priest. John alludes to the more important arrest, which was *subsequent* to that event. Mark, writing under the direction of the fiery and impetuous Peter, puts the assault *after* the seizure, because it was the indignity offered to the person of his Master, which provoked Peter to strike. Luke, influenced by his profession in life, notices the healing of the wounded servant, (which the other three Evangelists

say nothing about,) and therefore naturally places the arrest of Christ after the blow of Peter; because, it was that act of healing, which encouraged the band to make the final seizure.

33. Now, observe that there is difference enough in the four statements, to prove the absence of all previous understanding; and yet not so much as not to admit of easy reconciliation. Observe, too, that three of the witnesses preserve their individual characteristics in a remarkable manner. Mark, as the amanuensis of Peter, places the assault *after* the seizure, because it was thus remembered by the zealous Galilean. Luke places it *before* the seizure, because Luke, as a physician, had in his mind the act of healing, which encouraged the band to make the final arrest. John, ever keeping in view the divinity of Christ, tells of the overthrow and confusion of the Jews, and how they dared not approach until Jesus had signified his intention to submit to their authority, if they let his disciples go. John therefore places the arrest after Christ's command to Peter to put up his sword. If we take the three things in connection: the difficulty, proving the absence of collusion; the reconciling of it, proving the integrity of the witnesses; and the preservation of individuality, proving the authenticity of the testimony; we cannot but be satisfied of the truth of the gospel narratives. This three-fold cord cannot be broken. This triune argument cannot be refuted.

The different accounts in regard to the wounding

of the servant of the high-priest, furnish a nice instance of independent, yet concurrent testimony. Mark says, "And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high-priest, and cut off his ear." Everything is vague and indefinite in this statement. For all that we know to the contrary, he may have been a casual spectator who struck the blow; he may have used the sword of another, and not his own; he may have struck one of several servants of the high-priest; and he may have cut off the left ear. Matthew is more explicit. He says, "One of them which were with Jesus, stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high-priest, and smote off his ear." The assailant, then, was a follower of Christ; but it is left doubtful whether he was a disciple. However, it is settled that he used his own sword. Luke settles two more points: "And one of them (which were about him) smote *the* servant of the high-priest, and cut off his *right* ear." There was, then, but *one* servant of the high-priest present, and he lost his *right* ear. Still we do not know who struck the blow; nor yet who the servant was. John, however, supplies all the deficiencies in the narratives of the other witnesses: "Then *Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high-priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.*" Peter, then, was the assailant, and Malchus the assailed.

Was there ever a nicer fitting in of testimony with testimony? Was there ever nicer supplementing by

one witness, of a lack in the evidence of another? Was there ever nicer harmony in the statements of all, coupled with just difference enough to prove that there was no preconcerted tale? Observe, too, that there was a reason why the first three Evangelists should suppress the name of Peter. They wrote during his lifetime, when the relation of his assault upon Malchus might prove fatal to him. But John wrote after his death, when the knowledge of the transaction could do him no harm. Observe, too, how it happened that John knew Malchus. He tells us, a little farther on in his narrative, of his intimacy with the high-priest, and with his household. And this he tells us, not to account for his knowing Malchus, but to explain a totally different matter.

34. If now we sum up our evidence, we have again a three-fold argument to present to the jury. First, the reconcilable and reconciled differences among the witnesses; second, the reason why John is the only witness to name Peter; third, the explanation of John's acquaintance with Malchus.

Matthew and John tell us of Christ's rebuke of Peter for his blow; but they do not agree about the language of the rebuke. Mark is altogether silent in reference to it. Luke's "Suffer ye thus far," may be construed into an admonition to Peter to withhold his hand, but it scarcely implies censure. Before making another point, it may be well to show, that the relation by one Evangelist, of a thing omitted by another, does not argue any disagreement between the two.

Had Mark expressly said, that Christ did not rebuke Peter, he would have flatly contradicted Matthew and John. But his failure to record the rebuke, surely does not warrant the conclusion that there was no rebuke. No court would be so senseless as to throw out the positive testimony of two witnesses in regard to a fact, because a third witness omitted the mention of it. Moreover, the difference between Matthew, Luke, and John, with respect to the words of censure used by Christ, shows no contradiction. If each of them, after giving his account, had added, "These are the precise words of Jesus, and he employed no other," then we could not reconcile their statements. But as they make no such declaration, we may safely conclude that Christ used the language recorded by Matthew, the language recorded by Luke, and the language recorded by John. And we accordingly find, that the union of all the words recorded, in one connected sentence, makes just such an address as we would have expected from the Son of God: "Suffer ye thus far. (Luke.) Put up thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? (Matthew.) The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John.) And we doubt not, that it was during the delivery of this speech that he touched the ear of the servant, and healed it.

The argument, for the credibility of the witnesses, which we now make, is drawn from the fact that each of them preserves, in his narration, his own individuality. We have already seen that John says more than the other three Evangelists all together, of the obedience of the Son to the Father. We will show this very fully hereafter. For the present, we make the assertion, and the reader can verify it by an examination of the four Gospels. John, then, in recording the language of submission of the Son, ("the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?") has been consistent with himself, in ever bringing out prominently the subordination of the Son to the Father. Luke omits much of the address of our Lord, and only records enough to make intelligible the healing of Malchus. As a physician, he was peculiarly impressed with that thing, and therefore hurries on in his narrative to tell about it. All have observed how rapidly a narrator passes on, who is impatient to reach the point of peculiar interest to himself. Mark's omission of the address of our Saviour to Peter, is somewhat surprising. We would naturally expect him to be full in regard to a matter of personal concern to the man for whom he wrote. It may be that Peter, in the excitement of his assault, was conscious only of the interposition of his Master, and not aware of the precise language which he employed. But, however the silence of Mark may be explained, he preserves his individuality in that very

silence. It is well known that he is more brief and less circumstantial than the other Evangelists.

The part of our Lord's address which Matthew has recorded, is just that which we would expect him to record. We understand the words, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," to be admonitory as well as prophetic. They are a warning to the Jews, not to rebel against the Roman government, and a prophecy that rebellion would result in the overthrow and destruction of their nation. Matthew, writing for his countrymen, the Jews, before their revolt, could not, with any propriety, pass by this fearful threat against insurrection. It would do no good for those to know it, to whom Mark and Luke wrote. And as John's gospel was written after the desolation of Judea, it would have been idle in him to record a warning already too late, and a prophecy already fulfilled. Besides, if he, instead of Matthew, had recorded the caution and prediction, cavillers would not be slow to raise the objection that it was the knowledge of the event which prompted the record. But to confound infidelity, this allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem, is contained in the narrative of the Jewish Evangelist, and was written before the sword had been taken. And so, too, the more full and detailed prophecies in regard to that event are found in the first three Evangelists, while John says not a word about it. (See Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii; Luke xxi.)

We observe, furthermore, that Matthew's allusion

to twelve legions of angels, would be readily appreciated by the Jews, whose government and polity embraced so much of this duodecimal division, and whose history was so full of instances of angelic aid and interposition. But this allusion would be wholly lost on those for whom Mark wrote. In like manner, as Mark does not write to show the divine and human natures of Jesus of Nazareth—his equality with and his subordination to God, the Father; it, of course, did not come within the scope of his narrative to record the language of submission of the Son, “the cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” So then, we have another and a stronger reason for Mark’s silence in regard to Christ’s rebuke of Peter. The part which Matthew records, was intended as a warning to the Jews, and therefore out of place in a gospel for Romans. The part which John records is doctrinal (as we will see more fully hereafter) and therefore appropriate in the record of a polemic writer, but not consistent with the plan of Mark’s narrative.

35. The maintenance of individual characteristics, is always esteemed an infallible criterion of integrity in witnesses. And the reason of it is obvious. If a fictitious tale were gotten up, three or four men could not tell it in their own way, using their own language and preserving their own individuality, without being betrayed into inconsistencies and discrepancies. And as the four Evangelists have been perfectly natural and true to themselves in their independent state-

ments, and yet have made a consistent and harmonious account, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that they were honest and truthful men.

Another argument is suggested by the characteristic testimony of John, an argument based upon the consistency of that testimony. We propose to show that he has linked and interlinked indissolubly together, the doctrines of the humanity and divinity of our adorable Saviour; and that he has done this, from the beginning to the end of his Gospel. We will endeavour, moreover, to show that he is not only consistent with himself in his teaching, at all times, and under all circumstances, but that he is also consistent with the whole tenor of the Old Testament Scriptures. Since John is preëminently the doctrinal writer among the Evangelists, it is right that we should examine thoroughly and weigh carefully his infallible instructions.

We have seen that he is the only Evangelist who speaks of that manifestation of divine power on the part of Christ, which resulted in the prostration of the Jewish leaders and their gang. We have also seen that he is the only one who mentions the Son's language of resignation to his Father's will, "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" He is perfectly consistent with himself in thus alluding to the independent power of Christ, and at the same time to his subordination to the Father. For he never alludes to the divinity of Christ, without also alluding to his humanity; and conversely, he never

speaks of his humanity without an explicit declaration of his divinity, in the very same connection. He is careful to give no uncertain teaching, in regard to the "two distinct natures" and "one person" of our precious Saviour.

After reiterating again and again, the divine attributes of Jesus of Nazareth, in the first thirteen verses of his first chapter, he adds in the fourteenth verse, "and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

In the second chapter, we are told how Jesus "manifested forth his glory" by an act of creative power in "Cana of Galilee;" and how with divine energy he drove the traders out of his Father's house: and how he proclaimed his ability to raise his own body from the grave; and how he read the hearts of men. And yet, in the same chapter, we are told of his mother and his brethren, and we have a prophecy of his death as a man.

In the third chapter, we have these remarkable words, "and no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." Here Jesus speaks of himself as a man, and as having come down from heaven, notwithstanding his humanity, and as being in heaven at the very moment he was conversing on earth. Language cannot convey more definitely and precisely the great doctrine upon which hang our hopes for time and eternity.

In the fourth chapter, John, after telling how the humanity of Christ was manifested by weariness and

thirst at Jacob's well, tells also how he, as God, read the heart of the woman of Samaria, and revealed the secrets of her past life.

Again, in the fifth chapter, John is very explicit in regard to the union of the two natures. There can be no misunderstanding of the 18th and 19th verses of this chapter: "Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." Here is first the equality of the Son with the Father; next, the subordination of the Son to the Father; and finally, the performance by the Son of deeds equal with those of the Father. Again does John teach the same great truths in the 28th, 29th, and 30th verses of this chapter: "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, &c., . . . I can of my own self do nothing . . . I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which sent me." Here it is declared that he, at whose command the graves shall open and the dead come forth, can, of himself, do nothing, and that he came on earth in obedience to the order of his Father.

In the sixth chapter, John teaches the subserviency

of the Son to the Father: "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." And in the same chapter, the divinity of Jesus is taught with equal clearness: "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; he hath seen the Father. . . . I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. . . . Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." He can be no other than God, who has seen the Father, who is of God, who gives eternal life, and who will raise the dead in the last great day.

In the seventh chapter, we have these words: "But I know him (God;) for I am from him, and he hath sent me." Here Christ speaks of the intimate union between himself and the Father, and yet, at the same time, of his being subject to the will of the Father. In this chapter, also, we have the solemn declaration of the Jewish officers, that Jesus of Nazareth was not a mere man: "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."

The eighth chapter is replete with allusions to the two natures and one person in Christ. A great, wise, and pious commentator has said of this chapter, "In several places our Lord shows his intimate *union* with the Father, in *will*, *doctrine*, and *deed*; and though he never confounds the *persons*, yet he evidently shows that such was the indivisible unity subsisting between the Father and the Son, that what the one witnessed, the other witnessed; what the one

did, the other did; and that he who saw the one, necessarily saw the other." (*Adam Clarke*.) We will give a few extracts: "I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. . . . I honour my Father. . . . I seek not my own glory. . . . The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." The obedience and dutifulness of the Son are herein clearly set forth. But a little farther on, the Man of Calvary arrogates to himself the name of the ever-living, self-existent God: "Before Abraham was, *I am*." Compare this language with the 14th verse of the third chapter of Exodus: "And God said, I AM THAT I AM. And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me." Who can doubt that John meant to teach, that the lowly Nazarene was the great and terrible I AM—the eternal, uncreated God?

In the ninth chapter, we are told that before Jesus, by his own divine power, had restored sight to the blind man, he expressed his subserviency to his Father: "I must work the works of him that sent me." John tells us, too, how the man, when cured of his blindness, offered divine homage to his great Physician.

The tenth chapter is peculiarly rich in regard to the combination of the divine and human natures in our Lord: "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 up again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Here the divinity of Christ is shown by the reciprocal knowledge and intimate relations between him and the Father. Next, his humanity is manifested by the laying down of his life: again, his divinity, by his lordship over life and death; and, finally, his subjection to the Father, by a command received from him. Again, we hear Jesus saying: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." The giver of eternal life must be God. He whose power is sufficient to secure from all harm and danger, must be God. But lest we should infer from this language, his independence of the Father, he immediately adds: "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." And that we might not mistake this apparently contradictory doctrine of independent and delegated power, "the carpenter's son" proclaims his oneness with the Lord God Almighty: "I and my Father are one." And when the Jews take up stones to stone him for blasphemy, he repeats the same compound idea: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."

In the eleventh chapter, Jesus, as God, speaks of the death of Lazarus; calls himself the resurrection and the life; and arouses the dead man in his grave.

As man, he weeps in sympathy with the bereaved sisters of Lazarus, and prays unto the Father.

A comparison of the 41st verse of the twelfth chapter with the 1st verse of the sixth chapter of Isaiah, will prove that John believed his Master to be the "Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." And that there might be no mistake about it, he gives the explicit claim of the Son to identity with the Father: "He that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me." And immediately after, the obedience of the Son to the Father is taught in equally intelligible language: "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father, which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak." In this chapter, also, we are told of his soul being troubled, even as the soul of a man is troubled; and of his prayer of distress to the Father. But in the same connection, we have an account of the Father's voice speaking from heaven to his Son and coëqual.

In the thirteenth chapter, John tells of his Master washing the disciples' feet; but he prefaces the account with these remarkable words: "When Jesus knew that his hour had come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Here is omniscience ascribed to him who was about to humble himself to perform the office of a servant. In the 19th verse, we are told how he again claimed to be the I AM; and immediately after, how "he was troubled in spirit;" but notwithstanding

this exhibition of humanity, how he predicted the betrayal by Judas, and the denial by Peter.

In the fourteenth chapter, Jesus claims, in the plainest possible language, identity of essence with the Father: "If ye had known me, ye had known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. . . . He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. And how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? . . . Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." But he will not permit us to overlook his humanity, for he says, soon after, "My Father is greater than I."

In the fifteenth chapter, the doctrine of the divine and human natures is taught in the same sentence: "He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." The humanity of Christ, and his oneness with the Father, are here declared in an unmistakable manner.

In the sixteenth chapter, the doctrine of the divinity seems to have special prominence: "And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me." The unity of the Father and Son is here plainly taught: "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." He who can send the Holy Spirit, must be God: "He (the Comforter) shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show

it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." He whom the Holy Ghost glorifies, must be God. He who has all things in common with the Father, must be God. The Father has said of himself, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." Exod. xx. 5, xxxiv. 14; Deut. iv. 24, v. 9, vi. 15; Josh. xxiv. 19. He has said, "My glory will I not give unto another." Isa. xlii. 8. Since then he has given his glory to Jesus—Jesus cannot be "another," but must be one with the Father.

The seventeenth chapter is peculiarly instructive: "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. . . . And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Can this be the language of a created being? Can there be reciprocal glorifying between the creature and Creator? Would it not be the highest blasphemy, for a finite being to pray that God might glorify him with his own self? Will he, whose "name is Jealous," (Exod. xxxiv. 14,) impart his essence to a thing of time? Is it possible to believe that the loftiest angel nearest the throne, shared, in common with the Father, his incommunicable glory, "before the world was"? Again, he says: "And all mine are thine, and thine are mine." Is it not the height of folly and wickedness, to say that there can be this interchange and intercommunication between the living God and any inferior intelligence? And yet notwithstanding these strong expressions in

the seventeenth chapter, to establish the doctrine of the divinity of our blessed Redeemer, we have in it also the fullest teaching in regard to his humanity. "That he (the Son) should give eternal life unto as many as thou hast given him. . . . Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. . . . I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. . . . All things whatsoever thou hast given me. . . . And they have believed that thou didst send me. . . . As thou hast sent me into the world. . . . That the world may believe that thou hast sent me. . . . These have known that thou hast sent me." In all these phrases, the subordination of the Son to the Father is clearly set forth. The 24th verse embraces the compound idea of the Son's equality and inferiority. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Here is the demand of a sovereign, rather than the petition of a suppliant. It is a prayer, but the basis of it is *the will* of the Son, and the reason for granting it is that his glory may be manifested. And yet while he makes this lofty assumption of sovereignty, he thankfully acknowledges the gifts of the Father. The Trinitarian scheme harmonizes this apparently contradictory language, but it must for ever remain, in the creed of Socinianism, inconsistent and irreconcilable.

We have already noticed the instruction imparted by John in the eighteenth chapter, in regard to the

two-fold nature in Christ. We have an account in this chapter of his overthrow of an armed host by a simple question, and immediately after, of his expressing the most perfect submission to his Father's will.

In the nineteenth chapter, we learn how our precious Redeemer, in three ways, manifested his human nature; first, by his thirst; second, by his cry, "It is finished"—the work given me by my Father has been performed; third, by the water and the blood, which flowed from his side. John has omitted the three proofs of his divinity, given by the other Evangelists: first, the earthquake, which rent the veil of the temple, and opened the graves of the saints, showing thereby his sovereignty over the earth; second, the darkening of the sun, showing his sovereignty over the solar system and stellar universe; third, his pardon of the thief, and promise to him of life eternal, showing his sovereignty over the heaven of heavens. Still, John has given us more fully than the other Evangelists, the proofs of Christ's absolute control over his own life. He alone of the gospel writers records the saying of our Lord, "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." And now, in verification of this assertion, the beloved disciple tells us in this nineteenth chapter that Jesus "bowed his head and gave up the ghost"—the Greek word expressing the act of dying by his own free will. All the Evangelists are careful to avoid saying that Jesus died, and employ a word which signifies the voluntary

“breathing out” of the breath of life. (See *Dr. Alexander* on Mark.) But there is this marked difference between the other writers and John. They all agree in conveying the idea that the death of Jesus was the result of his own sovereign volition; but John alone gives the evidence of this, by showing that the death of the two malefactors had to be hastened by breaking their legs, and that not a bone of the paschal lamb was broken, because he was already dead. And thus it appears that John, who alone had related the claim of Jesus to power over his own life, has alone demonstrated the justness of the claim, by telling that he gave up the ghost after a few hours suffering; when it is well known that the crucified usually lingered in agony for days, unless additional violence were offered to shorten their lives.*

In the twentieth chapter, John teaches, with his usual precision, the doctrine of the two natures. We select a single passage, which embraces the dual idea in all its completeness. “Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God.” (Vers. 27, 28.) Here Thomas most unequivocally and undeniably acknowledges his Master to be God over all, blessed for ever; but the acknowledgment is drawn

* Campbell, in his *Four Gospels*, strengthens this view of Christ's voluntary death, by his rendering of Mark xv. 44. “And Pilate was amazed that he was so soon dead.”

from him by the marks of humanity on the sacred person of our Lord. Doubtless, the prints of the nails and the wound in the side not only convinced unbelieving Thomas of the personal identity of Jesus, but also brought to his recollection all those prophecies which spoke of the Messiah as both God and man. A flood of light was let in upon him in a moment, and the whole teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures became plain to him. Then he understood how the child born unto us, and the son given unto us, could be the mighty God, the everlasting Father. Then he understood how the son born of a virgin could be Immanuel, God with us. And, therefore, it was that he worshipped the risen Saviour, as his Lord and his God. We are amazed that the 28th verse above, is so often quoted in controversies with the Unitarians, while the 27th is so completely ignored. The withholding of the latter verse impairs the force of the former, and utterly destroys the great truth (as we believe) meant to be taught, viz., that Thomas arrived at his belief of the divinity of Jesus, through the traces of his suffering humanity.

In the twenty-first chapter, the divine nature of Christ is the paramount doctrine. This is shown by the miraculous draught of fishes, and by his foretelling by what death Peter should glorify God. Nor have we any evidence of his humanity, unless we assume that he himself partook of the bread and fish, which he gave the disciples. It was fit that the divinity of the Saviour should have a prominent place

in the last instructions of the Evangelist, who wrote mainly to confute the heresy on that subject, which had crept into the church. But we will grossly pervert the teaching of John, if we overlook the fact that he joins together the doctrines of the divinity and humanity, and seems fearful of separating them, so that when he speaks of Jesus as God, he, in the same breath, speaks of him as man; and oftentimes again, as God, and again as man; and then as both God and man. He employs every variety of expression, and every form of words, to teach the union of the two natures. He nicely balances his language, so that the teaching of the oneness of the Son with the Father does not outweigh nor underweigh his teaching of the humanity of the Son. And throughout his whole gospel, he preserves the same unity of plan, the same consistency of instruction. It is only necessary to read his whole system of theology to form a correct opinion upon the most vital points of Christian faith. Heresy has ever taken an isolated text here, and a garbled extract there, to support its pernicious tenets. The honest, candid, prayerful reading of every passage touching the Messiah, with the context, must satisfy the sincere inquirer after truth, that "The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, is very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father."

But we started out with the proposition that John was consistent with himself throughout his whole narrative, in teaching the union of the divine and human

natures in the person of Jesus Christ; and that he was also consistent with the plain instructions of the holy men of old. Our first position is, we trust, firmly established. It only remains to show that the doctrines inculcated by John, comport with the prophecies respecting the Messiah. Isaiah speaks thus of the promised deliverer, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Isaiah ix. 6.

The first part of this verse plainly teaches that the mysterious being spoken of had a true human nature, while the latter part proves his identity with "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." Again, Isaiah says, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Here the offspring of the virgin is to be called "God with us," as the name Immanuel signifies. As God will not give his "glory to another," how is it possible to suppose that he will permit this Son of the virgin to assume his name, unless the child be of the same substance, the same essence, and the same eternal existence with Jehovah himself? Paul quotes the forty-fifth Psalm in proof of the divinity of Christ. (See Hebrews, first chapter.) In this Psalm, a king is introduced, who is fairer than the children of men, into whose lips grace has been poured, and upon whom the blessing of God rests for ever. In the 6th verse, this fair, gracious, and blessed king,

is distinctly and emphatically addressed as God: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." But in the very next verse, he is said to have been rewarded by God for his love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity: "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Who can he be, who thus enjoys the favour and approbation of God, and yet is truly God himself? Surely, he can be no other than Christ Jesus, who, though "in the likeness of men," "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Philip. ii. 6, 7. Surely, this King must be "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." Rom. ix. 5.

Jeremiah speaks of the same sovereign predicted by David, and prophesies that he shall be of the house and lineage of David: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. . . . And this is the name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**" Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. The word rendered Lord, in this place, means literally Jehovah—the name of God, so much revered by the Jews. The branch and offspring of David, partaking of his mortal nature, is the absolute God of the universe. But in addition to the fact, that the descendant of David is expressly called Jehovah, it is evident that God cannot be our righteousness in any other

way than through his co-equal Son. The righteousness of Jesus Jehovah becomes the believer's, and thus only can the righteousness of God become his. And to this effect is the teaching of Paul: "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30. In Isaiah xl. 9. 11, we find the same name, Jehovah, given to a Being who is evidently the "Good Shepherd," that "giveth his life for the sheep." Another prophet speaks thus: "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones." Zech. xiii. 7. Here the sword is to be aroused against a *man*, who is yet the "fellow," the equal, the compeer, and the companion of the "Lord of hosts." Now, as Christ appropriated this prophecy to himself, there can be no doubt of his claiming to be the Man who was equal in power and glory with the Father. And it is remarkable that John, who says so much of the two natures in Christ, is silent in regard to his referring this prediction of Zechariah to himself; while Matthew and Mark, who are less explicit concerning the divinity of our Saviour, make mention of his so applying it. (See Matt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27.) So that the Evangelists, who have dwelt less fully than John upon the doctrine so precious to him, have told, nevertheless, of the fulfilment in Christ of that which was foretold of a Man, who was co-eternal, co-existent, and co-supreme with the Father. The

text in Zechariah, and the appropriation of it by Christ, should for ever settle the question as to his divine and human natures.

But to our mind, there is nothing more satisfactory on this point than a comparison of the second Psalm with the eighty-fourth. In the former we read: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. . . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." The King here spoken of, is plainly the only begotten Son, whose subordination to the Father is shown by his being required to ask, that he might receive dominion; and whose divinity is shown by the blessing pronounced upon those who trust in him. Remember, that God has said, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help." The King, in whom we are directed to trust, cannot then be a mere man, else there would be a contradiction in God's word. It would be foolish, too, as well as wicked, to put confidence in the creature; for experience, as well as Holy Writ, teach us that "vain is the help of man." Paul shows that the Son mentioned above was Jesus Christ; and though in his human nature he was subordinate to the Father, yet to make him a mere man, would be to make the Bible

contravene itself, and teach an absurdity. But the comparison of the foregoing verses with the 11th and 12th verses of the eighty-fourth Psalm, will show conclusively that the Being, in whom we are exhorted to trust, is one consubstantial with the Lord God. "The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee!" Now, as we are forbidden to trust in the mightiest potentates of earth, and as the same blessing is pronounced on him who trusts in Christ, as upon him who trusts in the Lord of hosts, it is plain that there must be oneness between the Father and the Son. (Compare also the second Psalm with Isa. xxvi. 4; Psalms xxxvii. 3; cxviii. 8; &c. Compare also Micah v. 1, 2, with Matt. ii. 6.)

We deem it unnecessary to produce more proof that John has been consistent with the prophets, in teaching that Jesus of Nazareth was truly God and truly man. They speak of the promised Messiah as possessing the name, titles, and attributes of Jehovah, and yet as wearing a nature having the qualities and properties of the creature. He employs the same language respecting the Messiah after he had come and been offered up a sacrifice for sin. Moreover, the testimony of John not only comports with that of the Hebrew prophets, but also with nature itself, speaking through the creeds of all the nations of the earth. God has so constituted the heart of man, that it longs for the union of the divine with the human nature—the

divine to protect, the human to be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” We have all felt the impotency of an arm of flesh; trials, bereavements, sickness, and death have taught us to “cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.” We need the preserving, sustaining care of Omnipotence. When desolations come like a whirlwind, we turn away from our fellow-worms of the dust, and cry earnestly unto the Lord God Almighty: “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” This is the universal voice of all our feeble, helpless race. Who has not cried, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I,” when the great floods were about to overwhelm him? Sin has not so darkened our understandings that we do not know that God alone can be an efficient protector. But a God absolute is a God terrible. We shrink in our nothingness from the contemplation of the grandeur and immensity of the Sovereign of the boundless universe. We shrink in our guilt and pollution from addressing a pure and holy God, who cannot look upon sin with the least allowance. How grateful to us poor trembling sinners is it, to hear that “God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself”—reconciling his fallen creatures to the contemplation of his power, dominion, and sovereignty, as well as of his holiness, justice, goodness, and truth! How delightful for a frail thing of earth, who needs sympathy in trouble, succour in distress, grace in temptation, and support in death, to hear, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise

took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Heb. ii. 14-18. Here is just the Deliverer that suffering humanity needs—Almighty to save, and yet of a kindred nature, to understand and pity our weaknesses and imperfections. And we find accordingly, that mankind, with few exceptions, have claimed just such a friend and protector.

Dr. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, says, "The belief in a Trinity—a triad of supreme and co-equal deities—has been held in Hindostan, in Chaldea, in Persia, in Scythia, comprehending Thibet, Tartary and Siberia; in China, in Egypt, among the Greeks, among the Greek philosophers who had visited Chaldea, Persia, India and Egypt, and who taught the doctrine of the Trinity after their return; among the Romans, among the Germans, and among the ancient Mexicans."

Dr. Cudworth says: "The most acute and ingenious of all the Pagan philosophers, the Platonists and

Pythagoreans, who had no bias at all upon them, nor any Scripture, (which might seem to impose upon their faculties,) but followed the free sentiments and dictates of their own minds, did, notwithstanding, not only entertain this Trinity of divine hypostases, eternal and uncreated, but were also fond of the hypothesis, and made it a fundamental of their theology."

Dr. Minchola has shown, that the same doctrine existed in some form among "the Finns, Laplanders, Aztecs, and South Sea Islanders." The great mass of the heathen world has then had some vague presentiment of a three-fold distinction in the divine essence. This presentiment has assumed a somewhat definite belief in the Egyptian, Hindoo, and Chinese mythologies. The Egyptian theogony embraced three personifications of the Supreme Being—Chnouf, Neith, and Phtha. The Shu-King, or holy book of the Chinese, recognizes a sacred and mysterious Three—Yu, Tshing-tang, and Va-vang. The second of these, with a lamb-skin cast around him, offered himself voluntarily an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of his people. (*Müller's Universal History*.) The Vedas and Puranas, the sacred writings of the Hindoos, teach the tri-personality of the Godhead, and name the Triune Being—Brahma, Vishna, and Shiva. They speak too of the avatárs, or incarnations of the self-existent God. Buddhism, which prevails over a large portion of Asia, is the worship of Buddha, or Deity incarnate. The Lamaism of Thibet is but another form of

Buddhism; the Delai Lama, or Great Priest, being regarded as the representative on earth of the ever-living Buddha.

All this looks like the trace of a great original truth—sadly obscured, it is true—but not altogether obliterated; or it shows that mankind have universally felt the want of a Mediator and an Advocate between their guilty selves and a holy and absolute God. And to this felt want, we ascribe, in a great degree, the prevalence of idolatry. As the world became corrupt, and lost the idea of a divine Deliverer, to appear in human form, it became more and more conscious of utter unworthiness of communion with the awful and dreaded Great First Cause. Hence it framed for itself a system of subordinate deities, to plead and make intercession for the sinner.

And this it is that gives Popery such a hold upon the corrupt human heart—the Romish saint has taken the place of the Pagan god. The former, like the latter, is an intercessor, an offerer of the prayers, and alms, and good deeds of his devotee. The Papist prays to Mary, or Joseph, or Francis, to intercede for him with the offended Majesty of Heaven, just as the heathen prays to his subordinate god to propitiate the favour of the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. Romanism has cunningly taken advantage of two convictions, the most deeply seated in the human breast—the conviction that we have insulted the dreadful Jehovah, and the conviction that we need a Friend, who has his favour and his confidence. But the

Romanist takes as that friend, not Jesus Christ, our elder brother, but a priest or a saint.

And here it may be well to answer an objection of Unitarianism, that the doctrine of the Trinity was not authoritatively promulgated until the meeting of the Council of Nice, A. D. 325. It is sufficient for our present purpose to answer, that even the grossest heretics of the ante-Nicene period did not teach the doctrine of an absolute monotheism. Some (as the Ebionites) denied the divinity of Christ. Some (as the Gnostics) denied his humanity. Some again (as the Patripassians) merged his divinity in that of the Father. Others (as the Sabellians) taught that there was a trinity of revelation, but not of essence. All of these errorists, however, acknowledged (with rare exceptions) a Trinity of some sort—a Trinity of manifestation, a Trinity of existence, or a Trinity of operation. They all felt that guilty man could not approach his righteous Judge without an advocate. And though they were not prepared for the Athanasian creed, of three persons and one essence, still their views were more rational, more intelligible, and more scriptural than those of Socinus, Priestley, Belsham, Schleiermacher, and others of the modern Unitarian school.

Enough has been said to prove that John's teaching is consistent with itself, consistent with the Old Testament Scriptures, consistent with the creeds of nine-tenths of mankind, and consistent with the wants, if not the wishes, of the whole human race. It is

important, too, to observe that John does not lay down dogmatically his great doctrine, except in his first chapter. He gives utterance to it in the natural course of his narrative, and does not pause to make any comment upon it. He again and again declares this paramount truth of the gospel in the most simple, artless manner. It comes up in the natural course of his story. He adopts no expedient to call his reader's attention to it. The regular order of his testimony is nowhere broken to make way for it. If John shows artifice in all this, it is the very perfection of artifice. Never was counterfeit so thoroughly stamped with all the marks of the real and genuine.

36. Now, what shall be said of testimony, in which no discrepancy and no incongruity can be detected? What shall be said of testimony, which is consonant with the statements of a "great cloud of witnesses"? What shall be said of testimony, which agrees with the opinions on the same subject, of the vast majority of mankind? Is it possible to question the verity of such evidence. Is it possible to doubt the truthfulness of the witness?

The 52d and 53d verses, already quoted, contain a rebuke of the Jews for the ruffianly manner of the arrest of Christ; ("Be ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves?") a reproach for their cowardice in coming secretly at night, ("When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me;") and an intimation that they could do nothing against him even then, but for the permis-

sion granted them in connection with the spirits of darkness to exercise power for a season, ("But this is your hour and the power of darkness.")

The last clause is obscure, and we would not have ventured to give the above exposition, but for the light thrown upon it by the first two Evangelists. Mark, after mentioning the rebuke and the reproach in nearly the same words as Luke employs, adds, "But the Scripture must be fulfilled." The account of Matthew is almost identical with that of Mark.

We have in Luke's slight departure in his closing sentence from the language used by Matthew and Mark, no mean proof of the credibility of the witnesses. The first two witnesses explain fully a phrase of the third witness, which is in itself of doubtful import; and after the explanation we see clearly that all three agree in conveying the same idea, viz., that just as God permitted Satan to tempt his servant Job, so he allowed the powers of darkness to prevail, in their allotted hour, over his own well-beloved Son.

But we will make a still more important use of the words of our Saviour as recorded by Luke. We have seen that Matthew and Mark agree substantially with him, as to the precise language used by Christ. John however, omits the address altogether, although it is the most natural conceivable under the circumstances. It is an indignant protest by our Redeemer against the advantage taken of him in the darkness of the night. It is just such an appeal against violence and

injustice as any man would make, who was similarly wronged. The naturalness of the address demonstrates that it was spoken, and yet John leaves it out altogether. Moreover, the reproach of the Jews for their cowardice, must have stung them keenly. The point of honour in man lies in his courage. He would rather be called villain than coward. And yet John has passed over the stinging reproof, under which the Jews must have writhed. But it so happens that he puts the same words of reproach, in the mouth of our Saviour on the occasion of his trial before Caiaphas, and shows the anger excited by them. "Jesus answered him, (the high-priest,) I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort: and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I have said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so?" John xviii. 20, 21.

We find the same thought still prominent in the mind of the Saviour, which he had given utterance to in the garden. He is still thinking of the publicity of his instructions in the synagogue and the temple, when no hands were laid upon him. This concurrent and yet undesigned testimony of John, in regard to the language of Christ, proves that it was also spoken at the time specified by Matthew, and Mark, and Luke. Furthermore, John gives incidentally the most

satisfactory proof of the veracity of the other three witnesses. He, and he alone, tells of the violence offered to Christ. Now observe that there was nothing offensive in what Jesus said to the high-priest, nothing that called for a blow. Observe, too, that it was an *officer* who struck him—an officer doubtless of the arresting party, who had been smarting under the imputation of cowardice, and who now sought to revenge the insult upon again being reminded of his poltroonery.* And notice that with the characteristic hypocrisy of Jewish officials, he professed to buffet Christ for his disrespect to the high-priest, when he really struck the blow for the reflection in the garden, now renewed by the allusion to openly teaching in the synagogue and temple. So we see that John, who says nothing about the address of our Lord to the band who seized him, tells us of his using substantially the same words before Caiaphas. The other three Evangelists omit the speech to Caiaphas, but record that in Gethsemane. And so they all mutually supply deficiencies, while agreeing in the main. Moreover, John alone speaks of the outrage perpetrated by the officer upon the person of Christ, but the other three writers explain the motive which prompted to the brutal act.

37. A brief recapitulation will show that we have again a triune argument for the credibility of the wit-

* John employs the same Greek word to express the rank of him who struck the blow, as he had used to denote the official character of those who commanded the arresting party.

nesses: First, the elucidation, by Matthew and Mark, of an uncertain expression in Luke; second, the mention, by John, of words spoken by Christ, and alleged by the other three Evangelists to have been spoken on another occasion also; third, the explanation, by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, of an act of violence recorded by John alone.

The man who can believe that this differing yet agreeing testimony, this independent yet concurrent evidence, is the result of a cunningly contrived fraud, is prepared to believe any absurdity. We know that intelligent juries are always convinced, by harmonizing disagreements among witnesses, of the truth of their statements concerning temporal affairs. Have we one set of laws by which to try secular witnesses, and another by which to try spiritual witnesses? Shall the rules of common sense, which govern mankind in judging of earthly matters, be ignored when they come to examine heavenly things? Is it right, is it rational, to reject testimony that would satisfy judge and jury, in an action at law, simply because we have not the patience to investigate it, or the candour to acknowledge its credibility?

The 54th verse is very instructive: "Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high-priest's house." The word rendered "took," signifies really the joint laying of hands upon him. The word rendered "brought," is tautological, being but a compound of that rendered "led." The whole verse conveys the idea of guarding him with the most extraor-

dinary care. John agrees with Luke, for he mentions that they bound Jesus, a circumstance not related by the other Evangelists. Now, why were these precautions taken? We find no explanation in the records of the two Evangelists, who alone allude to them. On the contrary, Luke tells us of Christ's healing the wounded servant, signifying by that very act that he did not mean to resist. And John tells of his expressing a willingness to submit to seizure, if his disciples were not molested. We must turn then to Matthew and Mark for a solution of the mystery, and we do not turn in vain. For Matthew relates the warning that Judas gave the Jews to guard their prisoner well. "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast." Mark says that Judas cautioned them to "lead him away safely." Doubtless the traitor had in his mind the escape of his Master at Nazareth, when a murderous crowd sought to thrust him down a precipice, (Luke iv. 29, 30;) and of his escape from the wretches who had taken up stones to stone him. John viii. 29. It may be, too, that Judas mentioned these things to the Jews, and thus put them on their guard against his getting away.

38. We have here as strong proof of the credibility of the testimony, as the most sceptical could demand. Two of the witnesses tell of the vigilance of the Jews in securing their prisoner; the other two, who had not noticed this circumstance, let drop a remark which explains the cause of this vigilance. If there can be any surer mark of the truthfulness of evidence

than is exhibited in this nice concurrence, we are at a loss to know what it can be.

We have had occasion before to notice the last sentence of the 54th verse, ("and Peter followed afar off,") contained in the chapter we are investigating. We then remarked, that though Luke and John had not told us explicitly of the flight of the disciples, they yet agreed with Matthew and Mark, who had related that incident, by using expressions which showed that they were fully apprized of it. The reference of Luke to Peter's following afar off, and of John, to the following of Peter and that "other disciple," would be wholly unmeaning, if all had followed and none had fled. The point, however, which we now make, is that the first three Evangelists mention that Peter followed in the distance, but say nothing about that "other disciple." The omission is a proof of the truth of the gospel narratives; for, as we have already stated, the relation by one witness, of an occurrence passed over by the other witnesses, would strengthen our impression of the honesty of them all, provided that the narrator had superior opportunities of knowing the fact which he alone mentions. This is the case in the present instance. John himself was the "other disciple," and he therefore has spoken of that which he knew perfectly, and which was a matter of personal interest.

39. Men who get up a fictitious story, do not act like the Evangelists. Fraud seeks to make its tale consistent. It guards against deficiencies as carefully

as against superfluities. It never permits one narrator to relate an incident not related by the rest. We may detect absurdities in the fiction itself; but it is seldom gotten up so clumsily that we can discover incongruities in the manner of relating it. The boldness of the Evangelists, and their calm ignoring of all the tricks and artifices of forgery, constitute an unanswerable argument for their truthfulness.

Before passing on to the consideration of the next subject, we will notice a remarkable expression used by our Saviour in his address to the band from the chief priests and elders. Mark says, that after he had rebuked the mob for their ruffianly and cowardly mode of approaching him, he added, "*But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.*" The Evangelist then subjoins these significant words: "And they all forsook him, and fled." Matthew says, that the last words of Christ's address were, "But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." And then Matthew, like Mark, adds, "And they all forsook him, and fled."

It is a noteworthy fact, that the only two Evangelists who distinctly speak of the flight of the disciples, are the only two to record an expression which throws much light on that transaction. We have little doubt, that the allusion of our Saviour to "the Scriptures of the prophets," had a great deal to do with the flight of the disciples. Let it be remembered, that whenever he quoted the Scriptures, to show that he must be delivered to be crucified, his disciples

heard him with doubt, if not positive disbelief. Let it be remembered, that only a few hours before, when he applied the prophecy concerning the smiting of the shepherd, and the scattering of the flock, to himself and them, they earnestly protested against its application. But now, when they saw their Master actually in the power of his enemies, and were reminded by him, that he was in that condition in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, they naturally recalled the prediction also concerning their own desertion of him. Seeing the prophecy fulfilled in regard to their Lord, they then knew that it would be fulfilled with respect to themselves; and passing from the extreme of presumption to the extreme of despair, they bring about, by their flight, the fulfilment of an event so long foretold.

Dr. J. A. Alexander has well observed, that "The prophecy contributed to its own fulfilment, by enfeebling or destroying that factitious courage which existed when the danger was distant or future." There is sound philosophy in this remark, and it agrees with two well-known principles: First, that the fulfilment of a prediction inspires confidence in the prophet. Second, that men oppose but a feeble resistance to a supposed inevitable calamity. The first principle has numerous illustrations. The man who, by the force of mere shrewdness in worldly matters, can foretell that certain results will follow certain causes, is looked up to in intelligent communities, and is regarded with superstitious reverence

in rude states of society. A few fortunate predictions invest all his opinions with the sanctions of infallible truth.

The astronomer Le Verrier made most probably but a lucky guess, as to the direction in which the new planet Neptune was to be sought; for he miscalculated its orbit, its distance, its eccentricity and its mass. Yet since the planet was found by "the happy accident" of his prediction, he was overwhelmed with the adulation of all Europe. "Language could hardly be found strong enough to express the general admiration. He was created an officer of the Legion of Honour by the King of France, and a special chair of Celestial Mechanics was established for him at the Faculty of Sciences. From the King of Denmark, he received the title of Commander of the Royal Order of Dannebrog; and the Royal Society of London conferred on him the Copley medal. The Academy of St. Petersburg resolved to offer him the first vacancy in their body; and the Royal Society of Gottingen elected him to the rank of Foreign Associate." (*Loomis's History of Astronomy.*) And so it was, that a single fortunate prediction made Le Verrier the most celebrated man in Europe. To this proneness of the human mind to repose confidence, where lucky guesses or shrewd calculations have revealed the secret and the unknown, is to be ascribed the success of the oracle of Jupiter at Dodona, of Apollo at Delphi, and of others less celebrated. This also has led to the practice of divination, fortune-

telling, &c. Now, it is a remarkable fact, that the confidence of the incredulous when once gained, is just in proportion to their former disbelief. General Taylor, before the battle of the 8th and 9th of May, 1846, was distrustful of the artillery arm, and entirely sceptical of the grand achievements so confidently predicted of it. But after he had witnessed the terrible havoc made at Palo Alto by round shot, grape, cannister, and schrapnel, he passed to the other extreme, and put no limit to his expectations from his light and heavy ordnance. The case of the disciples is exactly parallel. They had been altogether incredulous in regard to the predictions concerning the seizure of their Master, and their own desertion of him. But when they saw one part of the prophecy fulfilled, they lost all their doubts, and implicitly believed that the other part would be fulfilled also.

The second principle has also numerous illustrations. Men have no heart, and consequently no force to oppose a fate, which they regard as inevitable. It has ever been a cardinal feature in the strategy of great military leaders, like Napoleon, to take the initiative in warfare, strike the first blow and gain the first battle. The prestige of arms once established, the defeat of the enemy in every subsequent engagement, becomes almost a matter of course. The victories on the Rio Grande ensured the easy conquest of Mexico. It is seldom, indeed, that a twice-beaten army ever shows again any vigour on the field of battle. But the principle that we are discussing is by

no means confined to martial affairs. When a man has once failed in a particular business, it is regarded as a wonderful proof of his energy and determination, should he have the courage to engage in it again.

Now let us apply the two principles under consideration to the case of the disciples in Gethsemane. The fulfilment of the prophecy respecting their Lord destroyed at once their presumption and self-confidence, and made them believe that their desertion of him was inevitable, and they, therefore, resigned themselves to their fate.

40. The explanation given by Matthew and Mark of the conduct of the apostles, is so natural and so accordant with experience, that it affords a strong presumption of the truth of the witnesses. When, moreover, we take into consideration the fact that the explanation is given without comment, without any apparent design to make it an explanation; and when we reflect, too, that the incident mentioned was so eminently discreditable to Matthew and Peter, who had it recorded, we have again a three-fold argument for the credibility of the gospel narratives.

Mark alone mentions an incident which occurred while they were taking Jesus from the garden to the house of the high-priest. "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and the young men laid hold on him. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked."

It is commonly supposed, that some one living near

the garden, was aroused from his slumbers by the noise of the multitude, and came out hastily to see what was the matter. Since Mark speaks of the youth following him, (Christ,) and not the band, we think it probable that the aroused sleeper felt a special interest in the Saviour. We do not know who he was, nor is it important that we should. Some suppose that Mark himself was the young man, and that he has accordingly related a matter of personal interest. If so, the silence of the other Evangelists is perfectly natural. Be that as it may, we have more to do with the incident itself than with the subject of it. There can be but two suppositions made in regard to the treatment of this young man. It was either an act of wanton and gratuitous mischief, or it was an attempt to secure a person who had manifested an interest in Christ, and who therefore might possibly be one of the escaped disciples. In other words, it was either the sportiveness of the wicked, or the struggle of the malignant for another victim.

Take the first view, and we have thousands of instances of similar devilish playfulness. The sport of the Philistines around poor sightless Sampson, is a case in point. The pleasantries of Mary de Medicis concerning the massacre of St. Bartholomew's, are well known. And how innumerable were the jests, the puns, the witticisms perpetrated by the mob of Paris, upon the victims of the guillotine, during the Reign of Terror. One of the remorseless executioners of that strange compound of bigotry and villany,

Louis XI. of France, was celebrated for his jocoseness with the prisoners under the gallows. Some of the most unfeeling wretches in the world have mingled merriment with their cruelties. The poet has beautifully expressed this idea :

“Ralph felt the cheering power of spring,
It made him whistle, it made him sing;
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the *Rover's mirth was wickedness.*”

If the first view is correct, and the apprehension of the young man was merely through the exuberance of hellish joy at the capture of Christ, we have exhibited here a natural stroke from a master hand. The Evangelist has given us a true picture of exulting wickedness, and history teaches that corrupt humanity has, alas ! but too often presented the living reality. But Mark has not only been consistent with experience, he has also been consistent with himself. What he tells us subsequently, of the mocking of Christ, and of the sport indulged in around a helpless prisoner, is entirely in keeping with the fun over a naked and unarmed man. And yet the harmony in his narrative is so delicate, and evidently so undesigned, that even biblical critics have failed to observe it. Mark, then, by the consistency of his story, has given a strong proof of his integrity ; but this proof is augmented a thousand-fold by the manifest absence of all design and preconceived plan. Had he related the incident of the seizure of the young man, with the intention of showing that the same spirit of mischievous deviltry

which prompted that act, also prompted the wicked jocularly over the sacred person of our Redeemer, he would have made some remark to call our attention to it; but he has made no comment whatever. Like an honest and impartial witness, he has related facts, and left motives out of consideration, because he had nothing to do with them.

The second view, however, may be correct. The Jews may have thought that the young man was a disciple, or at least a friend of Jesus, and may have wished to apprehend him, either to appear as a witness against his Master, or to share his fate. John tells us of the anxiety of the high-priest to find out from Christ who were his disciples: "The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine." It is evident from this, that the Jews either thirsted for the blood of the disciples as well as that of their Lord, or that they wished to get from them testimony which would serve to convict him. The third emphatic denial of Peter somewhat strengthens this view. We are told, a little further on in the narrative, that when Peter was charged for the third time with being a disciple, "He began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak."

We think it exceedingly probable that Peter, while standing warming himself by the fire, heard many savage threats against the disciples as well as their Master, and that it was this that made him so fearful of being thought even an acquaintance of Jesus. To this it may be objected, that no insults were offered to

John. But John's intimacy with the high-priest was his best protection; and we find too, that such was the estimation in which he was held by the household of Caiaphas, that he had influence enough with the portress to secure the admission of Peter. John xviii. 16. And this influence is directly ascribed to the fact that he "was known unto the high-priest." So that the courteous treatment of John shows nothing as to what would have been the treatment of the other disciples had they been apprehended. The relations between John and the high-priest may have been such that the latter was reluctant to have him even appear as a witness in the trial of Christ. But whether this be so or not, it is certain that for some purpose the Jews wished to seize the disciples in the garden. Why then did they not accomplish their object? The passover took place at full moon, when the nights were bright and every object distinctly visible. The arresting party were large enough to capture all the disciples. They were led by a competent guide, familiar with the place and all the avenues of escape. How happened it then that they failed to carry out their designs? How was it that they permitted so many of their intended victims to escape? Matthew and Mark, who alone speak of the flight of the disciples, afford us no clue to the mystery. But John gives us certain hints, which enable us to ascertain how it was that the disciples could evade the vigilance of their enemies. First of all, we learn from him that it was a dark night, and therefore favourable to their escape.

He speaks of the "lanterns and torches" carried by the band which came from the chief priests and elders. These lights would have been entirely unnecessary, had not the moon been obscured by clouds. It would seem that all nature sympathized with the glorious sufferer. The moon withdrew her light from the indignities offered his sacred person in Gethsemane. The sun veiled his face from witnessing the cruelties of Calvary. The earth shook, the rocks rent, and the graves were opened; but man was then as man is now, more insensible than sun and moon, earth and rocks, yea, than the very dead in the grave.

John, moreover, is the only Evangelist who speaks of Christ's interposition in behalf of his disciples, "If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way," and of the arresting party's overthrow. Putting the three statements of John together, we are no longer at a loss to account for the escape of the disciples. The darkness of the night favoured them, the interposition of their Master favoured them, and the fright and confusion of the Jews after they were hurled to the ground, favoured them.

41. So, then, we see that whichever view is taken of the seizure of the "young man having a linen cloth cast about his naked body," there will be a strong proof of the credibility of Mark as a witness. For our own part, we are inclined to think that the whole thing was a riotous frolic. Mark does not say that the band seized the young man, but that "The young men (*neaniskoi*,) laid hold on him." We do not

know whether he means to designate by this term, youthful persons or servants. Olshausen supposes that the latter are meant. The epithet *boy* was then, as now, applied to a slave of any age. Whether youths or servants, they were just the sort of persons to engage in a piece of cruel fun, which was of too undignified a character for the Roman soldiers and civil posse. If our opinion be correct, there is strong, internal evidence of the truth of Mark's Gospel. He has related an incident, which accords exactly with all that experience and history teach of the sportive cruelties of the wicked; and which accords well with the malignant buffoonery practised afterwards in the house of Caiaphas.

If, however, we take the second view, and suppose that the young men were desirous to catch a disciple, the question arises, Why did they let the disciples escape? And there we find that John, who had said nothing about the flight of the disciples, affords the only explanation that we have in regard to their slipping out of the hands stretched forth to grasp them. The second view will furnish as strong an argument as the first, for the credibility of the witnesses. A natural and undesigned explanation by one witness, of an incident related by another, is an incontrovertible proof of the truthfulness of both.

The 54th verse states that Jesus was brought to the high-priest's house, and Matthew and Mark employ similar language. And but for the parallel passage in John, we would naturally infer that Christ

was taken from the garden directly to the palace of Caiaphas. John however tells us, that he was taken first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, a man of great influence with the Jews. He had himself been high-priest, but had been deposed by Valerius Gratus, the Roman Procurator under the Emperor Tiberius. His son Eleazer was made high-priest some time after his deposition, and now his son-in-law, Caiaphas, was in the seventh year of his administration, as head of the Jewish Church. The house of Annas may have been nearer to the garden than was that of Caiaphas, and the arresting party would naturally stop to show their prisoner to a man who had been high-priest himself, and who was the father of one high-priest, and the father-in-law of another. That the party did stop, John leaves us no room to doubt. But it is, and has long been, a disputed question, whether any of the events recorded by the Evangelists, took place in the house of Annas.

That we may the better understand the point at issue, it will be necessary to examine verses 13 to 24, of the eighteenth chapter of John:—"And led him (Jesus) away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high-priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest. But Peter stood at the door without.

Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high-priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art thou not also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and the officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. The high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high-priest."

Many learned commentators suppose that Annas was the high-priest that propounded the foregoing questions; that it was in his house Jesus was struck by the brutal officer, and that it was in his house Peter denied his Master. Olshausen expresses himself on the subject in these words: "In ancient times it was proposed to solve the difficulty (in regard to the place of the denial of Peter and the assault upon

Christ) by very violent means: verse 24 was placed immediately after verse 13. One manuscript has this reading still; and in the Philoxenian translation, verse 24 is marked on the margin as interpolated. But the difficulty is more easily removed by taking the 'had sent,' (*apesteile*,) in verse 24, as the pluperfect tense. Thus everything related concerning the trial of Christ, and the denial of Peter, would be referred to the palace of Caiaphas.

“Lücke and Mayer declare themselves entirely in favour of this hypothesis; and the *enallage* thus assumed, certainly involves no essential difficulty. Compare *Winer's Grammar*, page 251, where many passages quoted from profane writers, prove that the aorist may be employed for the pluperfect. But the absence of any particle of transition, as well as the position of verse 24, seems wholly adverse to the hypothesis. Had the words stood after verse 18, such an assumption would have been more tenable; as it is, it would involve at least extreme negligence in John as a writer. If we confine ourselves to John, it seems clearly his intention to inform us that a trial took place in the palace of Annas, and that Peter was present in that palace. Without the synoptical narratives, no one could have understood him differently. For these reasons, I declare myself, with Euthymius, Grotius, and others, favourable to the supposition that John intended to correct and complete the synoptical accounts, and therefore he supplies the notice of the examination in the palace of Annas. That there can

be an error in the account of John, we cannot imagine, for he was an eye-witness, and has narrated the circumstances with care and minuteness; so minute is he in this part of his history, that he has given even the kinship of the high-priest's servant, (xviii. 26;) what he has added concerning the examination by the high-priest (vers. 19, 23,) has no resemblance to that held before Caiaphas, and therefore cannot possibly be identified with the latter."

We have given the arguments of Olshausen in full, because we are constrained to differ with him, Neander, Dr. David Brown, and all who entertain the opinion that there was an examination of Christ before Annas. It will be seen that this eminent critic gives three reasons for supposing that the occurrences recorded in the foregoing extract from John, took place in the palace of Annas. We will notice these in their order. The first is, that there is no particle of transition from the 23d verse to the 24th verse. To this we answer, that many editions of the Greek text *do* have a particle of transition. The text used by the translators of King James's Bible contained it, and "now" has been given us as its equivalent in English, "*now* Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas," &c.

It may be well to explain to the reader acquainted only with the English translation, that the word rendered "now" is not an adverb of time, but what is called a Greek particle—a kind of expression which depends for its meaning very much upon the context.

Winer has shown that the particle we are considering, is used when a conclusion is to be drawn from some antecedent statement, and that it has consequently a wide range of signification. He has shown that this particle (*oun*) in addition to its usual meaning, "therefore," might be rendered "so," in Acts xxvi. 22; "now," in Romans xi. 19; "then," in Matt. xxvii. 22, &c. And we find accordingly, that the translators of King James's Bible have rendered it, "now," in the 18th verse of the eighteenth chapter of John, "*now* Caiaphas was he, which had given counsel, &c." The obvious intention of the particle in that verse, is to call attention to the fact that Jesus was to be tried by a man who had already prejudged him, and that therefore, the issue of the trial could not be doubtful. Beyond all question, the particle has there the force of "be it remembered," "take heed to the fact," "mark," &c.;—Be it remembered that this was the same Caiaphas, which had given counsel, &c. We think that *oun* has the same meaning in the 24th verse. The Evangelist, after telling how Jesus had been struck when on trial, and therefore under the protection of the court, adds as an aggravation of the offence, that the prisoner was bound. It would be mean to strike a prisoner, but doubly mean to strike a bound prisoner. And so the Evangelist felt, and he therefore said, "Be it remembered that Annas had sent him bound to Caiaphas." Nor is this exposition affected by leaving out the particle, and it is left out in Bagster's edition of the Greek text, likewise in

Knapp's, and probably also out of most of the best editions. The only difference will be, that in this case, John gives utterance to his own indignation at the thought that a bound prisoner had been struck, without seeking by word or comment to make us share in his anger. And this absence of comment is so characteristic of the Evangelists, that it almost amounts to a demonstration of the interpolation of the particle.*

Olshausen's second reason for thinking that part of the recorded proceedings against Christ, took place in the house of Annas, is that verse 24, according to any other view, would be out of place. This is assertion and not argument, and can be appropriately answered, by saying that verse 24 is just where it ought to be, after the 23d verse, and before the 25th verse.

The third reason is, that what is related above by John could not have taken place at the palace of Caiaphas; because the trial before the high-priest, as recorded by the first three Evangelists, bears no resemblance to this recorded by the last Evangelist. To this, it may be replied, that John does not diverge more widely from the first three writers in regard to the trial, than he does in regard to the scene in the garden. And we might use the same form of argument to prove that there were two Gethsemanes, as

* We have seen a very ancient version, which retains *oun*. The English equivalent is left out in Tyndale's Bible, but retained in the Bishop's Bible, and Geneva, as well as King James's Bible.

well as two trials before Jewish officials. We think, moreover, that Olshausen is mistaken in asserting that there is no resemblance in the trial, as described by John, from the 13th to the 25th verse, and that referred by the other Evangelists to the palace of Caiaphas; for, to our mind, there is a most happy correspondence. John tells us, that when the high-priest asked Jesus "of his doctrine," he was answered, "Ask them which heard me." Matthew and Mark show us how Caiaphas and his coadjutors availed themselves of the hint, and how they did "ask of them which had heard him." "Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death."

In support of the opinion, that there was but one formal trial of Christ before the Jewish dignitaries, the following reasons may be given.

First. John introduces both Annas and Caiaphas in the 13th verse, and he is careful to tell us that the latter was the high-priest. The natural and fair inference then is, that when John speaks of the high-priest in the 15th, 16th, 19th, 22d, and 24th verses, he means Caiaphas, and not Annas. And it is not at all likely that John would make any mistake in the employment of the title, high-priest. He was a Jew, and could not have been careless in an allusion to the head of the Jewish Church. For the same reason, Matthew and Mark could not have erred in the use of the same term. John, however, would have been far less apt to be wrong, because his intimacy with the

high-priest, and even the very domestics of the high-priest, forbids any such supposition.

Second. Winer shows that the word rendered "had sent," (*apesteilen*,) though an aorist, has been properly translated as a pluperfect; and he quotes Kuinöl and Lücke as his endorsers. This word (*apesteilen*) then refers to some antecedent period; and the sense of the 24th verse is, therefore, "Annas, some time previous, had sent Christ bound to Caiaphas;" and not, "Annas, the preliminary examination being over, *now* sends Christ bound to Caiaphas." This shows clearly that the Evangelist means to tell us, that Christ had been sent to Caiaphas *before* the denial by Peter and the cowardly assault by the Jewish officer.

Third. The hypothesis that the 24th verse is simply the soliloquizing comment of John upon the atrocious conduct of the Jewish officer, relieves the whole subject of all difficulty; and it is the only supposition that is not attended with any embarrassment.

Fourth. This hypothesis gives us a characteristic feature of John's style of writing. It is entirely like him to think aloud, as it were, of the aggravated wickedness of the blow, and yet not to make any effort to excite our indignation on account of it.

For these reasons, we think that there was no trial in the house of Annas, and that the Jews merely stopped there a few minutes to exhibit their prisoner, and then passed on. This is the opinion of most commentators—Whitby, Doddridge, Scott, Clarke, &c. Whitby says, "Of his being sent to Annas, the other

Evangelists say nothing, because nothing was done to him there; but all was done in the palace of Caiaphas." Doddridge transfers verse 24, and places it immediately after verse 13. He also renders *apesteilen* according to its strict aorist signification, and not as a pluperfect. The connected verses then read, "And led him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high-priest that same year. And Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas." This makes good sense. But in addition to the fact, that the most eminent Greek scholars are against Doddridge, in his rendering of *apesteilen*, and that the best copies of the original text are against the transposition of verse 24, the internal evidence is strongly in favour of the correctness of the English translation of the verse in dispute. This violent wresting of it out of its place, deprives it of its force, significance, and life-blood. It is clear to our mind, that the verse is in its right place, and that it was intended solely to show the enormity of striking a helpless, bound prisoner.

Adam Clarke thinks that there were no proceedings against Christ in the palace of Caiaphas, but he has a difficulty in coming to this conclusion. The particle in verse 24 troubles him. He says, "John xviii. 15-23, seems to intimate that these transactions took place at the house of Annas, but this difficulty arises from the insertion of the particle 'therefore' (*oun*) in verse 24, which should have been left out, on the authority of ADES Mt. B II; besides that of some

versions, and of the primitive Fathers. Griesbach has left it out of the text.”

It is obvious that the trouble, with this eminent scholar, has arisen from his misunderstanding of the design of John in writing the 24th verse. The presence or the absence of the particle has no material bearing upon what we believe to be the true exposition. For, retain the particle, John then calls upon us to notice the baseness of striking a prisoner in bonds; reject the particle, John then mentions, without comment, that the smitten prisoner was bound.

42. We see, therefore, that there is the most perfect agreement among all the Evangelists in regard to the place of Peter's denial. They all locate it in the palace of Caiaphas. Had they fabricated a fiction together, and related it in precisely the same words, there would not have been more exact correspondence in their statements than we actually find to exist. But it is evident that John at least had no understanding with the others, as to what he should say. For, with the simple-hearted earnestness of a man intent only upon communicating what he saw and heard, he has told his tale without any regard to its conformity with the accounts of the other Evangelists. In fact, so utterly indifferent has he been in reference to this matter, that he has used an expression which has sorely puzzled the most eminent biblical students. This independence of manner in narrating facts, united with the most complete harmony as to the facts themselves, is irrefragable proof of the credibility

of the Gospels. It would have been no difficult task for John, writing after the other Evangelists, to have adapted his narrative to theirs. But it is a notable circumstance that most of the alleged discrepancies are between his statements and those of the first three writers. We trust to be able to show that these discrepancies are harmonies in disguise. But even if this be not shown, there will still remain the incontestable truth that every page of the record of the last of the Evangelists, bears marks of his own idiosyncrasy, and of his entire freedom from being trammelled by the accounts of the preceding writers. Does this look like fraud? Does it look like a "cunningly devised fable"? Does it look like the contrivance of artful and designing men?

If three witnesses had given their testimony with respect to a certain matter, and a fourth, who knew their evidence, should be regardless of conforming his statements to theirs, no intelligent jury could be made to believe that there had been any preconcert among the four. Whatever might be thought of the individual truthfulness of the men, they could not at least be accused of concocting together a falsehood. The absence of everything that looked like pre-arrangement would afford a strong presumption of their integrity. And this presumption would be changed into proof, when their several testimonies, though variant in word and manner, were found, after rigid investigation, to be beautifully accordant in even the smallest particulars.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DENIAL OF PETER.

To convey a clear impression of this sad affair and its attendant circumstances, we will describe the better sort of Jewish houses. The Israelites most likely derived their ideas of architecture from the Egyptians. Those nations which had intercourse with Egypt when preëminent in letters, arts, and sciences, would naturally imitate her architecture. Traces of her style of building are still to be found in Southern Europe. The Moors introduced Egyptian architecture into Spain, and the Spaniards and Portuguese brought it to this continent. We find, accordingly, that the houses in Mexico, Central America, and South America, are built at this day just as they were in Judea in the time of Joshua and the Judges.

We will try to describe the Jewish buildings from our personal knowledge of the Spanish. They were in the form of a hollow square, built around on four sides, thus leaving a court or open space in the centre. This enclosed area is called by Luke "the hall," and we will see that Matthew and Mark also designate it by the same name. The entrance to the court was by a large covered archway deeper than the front of the building; that is, it extended back into the court, and also projected forward into the street. It was closed by large folding gates through which horses and chariots could pass. The large gates were usually kept closed, and ingress and egress

were given by a wicket-gate made in one of the larger gates, and of size great enough to permit persons on foot to pass through. Matthew calls this archway or vestibule "the pylon." Matt. xxvi. 71. Mark calls it "the fore-court," *proaulion*. Mark xiv. 68. In our English translation, both words are rendered "porch." In large edifices, such as the palace of Caiaphas, there was always considerable room in this porch; and as it was the coolest part of the house, it was ever a favourite resort for the servants and retainers, and their visitors. It was also the place of traffic for family supplies, luxuries, &c. Permanent seats made in the walls extended the entire length of the archway on both sides, and were often used as couches for repose in warm weather. The gateways leading into walled towns were, in all respects, similar to those leading into private residences, and were visited by the elders and influential men, for the purpose of discussing the affairs of the commonwealth and the municipality. Deut. xvii. 5, 8; xxv. 6, 7: Ruth iv. 1, &c.

The rooms on the lower floor of the houses were a little elevated above the central court, and were entered from it. The office, or place of business of the master of the family, the kitchen and the apartments of the servants were on this floor. Some eight or ten feet in front of these rooms was a colonnade extending entirely around the four sides, in order to support a piazza or stoop, which gave access to the rooms of the second story. The piazza itself was reached by

a flight of stairs from the court beneath. The space between the colonnade and rooms of the first story is used at the present day for feeding horses, mules, and camels in the caravansaries or inns of Asia. The Jews most likely appropriated this space for the same purpose, and here most probably Solomon made the four thousand stalls for his horses. 2 Chron. ix. 25.

The Jewish houses were seldom more than two stories high. The proprietor and his family occupied the second story. One of the rooms on this floor, that immediately over the archway, was the largest and best furnished in the house, and was known as the "guest-chamber." (See Mark xiv. 14.) The roofs of the houses were flat, and were favourite places for walking, and for meditation in the cool of the evening. David often resorted thither, and Peter had gone "up upon the house-top to pray," when he fell into the trance, which was to teach him that the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down. (See Acts x. 9.)

To prevent accidents to persons walking on the roof, the law of Moses required that a battlement should extend entirely around the edges. (See Deut. xxii. 8.) In midsummer, an awning was frequently suspended from the inner battlements, so as to cover the court beneath. When Mark tells us that the friends of the man "sick of the palsy," "uncovered the roof," that they might let him down into the presence of Jesus, he means nothing more than that they removed the awning, so that the paralytic could

be lowered into the area below. (See Mark chap. ii.) Now, we will be able to understand all the transactions in the palace of Caiaphas, if we assume that his office was on the lower floor opposite the gate, so that it would be the first room seen by a person passing through the archway. Let us assume, too, that a *bema* or platform was just in front of this office, and between it and colonnade. Such an assumption is in entire accordance with the known customs of that period. Suppose, also, Caiaphas seated upon this rostrum, with Jesus and his accusers beside him; keep distinctly in mind the shape of the palace; remember that the open court is called the "hall," and that the gateway is called the "porch." With these things in view, a clear idea will be gotten of the proceeding against our blessed Lord and Redeemer.

The Evangelists, in their account of the denial of Peter, afford a perfect example of the mutual supplement by the witnesses of deficiencies in the narrations of one another, and of their mutual finishing out of incomplete statements. Matthew says, "But Peter followed him afar off, unto the high-priest's palace (literally hall or court of the high-priest) and went in and sat with the servants to see the end." The question naturally arises, Where did he sit? Was it in the court? or in the porch provided with permanent seats? or in some of the servants' apartments? Mark says, "And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high-priest: (literally court of the high-priest) and he sat with the servants, and warmed him-

self by the fire." From this it appears that Peter sat down by a fire; and it would be fair to infer, that the fire was in the kitchen, or a servant's room. But Luke says, that "When they had built a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down with them." The fire was, then, in the court or open space, and not in the kitchen or servants' room. We learn, too, another fact not before communicated, and that is, that the arresting party made the fire.

Why did they make it? Was it that they might have a better and steadier light than that afforded by their "lanterns and torches"? Were they cold, too, as well as Peter? Or was his chilliness only the result of fright and excitement upon a singularly nervous temperament? John says, that the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold, and they warmed themselves; and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself." We now learn, for the first time, that the weather was cold, and that others besides Peter felt it. Observe, too, that John, who usually pays so little attention to details, speaks here with the precision of an eyewitness. He tells us the very material of which the fire was made.

On summing up our evidence, we see that Matthew tells of Peter sitting down with servants; Mark, of his sitting by a fire; Luke tells who built this fire, and where it was built; John, why it was made, and of what it was made. The statement, too, of John

about the coldness of the night, agrees exactly with all that travellers say of the climate of Judea. The nights there are cool, even when the days are warm. There is still another point that claims our notice. Though Matthew and Mark do not directly tell us that Peter seated himself by a fire in the court, yet they evidently had this fact in their minds; for, instead of speaking, as Luke does, of coming to the high-priest's house, (*oikon*,) they speak of coming to this hall. Moreover, the first two Evangelists, a little farther on in their narratives, confirm what Luke had explicitly stated in reference to the place where Peter was seated. The English reader would scarcely suspect, that when Matthew says, "Peter sat without in the palace," the literal rendering is, "Peter sat without in the *court*." So, too, when Mark says, "And as Peter was beneath in the palace," the literal translation is, "And as Peter was beneath in the *court*." The Greek word (*aule*) translated "hall," in Luke, is the same as that translated "palace," in Matthew and Mark.

43. If we combine the three points in one—first, the beautiful adjustment of part to part, in the several independent statements; second, the confirmation of John's declaration about the cold, by all who visit Judea; third, the incidental agreement of Matthew and Mark with Luke, as to Peter sitting in the court, we will have a triune argument, which cannot be overthrown. It has its foundation on the eternal rock of the truth of God's word, and the petty storms raised

by the Prince of the power of the air will beat upon it in vain.

The next verse (the 56th) is in these words: "But a certain maid beheld him, (Peter,) as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man also was with him."

Who was this maid? Did she belong to the household of Caiaphas, or was she one of the rabble collected to see the trial of Jesus? Was she one of those seated around the fire, or did she come there after Peter? Why did she look earnestly upon him? Why did she suspect him? Who is the other person referred to in her accusation, "This man also was with him"? Finally, who is the person Peter is charged with following? Matthew answers two of these questions. He says, "Peter sat without in the palace; and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee." The damsel, then, was not seated by the fire, but came there; and we learn now, also, that Peter was accused of being with Jesus of Galilee. Mark answers another question. He says, "And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high-priest; and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." We now know that the damsel was one of the maid-servants of Caiaphas. Still we do not know from what part of the building she came; nor how she came to suspect Peter of being a disciple of Jesus; nor yet who is the other person alluded to in her declaration,

“Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.” John, however, supplies all that is lacking in the other narratives. He tells us that “Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace (*aule*) of the high-priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high-priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man’s disciples? He saith, I am not.”

The whole thing is now perfectly plain to us. Peter and John both followed Jesus, but John entered boldly into the palace with his Master. Peter followed afar off, and when he reached the archway, his courage failed him, and he was afraid to go in. He, however, hung about the door, too cowardly to enter, and too much attached to his Lord to go away. This extraordinary conduct excited the suspicion of the portress; and when John, a known disciple of Jesus, came out, and brought him in, she was led to suspect that Peter was also a disciple. Peter’s hesitation about entering, and, it may be, some trepidation of manner after he had gotten in, induced her to follow him to the fire in the central court, and there charge him with being a disciple, as well as his friend John.

A casual inspection of John, would dispose one to think that the portress addressed Peter in the archway; but on a more thorough examination, it is

evident that the Evangelist did not seek to produce that impression. For immediately after recording the conversation of the damsel with Peter, he adds, "And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold, and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself." This verse is not connected with what succeeds it; and the sole object of it is plainly to tell us where Peter was at the time of his being challenged by the damsel. There is, then, perfect harmony among the four Evangelists, in every particular.

But not only do they agree, and mutually supplement one another; they moreover mutually remove the obscurities that pertained to the several narratives. Thus the first three put the word "also" in the mouth of the damsel; and John explains it by showing that it referred to himself. Thus Matthew and Mark speak of the maid *coming* to the fire; and John explains the expression, by showing that she came from the gate. Thus Luke tells us of the damsel looking earnestly upon Peter; and John explains the reason of her earnest scrutiny, by showing that her suspicions had been excited at the gate, and that she had therefore followed him to the light, in order to examine him more carefully.*

* The word rendered *fire*, in the 56th verse of Luke, is different from that in the 55th, and literally means, not fire, but *light*. The verse, then, would read, "But a certain maid beheld him, as he sat by the *light*," &c. The change of word is very significant—it clearly proves that the damsel came to the light, for a better view of Peter.

Observe, moreover, that John is accurate, even in his allusion to a local custom. We know from profane history, that the gate-keepers of the Greeks and Romans were men; but the Jews employed women for this service. (See Acts xii. 13.) Hence John's declaration, that the maid who accosted Peter was a por-tress, accords with the known domestic policy of the Jews.

Observe, too, that what Matthew and Mark say of the position of Peter, agrees exactly with the more explicit statements of Luke and John, and corresponds to the known structure of Jewish houses. Thus when Matthew says, "Peter sat *without* in the hall," (*aule*,) he evidently means that he was *without the colonnade*, where was the *bema*, upon which stood Christ and his accusers. And when Mark says, "Peter sat *beneath* in the hall," he plainly means that he was beneath this *bema*.

44. On reviewing our evidence, we find—first, exact harmony among the Evangelists; second, mutual explanations of doubtful expressions; third, a reference to a known peculiarity in the household arrangements of the Israelites; fourth, several allusions to the internal structure of the Jewish houses, in strict conformity with the architecture of that people. We think that this four-fold cord cannot be easily broken. It was wrought by the four "witnesses chosen of God," and not by the feeble hand which traces these lines.

An objection may be raised, that much of the supplementing noticed above has been done by John, the

last of the Evangelists. The answer to this weak objection is easy. It is the most difficult of all tasks to finish a work in the spirit and manner of the original designer. Military writers tell us that there is nothing more dangerous than to change commanders, during the active prosecution of hostilities. None but he who has planned and begun a campaign, can successfully carry it out. None but he who has projected the order of battle is fit, to direct the subsequent movements on the field. This principle was well understood by the humblest private in the army of Napoleon. Hence the confidence inspired by the promise, "Soldiers! I myself will direct all your battalions." The confidence was not inspired merely by the fact that their beloved Emperor would attend to all the details of the battle, and control them by his wonderful genius; but by the fact that his personal supervision would prevent confusion and any change in the original plan of operations. At the battle of Saltzbach, the great Austrian leader, Montecuculi, stood gazing intently upon the terrible conflict, when his quick eye suddenly detected a movement of the French troops inconsistent with their previous arrangement, and inconsistent with their previous order of attack. So satisfied was he by this change in their operations, that a different mind was now directing the columns of the enemy, that he exclaimed aloud, "Turenne is dead, or mortally wounded." And so it proved to be. The French Marshal had been killed by a cannon-ball before the

evolution took place, which attracted Montecuculi's notice. But not only is it hazardous to change commanders during the conduct of a campaign, it is also exceedingly hazardous for the same commander to change his own preconcerted plans. The great military captain forms a distinct conception of the scene of operations, the numerical strength and capabilities of his enemy, the number and quality of his own troops, &c. From all these data, he devises his system of strategy, before he breaks up his encampment and puts his troops in motion. Circumstances may imperatively demand a modification of his well-digested scheme, but even the slightest alteration will be attended with immense peril. And there is scarcely anything that will justify a change in the presence of of an active and intelligent foe. "I have them!" was the exultant cry of Napoleon at Austerlitz, when he saw the Russians attempting to change their order of battle. A similar mistake to that of the allies in the campaign of 1805, was made by the Americans at Brandywine, and resulted most disastrously to our arms. At the battle of New Orleans, Packenham becoming fretted and annoyed at the inefficiency of Colonel Mullens, changed his mode of attack just as his troops were going into action. The issue is well known. "Wellington's invincibles" were driven from the field with fearful loss, by the untrained militia of the West.

These illustrations serve to show that whenever the unity of plan is broken up, a grave error is commit-

ted. Now to apply this truth to the case in point. John could not have told a consistent story without having a preconceived plan. But upon the hypothesis of a forged narrative, his plan would have been constantly broken in upon by his effort to adapt his story to the statements of the other three witnesses. And since his narrative, while forming a harmonious sequel to theirs, has still preserved unity and congruity in all its parts, the inference is inevitable that all four witnesses were under the direction of the same controlling mind, even the mind of the Spirit of God.

We have drawn our illustrations from a single department of human effort, and that the most remote from literary enterprise. It is easy to draw our parallels nearer, and to show that whatever the work may be, the man who first projected and began it can alone be trusted with finishing it in harmony with the original conception. Sculptors, painters, poets, philosophers, historians, &c., have often been called to render an account of the deeds done in the body, before the great works of art, science and literature, which they had begun, had been fully completed. And in most cases, no one has had the presumption or the hardihood to attempt the completion of their labours.

St. Peter's at Rome was designed by the celebrated Bramante; but he only lived to carry it on as far as "the springing of the four great arches of the central intersection." The work was then entrusted to seve-

ral architects in succession, who all failed most signally, since they tried to ingraft their own plans upon the original design. At length Pope Paul III. appointed Michael Angelo architect of the building, though the great artist was then in his seventy-second year. "He immediately laid aside all the drawings and models of his immediate predecessors, and taking the simple subject of the original idea, he carried it out with remarkable purity, divesting it of all the intricacies and puerilities of the previous successors of Bramante, and by its unaffected dignity and unity of conception, he rendered the interior of the cupola superior to any work of modern times. He was engaged upon it seventeen years, and at the age of eighty-seven, he had a model prepared of the dome, which he carried up to a considerable height; in fact, to such a point as rendered it impossible to deviate from his plan, and it was completed in conformity with his plan by Giacomo della Porta and Domenico Fontana." The success of Angelo was then due to his adhering to the original design, and yet, great as were his powers, we are told that he hesitated about undertaking to finish that which another had begun. In fact, on another occasion, he positively declined a similar task. An ancient work of art, the celebrated group of Laocöon and his children, was found in a vineyard, A. D., 1506, on the site of the baths of Titus. From the writings of Pliny, it was known that there was such a group, and that found, corresponded exactly with his description, except that the

arm of the principal figure was broken off. Pope Julius II. commissioned Michael Angelo to restore the mutilated limb, but he refused to attempt it. Though the greatest of modern sculptors, he felt his inability to make an arm in perfect proportion with the rest of the figure, designed and executed by another. We think, too, that no one ever attempted to complete Angelo's own unfinished paintings for the Sistine Chapel. It is said that Da Vinci intended to give some additional touches to the head of the Saviour in his picture of the Last Supper; but after his death, no artist ever dared to give those last finishing strokes of the brush. Raphael left a little work undone on his incomparable painting, the Transfiguration of Christ. This was committed to his pupil Romano, thoroughly imbued with his style and manner, and thoroughly acquainted with his design. In the picture gallery of the Boston Athenæum hangs Washington Allston's last and greatest work—Belshazzar's Feast, just in the condition in which he left it at death. Stuart began a portrait of J. Q. Adams, but died when he had almost completed the head. The picture was finished by Sully, but he would not touch the head.

Niebuhr, Arnold, and Mackintosh, left their historical works incomplete. The son of the former edited his father's papers, but the labours of the last two have been left in their unfinished state. Pascal had projected a great work on theology and the internal evidences of Christianity, and had thrown together

fragmentary ideas, which he meant to develop; but death arrested him in his work. No one has presumed to expand these fragments into a system, and they have been published in their original form under the title of "Pascal's Thoughts." If we mistake not, the *Lectiones Opticæ* of Newton were never completed, and were published posthumously without any additions. Kepler left some eighteen volumes of manuscript, which were never edited. So it has been supposed that Livy left several volumes of his History in an unfinished condition, and that they were never given to the world. Virgil died leaving portions of the last six books of his *Æneid* incomplete. And so fearful was he of their being issued in that condition, that in his last moments he requested the Emperor to have them destroyed. Augustus did not comply with his wishes, but had them published just as they came from the hands of the poet, and gave the strictest orders that there should be no supplementing of the incomplete lines and broken stanzas. And these orders were given, as we believe, not because there was no poet equal to Virgil, but because there was none so like him in taste, sentiment, style, and manner as to be able to compose lines which should possess exactly the same rhythm and tone of thought. Augustus may have been led to think thus by an incident, which was the means of introducing Virgil to him; an incident which illustrates the point we are contending for, viz., that it is the most difficult of all tasks to finish successfully that which

another has begun. Virgil wrote a complimentary couplet, and pasted it on the walls of the Emperor's palace. Augustus was so pleased with it, that he demanded the author. A poet, named Bathyllus, claimed the couplet, and was rewarded for it by the Emperor. Virgil pasted, by night, another piece on the walls, complaining that the wrong man had received the credit of the distich; and said that the true author was he who could finish the five lines which he appended, each beginning with the same three words. Cæsar, to discover the writer, ordered the poets of Rome to finish the lines. All failed, Bathyllus included, except Virgil. Thus we see, that the Mantuan bard risked his reputation, and desire of the monarch's favour, upon his belief that he only who had commenced the lines could complete them.

It has been regarded as a most wonderful effort of geometrical genius, that Robert Simson, of Edinburgh, could restore the Porisms of Euclid, by means of certain hints left by Pappus. Why has the world regarded this as one of the grandest triumphs of mathematical talent? Is it not because of the universal belief, that there is no task more arduous than that of carrying out the thoughts of another?

We will add another illustration. An eminent theologian died a few years ago, after completing his great work on Moral Science, so far as it relates to man's duty to God. His scarcely less distinguished sons were urged to finish the second part—that which would embrace the reciprocal duties of man to man.

But, although aided by their father's copious notes on the subject, they felt unable to write a sequel, which would preserve the same terseness of thought, form of argument, unity of plan, and simplicity of illustration.

If in sculpture, painting, poetry, science, and literature, it be found to be next to impossible to supply increments which shall blend so harmoniously with the primitive work, as to form one congruous, symmetrical whole, what right has infidelity to assume that it was an easy matter for John to write an elaborate narrative, which so admirably fills out the deficiencies of the preceding narratives? We readily grant, that if three men had concocted together a fiction, a fourth false witness, who had heard their evidence, might make his statements touch theirs at a few salient points. But we hold it to be utterly impossible for such a witness to give testimony enough to constitute a volume, comprising hundreds of personal incidents, minute particulars, local allusions, descriptions of character, doctrinal truths, speeches, conversations, and public acts—all agreeing with the declarations of the other three, sometimes reiterating them, sometimes removing their obscurities, sometimes adding to what was incomplete, sometimes giving new but consistent facts, sometimes seeming to differ, but really harmonizing always. We hold, that such multiplied consistencies, under such multifarious aspects, would be a greater miracle than any recorded in the Bible.

Let us look, too, at John as the finisher of the portrait of our Lord. The other Evangelists made the outline, and he gave colouring, soul, and life to the whole figure. Their combined work has produced a picture, faultless in beauty and grace, inimitable, unrivalled, unsurpassed—a picture which has been gazed upon with admiration, reverence and awe, by sinners as well as saints, infidels as well as believers, savage as well as civilized nations; by learned and by unlearned, by wise and by foolish, by the young and by the aged, by all classes and by all conditions. And as we love to look upon the portraits of our friends, taken at different periods of their lives, so we may imagine that angels and glorified spirits from other worlds, turn to this picture, made by the Evangelists, to trace with adoring rapture the lineaments of their Sovereign and King, in the face of the lowly man of Nazareth.

How is it possible to believe, that the fishermen of Galilee could, by their own unaided power, produce such a perfect picture? Even Rousseau thought that the conception and the portraiture of the character of our blessed Redeemer were miraculous. Let modern infidels blush to hear him say: “It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, (of Christ,) than that one man only should form the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the

inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero." But if it be difficult to conceive how four men working together could produce so matchless a picture, how much is the difficulty enhanced in our estimation, by the reflection that three of them merely began it, while the fourth was left to complete it!

And thus we see, that the supplementing by John, of the accounts of the other Evangelists, so far from constituting an objection against the credibility of the Evangelists, is truly the very strongest proof of their reliability.

The 57th verse reads thus: "And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not."

John tells us that when the portress asked Peter, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? he saith, I am not." And it is remarkable, that this is the strongest form of denial which John puts into the mouth of Peter. The denial, as recorded by Matthew, is much more emphatic: "And a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest." Mark relates the denial with additional emphasis: "And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest; and he went out into the porch, and the cock crew."

We see, that while the witnesses agree substantially about the fact, they have related it, each in his own peculiar way. We will make a few comments upon

their respective accounts, beginning with that of Luke. Our impression of this Evangelist is, that like the sinner of his own touching story, his sins, which were many, had been forgiven; for he loved much. Luke vii. 47. He is essentially the Evangelist for the sinner. There is more encouragement for the penitent offender in his Gospel, than in the other three Gospels combined. We propose to show this more fully hereafter. Assuming it for the present, we can point to some traces of that overflowing love to Christ which is to be expected in one who had been freely and fully forgiven. The story of Peter's denial contains one of those natural and exquisite touches, which thrill so upon the heart of the long-estranged, but now recovered child of God. With melting tenderness, Luke tells us, that Peter denied *him*, his Master, his Leader, his Friend, his Saviour. It is the denial of Jesus which excites the astonishment and regret of "the beloved physician." He does not stop, with Mark, to notice the emphatic form of the falsehood, nor with Matthew, to notice its publicity—that it was uttered "before them all." The enormity of the offence, in his estimation, consisted, not in the manner, nor in the place where it was committed, but in the fact that it was a wrong to the Redeemer of sinners.

John preserves his individuality as well as Luke. With characteristic mildness, he tells the tale in its least offensive form. He does not, with Mark, notice the repetition of the same idea, "I know not, neither

understand;" nor does he, with Luke, call attention to the offence as committed against Jesus; nor yet does he, with Matthew, mention, as an aggravation of the sin, that it was in the presence of the enemies of our Lord.

Mark, writing under the direction of Peter, gives us, doubtless, the very language used by that frail disciple: and it is a clear proof of Peter's honesty, that he permitted the record of his denial, aggravated by the double falsehood of not knowing nor understanding what he was charged with. Mark, furthermore, tells us of another circumstance that enhanced the guilt of the second denial of Peter. As this Evangelist had alone mentioned *two* crowings of the cock, in the prediction of our Saviour concerning the defection of Peter; so he alone tells of the first crowing. This was immediately after the first denial, and ought to have recalled Peter to a sense of duty. That it did not have that effect, we can only attribute to his being under the influence of the "hour and the power of darkness." In warning Peter by means of the first cock-crow, God dealt with him just as he now deals with us all. He admonishes for the first offence, and seeks to bring us back to the path of rectitude. But we go off, like Peter, and commit the same sin again and yet again. The Evangelist, in noticing the fruitless admonition has but given us a single leaf in the folio history of the world. But that which we call attention to now, is the honesty of Peter in permitting the relation of an unheeded warning.

If he had not communicated this fact to Mark, the amanuensis could not have gotten it from any other source.

45. On summing up our evidence, we find once more a triune argument for the credibility of the witnesses—First, Substantial agreement coupled with an independent mode of narration by the respective witnesses; Second, The preservation of individual characteristics by Luke and John; Third, The record by Peter's secretary, of things discreditable to that disciple.

The 58th verse is in these words: "And after a little while another saw him and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not."

We would naturally infer from this verse in connection with the preceding, that Peter was still by the fire in the court, when he denied his Master the second time. John leaves us no ground to doubt it. He says, "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said, therefore, unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not." Matthew and Mark seem to differ from both Luke and John, with respect to the person who interrogated Peter, and also in regard to the place of the second denial. Matthew says, "And when he was gone out into the porch (entry,) another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man." Mark says, "And he went out into the porch, (entry;) and

the cock crew. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And he denied it again."

Before attempting to reconcile the testimony of the first two Evangelists with that of the last two, we will notice the mutual supplementing between Matthew and Mark. While the former leaves it doubtful at what time Peter went out into the porch, the latter shows that it was immediately after the first denial, and unquestionably with the view of escaping the searching scrutiny of those around the fireside. We do not agree with the commentators in supposing that Peter meditated an escape from the palace. His character was a strange compound of strength and weakness. Love to Christ was singularly blended in him, with intense regard for his personal safety. He had come "to see the end," and was resolved to accomplish that object, without danger to himself. He, therefore, left the court, to escape the troublesome inquisition, facilitated by the light of the fire, and sought the darkness of the archway. But here he encountered another maid. In this case, Matthew supplements Mark. We might have supposed from what the latter says, that it was the same watchful portress, who pertinaciously persisted in her suspicions. And from the indefinite allusion of Mark to the bystanders, we might have been led to believe that reference was had to those around the fire. But Matthew tells us expressly that this other maid spake to "them that were there," that is, to those in the porch. And

thus the two writers in turn correct the errors that we might have fallen into, by reading separately their respective narratives.

From Matthew's reference to the two maids, and other persons in the archway, we conclude that there was quite an assemblage of servants and idlers in their wonted place of gossip, drawn there partly by the force of habit, partly to guard the entrance, and partly by the desire to use the benches of the entry as seats or couches. With this in view, there will be no difficulty in reconciling the statements of the Evangelists. We imagine that when Peter heard the maid accuse him to the bystanders, he naturally supposed that there would be less safety for him in the porch among a crowd of lawless servants, than in the court, where the presence of the military might serve as a check to personal violence. Unwilling to flee, yet extremely solicitous for his own safety, he returned to the fireside as the place of greatest security. Some of the menials followed him from the entry, and once more aroused the suspicions of those about the fire. Several of these, according to John, began simultaneously to speak among themselves, or to him personally, accusing him of being a disciple of Jesus. Peter then addressed himself to the most vociferous of his accusers, or to the principal personage among them, and said, "Man, I am not."

We do not pretend to assert that the things occurred just as we have described them. All that we aim at is a plausible explanation of supposed difficul-

ties. We are bound to believe witnesses, if we do not detect them tripping in their evidence. We are bound to receive their statements as true, if they contain no irreconcilable discrepancies. We are bound to accept their testimony, if apparent differences can be made to harmonize by any reasonable system of interpretation. The *onus* lies upon the objector. It is for him to prove their falsehood, by showing that their evidence cannot be made to correspond by any device whatever. Let the Evangelists be tried by this well known rule. It will then be seen how weak and frivolous is the allegation of infidelity, that the four witnesses contradict each other, when Matthew and Mark speak of the second accusation against Peter, as having been made by a woman; while Luke speaks of it as having been made by a man; and John, as having been made by several men. There would be some ground for this confident assertion had Matthew and Mark said that none but a woman made it, and Luke had declared with equal precision that none but a man made it. There would be in that case a flat contradiction on the part of Luke of the statements of Matthew and Mark. Furthermore, had Luke explicitly declared that the charge against Peter was made by one man only, while John as distinctly stated that several men spoke personally to Peter; the last two Evangelists would then contradict one another. But so far are Matthew and Mark from saying that a maid was the only person to accuse Peter, they do not even say that he was accused by a

maid at all. Matthew tells us that a maid spake "unto them that were there;" and Mark says that she spake "to them that stood by." Neither of them intimates that she addressed a single word to Peter. The much vaunted disagreement between the first three Evangelists falls then to the ground. And upon such a frail thing as this does infidelity build its hopes that the gospel is a fiction! Upon a seeming difference, which a Sabbath-school scholar might reconcile, does it place its trust that there is no world of endless woe for those who reject the gospel of the Son of God. Alas! how has sin darkened the understanding, perverted the judgment, and seared the conscience!

The difference between Luke and John is just of the character that might be expected between independent witnesses, who had had no consultation with each other about what they should respectively depone. Nothing could be more natural than the several accounts of these two Evangelists. No statements when combined ever exhibited more intrinsic marks of truthfulness. Let us try to form an idea of the scene described by them. Let us imagine a promiscuous assembly gathered at this moment around a fire in some open yard, for the purpose of witnessing the trial of a supposed malefactor, and that a stranger has just joined himself to the crowd. Let it now be suddenly whispered that the stranger is a friend, an accomplice even, of the man under trial. What more natural than that the tale should be repeated from

mouth to mouth, until one bolder, or of more official dignity than the rest, should fling it in the teeth of the new-comer. And what more natural than that he should reply to this man, and not to the whole crowd. And this is exactly the order of relation by Luke and John. The difference between them amounts to nothing more than this—the one tells of the indefinite accusation by the mixed company; the other of its personal application to Peter by a single individual of the company.

46. So far are we from seeing any difficulty in the two accounts, that if called upon to give an example of the happy correspondence of independent evidence, we would select this very case. But in addition to this, John employs a word, which is, to our mind, full of meaning: “They said, *therefore*, unto him.” It is evident that the *therefore* refers to something not expressed. With the light thrown upon this word by Matthew and Mark, we think that we are not straining a point, when we suppose that it refers to the report of the servants from the archway. These had excited suspicion against Peter in the minds of the men about the fire, and the latter *therefore* said unto him, “Art not thou also one of his disciples?”

The 59th verse is as follows: “And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth, this fellow also was with him; for he is a Galilean.”

A cursory inspection of this verse seems to show that the third denial of Peter was made about an hour

after the second denial to some man, who had detected about him something of a Galilean character. We are not told who the man was, nor yet what it was about Peter which led to the suspicion of his being from the north of Palestine. Was the challenger of the apostle a ruthless Roman soldier? Was he a Jewish officer, ever keen on the scent of blood? Was he a vindictive Pharisee, burning for another victim? Was he a Scribe, "remorseless as death, and cruel as the grave"? Was he an elder, inflamed with hate against our glorious elder Brother, and all who adhered to him?

John informs us that the man who accosted Peter was none of these: "One of the servants of the high-priest (being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off) saith, Did I not see thee in the garden with him?" The man, then, was a servant of the high-priest, and the kinsman of Malchus. So far the testimony of John is explicit; but it does not explain why Peter was suspected of being a Galilean. The suspicion may have been excited by his personal appearance, or by his dress, or by his deportment, or by his accent, or by some allusion to Galilee in his fireside talk with the bystanders. We might have conjectured that the place of his nativity was discovered in any one of these ways. Matthew, however, shows that he was detected by something in his speech: "And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee." Some of our conjectures are now thrown out

as inadmissible. Peter was not discovered to be a Galilean by his personal appearance, nor by his dress, nor yet by his deportment. He was betrayed by his speech. How was he thus betrayed? Was there some peculiarity in his pronunciation? Or had he been entrapped into some reference to his home in Galilee? On turning to Mark, we find that the manner, and not the matter of his talk, led to Peter's exposure: "And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto." Poor Peter was then found out by his accent, his *brogue*. He had probably tried to put on a bold face before his accusers, and enter into a free and easy conversation; and in his case, as in many other cases, the effort at concealment but led to detection.

There is much in these parallel statements of the Evangelists that deserves our consideration. We observe, in the first place, that while there is no disagreement among them as to the challenger of Peter, nor as to the manner of his detection, yet their joint testimony is necessary to the full understanding of the whole matter. Matthew and Mark show that several persons gathered around Peter, denouncing him as a Galilean. Luke shows that one of them took upon himself the office of speaker, and John shows that this man was the kinsman of Malchus. In the second place, we notice that Luke tells of the suspicion that Peter was a Galilean. Matthew informs us that something in his speech caused this suspicion, and Mark

shows that this peculiarity in his speech was one of pronunciation. We notice, in the third place, that the nice attention to detail exhibited, is wholly at variance with forgery. Men who were relating a fictitious story, would never have thought of telling so natural an incident as that of the exposure of Peter by means of his dialect. Still less would they have told it in such an artless, offhand manner. We notice, in the fourth place, that the reference to the dialect of Galilee, comports with the historical fact. It is well established by profane writers, as well as by the Old Testament Scriptures, that the pronunciation of this country was "broader and flatter than that of Judea, and differed from the latter in confounding the gutturals and the last two letters of the Hebrew alphabet."

We have a notable instance of this difference recorded as far back as the twelfth chapter of Judges. And so marked was the distinction between the Judean and Galilean accents, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, were able to recognize the speakers as Galileans, by their peculiar pronunciation. Acts xii. 6. Nor need we be surprised that people of a common origin and a common faith should speak so differently. The dialect of several counties in England is imperfectly understood in other parts of the same country. And in our own land, there are local phrases and accents in one section, which are almost wholly unintelligible in other sections, even of the same State.

47. On reviewing our evidence, we find that we have a four-fold argument for the credibility of the witnesses—an argument of the very kind which barristers love to have when they make their appeals to intelligent juries.

So far, we have only observed differences arising from the evident incompleteness of the respective accounts taken by themselves. But now we have to examine what seems to be real discrepancies. We have seen that Luke appears to place the third denial of Peter, about one hour after the second denial. And this inference from Luke's language has been so generally made, that we know not a single expositor who has taken a different view. But we think that the popular notion is wrong, and that the second denial was succeeded in a few moments by the third. We adhered to the common opinion in attempting to estimate the time spent in the garden. It was then premature to attempt a refutation of the received theory. Besides, our calculation of the time spent in the house of Caiaphas was in no wise affected by the common, but, as we believe, erroneous construction put upon Luke's words.

John evidently means to teach that Peter was challenged by the kinsman of Malchus, immediately after his second denial. But even if we set down John's testimony as doubtful, we cannot put aside the direct declarations of Matthew and Mark. The former, after recording the second denial, adds, "And after a while (*meta mikron*) came unto him they that stood by, &c."

Mark uses the same Greek word to designate the little interval of time between the two denials; but our translators have given it the more appropriate rendering of "a little after." We are not disposed to spread this little time over an hour, and to believe with expositors that the hour of Luke is the same as the little while of Matthew and Mark. This assumes carelessness either on the part of Luke, or on that of the first two writers. But Luke is too circumstantial, and too exact in his details, to permit us to imagine any loose use of language from him. He frequently makes omissions, but what he does relate is related with minuteness and care. And, however we might be inclined to reconcile the difference by an assumption of negligence on the part of Matthew, it plainly will not do to charge the Secretary of Peter with any such negligence. Every circumstance connected with the denial must have been stereotyped upon the brain of the penitent disciple. If he had made any mistake at all in regard to the time that elapsed between his second and third denials, the mistake would have been on the side of the greater length. If he were really accosted for the third time, an hour after his second denial, it is inconceivable that he, so tortured with fear for himself, and solicitude for his Master, should have shortened the interval. Men, who have undergone great mental or bodily distress, often exaggerate the length of their suffering, but they never suppose the period to have been less than it really was.

The common solution of the difficulty seems then, to us, to be too absurd to be admitted for a moment. We can reconcile the discordant accounts by a simpler and, we think, more natural hypothesis. Our theory is, that the "hour" of Luke is measured from the first denial, and that the "little after" of Matthew and Mark is measured from the second denial. Luke tells us of the first denial, and then adds, "And after a little while another saw him, &c.," and then he subjoins in the same connection, "And about the space of one hour after," that is, about one hour after the first denial. There is nothing either in the Greek text, or in the English translation, which forbids us from estimating the hour from the time of the first denial. And, in fact, we think that this is the most natural mode of estimation. The defeat of Gates at Camden occurred in August, 1780. The victory at King's Mountain, probably the most brilliant of the Revolution, was gained in October of the same year. The British were again defeated on Broad River in November. Now, suppose that some one should say that the battle of King's Mountain was won two months after Gates's defeat, and that three months after, the battle on Broad River was also won; would there be any violation of grammatical construction, or the rules of common sense, in counting the three months from the defeat at Camden. Would not this in fact be the most natural mode of computation?

Apply this process of calculation to the hour of

Luke, and you will have the most perfect agreement between him and the other three Evangelists. This affords a plausible solution of the difficulty, and this is all that we are bound to give. It shows how the discrepancy may be reconciled; and it is for the objector to show that it cannot be thus reconciled. But this is an impossible task for him. The Greek text admits our explanation, and will not be bent and twisted to suit the cavils of infidelity.

A comparison of the Evangelists reveals an exquisite touch, so true to nature, that it claims our attention. Matthew and Mark speak of Peter as *seated* by the fire, when accosted by the maid; but John tells us of his *standing* by the fire. And in like manner, Matthew, Mark, and John represent the last two who accosted Peter, as standing at the time they made their accusation. All this is exceedingly natural. Peter and all the rest were doubtless seated at first round the fire, just as Matthew and Mark describe them; but when the maid accused Peter, he and all about him rose to their feet.

48. We have, in this case, a two-fold proof of the truth of the evidence—first, from the reconciliation of a difficulty; second, from the naturalness of the narration.

The 60th verse reads thus: “And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.”

The Evangelist tells us merely of the denial of Peter, without telling us that this was made in an

emphatic or a profane manner. John, too, simply records the fact, "Peter then denied again; and immediately the cock crew." But Matthew and Mark show that Peter added profanity to the sin of falsehood: "Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew." (Matthew.) "But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And the second time the cock crew." (Mark.)

We remark, upon these parallel statements, that there is a difference between them, but no disagreement. The first two Evangelists tell more than the last two, but they do not contradict them. The four witnesses agree perfectly, when speaking of the same thing; but Matthew and Mark give particulars which Luke and John pass over. Surely, a sin-darkened vision alone is keen enough to see discrepancy in this.

A traveller visits Westminster Abbey, and describes certain monuments of the illustrious dead. A second traveller gives corresponding descriptions of the same monuments; but in addition, he speaks of many more, not noticed by the first. No man of common sense would say that the two travellers disagreed, because the second was a more acute observer or circumstantial writer than the second. How great then must be the effrontery of infidelity, in asserting a contradiction between the Evangelists, for the reason that Matthew and Mark give more copious details than do Luke and John, touching the third denial of Peter!

Again, two historians write concerning the same period of time. The incidents, which they handle in common, are treated precisely in the same way; but one of them mentions facts and circumstances that the other does not. Is there any one so foolish as to contend that the voluminous writer contradicts the epitomist? Macaulay expands into several chapters, that which the author of a historical compend would dispose of in a single page. Does the diffuseness of Macaulay falsify the condensation of the other? The very schoolboy can see that this is not the case. Shall we apply rules of common sense to books of travel and of history, and withhold them from the records of the Evangelists?

Having shown that the several accounts do not clash, it only remains to examine their bearing upon the truthfulness of the Evangelists. We observe, in the first place, that the circumstantiality of Matthew is no small proof of his integrity as a witness. He wrote for the Jews, and in the life-time of some, if not of most of those who stood around the fire in the central court of the palace of the high-priest. If the facts were not just as he related them, there were men still living to impugn his veracity. It is preposterous to suppose that he would have made statements which, if untrue, could have been contradicted so easily. A false witness, with the least modicum of prudence, never ventures to give minute particulars; still less does he attempt to falsify, touching known and familiar incidents. The most bungling perjurer does not

thus stultify himself. If John, instead of Matthew, had told with circumstantial exactness, the precise manner of Peter's third denial, infidelity would have been swift to raise the objection that John wrote after all the witnesses of the transactions had passed from time to eternity. We would like to turn their own guns upon the ranks of the enemy. We would like to confound them with their own favourite objection. Let them ponder well the fact that John is the least circumstantial of the four Evangelists. He deals in doctrines, not in the events. In this respect, his Gospel stands out in remarkable contrast with that of Matthew, the Evangelist of the Jews.

Thus it is the latter, and not the former, who records the Sermon on the Mount. If there were no such address delivered, there were thousands still alive when Matthew wrote, who could denounce him for falsehood. Thus it is Matthew, and not John, who tells that "four thousand men, besides women and children," were miraculously fed with "seven loaves and a few little fishes." And though John tells of the feeding of the five thousand, yet the miracle is plainly subordinate to the doctrine inculcated by it. And it was plainly recorded in order to teach the great truth, that Jesus was "the bread of life." And this remark may be made of most of the miracles related by John. They are merely introductory to the vital and essential doctrines which "the beloved disciple" wished to impress upon his readers. Again, it is Matthew and not John, who tells of Christ's trium-

phant entry into Jerusalem, amidst the rejoicing hosannahs of the multitude. If there had been no such triumphant procession, the whole city could have disproved it. Thus, too, it is Matthew and not John, who tells of Christ's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem. Infidelity, then, with all its impudence and recklessness, cannot say that the writer shaped the prediction to suit the event. For Matthew wrote before "the abomination of desolation" was seen in the holy place. Thus, too, it is Matthew and not John, who tells of the rending of the veil of the temple, the quaking of the earth, and the shivering of the rocks, at the death of Christ. If these displays of divine power were not really exhibited, Matthew made his statements in the face of the millions of Judea still living, who had been present at the feast of the passover. If these facts had been recorded by John alone, how infidelity would have exulted over the omission of the other Evangelists; how the scoffer would have sneered, and said that the occurrences were not related until there was none left who could gainsay or deny them.

Again, it is Matthew and not John, who tells that when the Lord of life gave up the ghost, "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Thus, too, it is Matthew and not John, who tells how the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we re-

member that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will arise 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." Many of these priests and Pharisees must have been still living when Matthew wrote, and could have demonstrated his want of veracity, if these things were not so. Matthew, moreover, is the only Evangelist who tells of the sealing of the sepulchre of our Lord, and of the setting of the watch. He is the only Evangelist who tells of the bribing of the Roman soldiers to say that the body was stolen while they slept. He is the only Evangelist who tells that this story "is commonly reported among the Jews until this day," viz., until the time in which he wrote. This statement, if untrue, was made in the face of the direct knowledge to the contrary, not of two or three individuals, but of the whole Jewish nation.

The boldness of Matthew in speaking of public and notorious occurrences, and the entire silence of John with respect to them, ought to satisfy the most sceptical of the honesty of the witnesses.

But to return to the verse under consideration. The circumstantiality of Mark is no less noteworthy than that of Matthew. According to the ordinary principles of human nature, we would expect the Secretary of Peter to smooth over and soften down the asperities of the language of denial. On the contrary,

Mark gives it in all its rough and ugly reality. He does not shrink from telling us, that Peter descended to the bar-room vulgarity of confirming his lie with blasphemous oaths and imprecations. Cursing and swearing, in the mouth of Cephas, the rock, the bold, confident disciple of Jesus! Has he, who so stoutly declared, "I will lay down my life for thy sake," resorted to the low expedient of profanity, to prove that he knew nothing of the immaculate Son of God? How little was the boaster acquainted with the deceit and desperate wickedness of his own heart! How little do any of us know, when not exposed to strong temptation, of the depths of pollution into which we may yet plunge, if not held up by the mighty hand of God.

"Heaven's Sovereign saves all beings, but himself,
That hideous sight, a naked human heart."

If we could but see our own hearts as God sees them, with what horror, amazement, and alarm, would we be filled! Heavenly Father! we would be taught by the fall of the proud and self-reliant Peter, to be very humble, and to trust in thy sustaining grace, and not in our own feeble strength. We would deplore as the greatest of evils, the being left a single moment without the guiding, directing, and controlling influences of thy Spirit. Leave us not, neither forsake us, O thou God of our salvation!

The men of blood, assembled around that fire in the court of the malignant Caiaphas, paid a tacit, but

glorious tribute to the religion of Jesus! It seems that they were satisfied, by the cursing and swearing of Peter, that he had no connection with the pure and holy Prisoner, surrounded by his ruthless accusers! It would seem, too, that they even let the swearer leave the palace without further molestation, (verse 62.)

We thank you, O ye haters of Jesus, for your implied acknowledgment that a profane blusterer could have nothing in common with the holy Man of Nazareth! Although burning with hellish malice against Him who loved you then, and loved you afterwards, even unto death—praying for you when murderous hands were nailing him to the cross—yet by your act ye have confessed the excellency of his religion, since ye took it for granted that a coarse, vulgar swearer could not be his disciple! Just as you judged then, the world judges now, and is ever ready to denounce as hypocrites, those professed followers of Christ, whose life is not guileless, and whose conversation is not free from all impious expressions. Strange that the father of lies, and his mendacious children, should give such honest and truthful testimony to the purity of the Gospel of the Son of God!

49. On summing up our evidence, we find a two-fold argument for the credibility of the witnesses—first, the boldness of Matthew in giving circumstantial details, which, if untrue, could have been denied so readily; second, the honesty of Mark in telling of the aggravated manner of the denial of his friend and teacher.

The 61st verse is in these words: "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter: and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

The parallel statements of Matthew and Mark are as follows: "And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly." (Matthew.) "And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept." (Mark.) John is altogether silent with respect to the repentance of Peter.

We remark, in the first place, upon these several accounts, that Mark, who alone in recording the prediction of Christ, had mentioned two crowings of the cock, and who alone had told of the first cock-crow, when Peter went out into the porch, so is now the only Evangelist who refers to the fact, that the cock did crow twice. We have had occasion before, to attribute Mark's precision to his being the Secretary of Peter, upon whose mind every circumstance connected with his denial must have made an indelible impression. The particularity of Mark is then easily explained; and we think that the omission, by the other writers, of any reference to the first cock-crow, is also as readily accounted for. The second cock-crow was about daylight; and the word cock-crowing,

unless something was especially stated to the contrary, always conveyed to the Jew the same idea that the words "dawn of day," convey to us. When, therefore, the disciples heard our Lord predict the defection of Peter, they caught at the leading thought, namely, that in the very night in which Peter so proudly boasted of his courage and love for his Master, he should deny him before cock-crowing—before the shades of darkness should have passed from the earth. It was this that so forcibly struck Matthew and John, on hearing the prediction, and they therefore recorded it just as they remembered it. It was this that struck so forcibly those from whom Luke derived his account, and he therefore recorded it just as he got it from them. The exceeding naturalness of the omission of Matthew, Luke, and John, is no mean proof of their integrity. If the Evangelists had framed together a fictitious story, they surely would have been careful in making their statements correspond in small, as well as important particulars. We can give a plausible, and, we think, satisfactory explanation of the difference in their evidence, upon the hypothesis of their being honest and reliable men. But we would be utterly unable to account for this seeming disagreement, upon the hypothesis that they were liars and forgers.

We remark, in the second place, that Luke is the only Evangelist who notices the tender look of rebuke which Jesus gave to his erring disciple. And this brings us back to a position previously assumed, that

Luke is the Evangelist for the penitent sinner, for the poor, the weak, and the friendless. He is the Evangelist who specially instructs us concerning the amazing mercy and forbearance of God, and the wonderful pity and compassion of his Son. He is the Evangelist who specially tells us of God's tender regard for those whom the world thinks least deserving of its notice and his favour. Thus he is the only Evangelist who gives the parable of the two debtors, the burden of which is, that he who has been forgiven much, will also love much. Luke alone relates the parable of the good Samaritan, which so beautifully inculcates the duty of neighbourly kindness, and which rebuked the pride of the lawyer, by showing that the act of mercy was not bestowed by the sanctimonious priest, nor by the Levite formalist, but by the despised Samaritan. Luke alone gives the parable of the importunate widow, teaching that the earnest, persevering prayer of the most insignificant, will not be made in vain. Luke and Matthew alone give the parable of the lost sheep, the moral of which is the anxiety of the good shepherd for the wanderers from his fold. Luke alone gives the parable of the lost money, and the prodigal son; the former, teaching the solicitude of God for those of his children who have gone astray; the latter, the tenderness of his pity for the returning penitent. Luke alone gives the parable of the unjust steward, so often and so greatly misunderstood, the key to which is the expression found only in that gospel, "He that is

faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

The lowly, the obscure, the poor in this world's goods, the feeble in intellect, are here taught that the faithful use of their little gifts will not fail of receiving its reward. Luke alone gives the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, which teaches God's abhorrence of a proud, vainglorious, self-righteous spirit, and his acceptance of a true and hearty repentance. Luke alone gives the parable of the pounds, which teaches the strictest accountability for even the one pound committed to our care, and that the smallest, as well as greatest gift from God is but a loan, which must be improved for his glory. Luke and Matthew both record the parable of the supper, but it is patent on the face of their respective accounts, that they related it from different motives. Matthew narrated it to teach the rejection of the Jews—Luke, to show the calling of the Gentiles. For, Matthew mentions two incidents passed over by Luke, the murder of the king's servants, and the punishment of the murderers; "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 burnt up their city." The parable was evidently introduced by Matthew as prophetic of the rejection of the gospel by the Jews, their persecution of its ministers, and of the vengeance taken upon them by the King of heaven, in the destruction of Jerusalem. Luke has

introduced the parable to show that from the streets and lanes of the city, and from the highways and hedges of the country, "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind," shall come up to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Luke alone gives the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which so impressively teaches that "the poor of this world" may be "rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him." And if we turn from the allegoric teaching of our Lord to his public ministry, we find that Luke still preserves his characteristic as the Evangelist for the sinner. He still shows God's distinguishing grace towards those whom the world most lightly esteems. Thus, Luke alone tells of the anger excited by our Saviour, in his sermon at Nazareth, by showing that Elijah was sent to a widow of Sarepta, rather than to the mothers in Israel; and that he healed Naaman, a Syrian, a stranger, and a natural enemy of the Jews, rather than the lepers among his own countrymen. Thus, Luke is the only Evangelist who tells of Christ's gracious reception of the penitent sinner, who anointed his head with ointment, and washed his feet with her tears. The other Evangelists speak of a different anointing, which was for his burial; but this was made, not by a sinner, but by the pure and lovely Mary, who had chosen that good part, which should not be taken away. The sinner's Evangelist speaks of the penitential offering of the abandoned woman, and is silent with respect to the

affectionate tribute of the saint. In his extracts from the Sermon on the Mount, Luke, with his characteristic contempt of the world's wealth, and the world's favour, has given two sentences not quoted by Matthew: "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation," &c. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." So, Luke alone tells us the story (we consider it not a parable) of the rich fool, who pulled down his barns and built greater, and said to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," even when the sentence of death had gone forth from "the Judge of all the earth." Luke, in like manner, is the only Evangelist who tells of Christ's rebuke of Martha for being "cumbered about much serving." So, too, Luke alone records that remarkable saying of our Lord, "That which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God."

Luke gives us many instances, not noticed by the other Evangelists, of our Redeemer's amazing forbearance and long-suffering with his enemies. Thus, he alone tells us how, when James and John wished to call down fire from heaven, to destroy a village of the Samaritans, which had rejected their Master with contumely and contempt, they were rebuked by him for their revengeful spirit, and were told that "the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Thus, Luke alone tells us of his weeping over Jerusalem, the city of murderers, the city that stoned his prophets, rejected his gospel, and

thirsted for his blood. John tells us of our blessed Saviour weeping on another occasion ; but then it was over the grave of his dead friend, Lazarus, and not over living, active, malignant foes. Thus, Luke alone tells us of his healing the wounded Malchus, when in the very act of laying violent hands upon his sacred person. Thus, Luke alone tells us of his tender, compassionate address, on his way to Calvary, to the daughters of Jerusalem—the city which had persecuted him to the death. Thus, Luke alone tells us of his prayer for his enemies, even while they were nailing him to the cross. Thus, Luke alone tells us of his pardon of the thief who had broken his laws, and most likely had reviled Himself, but a few moments before. Thus, Luke alone tells of his appearance, after his resurrection, to the faithless Peter, to console him in his sorrow, and strengthen him in his faith. Thus, Luke alone tells us of his command to his disciples, to *begin* their ministry at that very Jerusalem which had shed his innocent blood. The offer of pardon, peace, holiness, and eternal life was first to be made to his cruel and implacable foes.

And besides these instances of Christ's forgiveness of injuries, Luke tells us of his many kind receptions of sinners, and of those who were looked upon with contempt by the Jews. Thus, Luke alone mentions the complaint of the Pharisees, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Thus, Luke alone tells us of his forgiving the sins of the degraded woman, who shed penitent tears so profusely in the

house of Simon. Thus, Luke alone tells us of his kindness to Zaccheus, the publican and the extortioner. Thus, Luke alone tells us of his healing the ten lepers, and that the one whom he commended was a despised Samaritan. Luke, and Matthew, and Mark, tell us of that precious saying of our Lord, "The Son of man came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And so these three Evangelists speak of the murmuring of the Scribes and Pharisees, when Christ ate with publicans and sinners in the house of Levi. Luke, however, in noticing the goodness and condescension of our Redeemer to the vilest of sinners, is careful to connect it with the grace of repentance on their part. Thus, the woman was in tears, when her sins were forgiven. Zaccheus had resolved to make restitution, fourfold, of all things "taken by false accusation," when Christ came to his house. Levi had left all to follow Jesus, when he dined with him. The publicans and sinners there assembled, were hungering and thirsting for the preached word. The Samaritan, commended by him, had turned back to glorify God. The poor publican was smiting upon his breast, and crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," when the act of justification was passed.

And so we see that repentance is a cardinal doctrine in Luke's theology. And we find that he is the only Evangelist who records that fearful saying of our Lord, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And while Matthew teaches the unqualified

forgiveness of the offending brother, Luke says, "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." (Compare Luke xvii. 4, with Matt. xviii. 21, 22.) Luke is the only Evangelist who tells of the "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth;" and this precious truth he repeats over again.

The prominence given by Luke to repentance, explains the fact of his being the only Evangelist to notice Christ's turning and looking upon Peter. It is the look of Jesus which strikes the key-note of the penitential psalm. It is the tender, pitying, loving, rebuking look of the insulted Son of God which fills the heart with sorrow for sin. "They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." Nay, gracious Saviour, we will look upon thee, but we will not mourn, unless thou first look upon us with forgiveness in thy eyes, and infinite compassion in thy face. Wretches that we are, we will stand around thy cross, O thou bleeding lamb, like thy murderers, but to mock and revile thee, unless thy look of love show us that thou art enduring all this agony for us.

"While I view thee, wounded, grieving,
Breathless on the cursed tree,
Fain I'd feel my heart believing
That thou suffered'st thus for me."

And when we can feel this, with what earnestness will we sue for pardon and peace—when we can feel

that thy look is full of pity and tenderness, and not of revenge and bitterness! With this belief, we can come with confidence, knowing that,

“In the world of endless ruin,
Shall it never, Lord, be said,
‘Here’s a soul that perished sueing
For the boasted Saviour’s aid.’
Saved! the deed shall spread new glory
Through the shining realms above!
Angels sing the pleasing story,
All enraptured with thy love!”

From what has been said, it is apparent that when Luke notices our Lord’s looking upon Peter, he preserves his individuality as the Evangelist for the sinner, the Evangelist who shows the grace of God towards those whom the world thinks the least deserving of his favour; the Evangelist who gives special prominence to repentance, as an exercise of heart which God will not despise. The beloved Physician, as a preacher of righteousness, delighted in encouraging the weak, the humble, the faint-hearted, the lightly esteemed, the little ones of this world, by teaching that God is no respecter of persons. He delighted in inviting penitent sinners to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. Moreover, Luke, in the touching sentence above (“the Lord turned and looked upon Peter”) has preserved his individuality as a writer, as well as a preacher. He is distinguished for the terseness and conciseness of his style, and the melting

tenderness of his periods. It will be sufficient to give a few examples. In his account of the restoration to life of the son of the widow of Nain, (a miracle recorded by him alone,) he uses that inimitably pathetic expression, "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." We think that the writings of ancient and modern times will be searched in vain to find such another single, brief sentence, that contains so much of true pathos. We know of nothing that will compare with it, save David's wild outburst of grief, on hearing of the death of Absalom. But there is this notable difference; the latter is the passionate lament of the bereaved father, the other, the account of an uninterested person. Pathos in the narrator is, of course, more remarkable than in the afflicted parent.

A poet has beautifully paraphrased the words, "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

"She had no kinsmen. She had lived alone,
A widow, with one son. He was her all—
The only tie she had in the wide world—
And he was dead! They could not comfort her."

With respect to the child of Jairus, Luke is the only Evangelist who tells us that she was an *only* daughter. What a world of tender meaning in the sentence, "one only daughter, and she lay a dying." Matthew and Mark both mention the restoration of the child to life, but neither of them notices the affecting fact of her being an only daughter.

There is a still deeper and more thrilling pathos in

the address of the father, whose son was possessed with a devil. "Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son, for he is mine only child." One only child, under the dominion of the powers of darkness! O how often has the distressed father and the agonized mother cried out for the ungodly, only child, "Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son; for this, mine only child, is sold to sin, to Satan, and to eternal death!"

Matthew and Mark both mention the healing of the son possessed with a devil, but neither of them notices that which gives such heart-rending emphasis to the appeal of the father. How tame is the language of Mark in comparison with that of Luke; "And one of the multitude answered, and said, Master, I have brought unto thee, my son, which hath a dumb spirit."

The moving lament of our Saviour over Jerusalem, is given by Luke and Matthew alone. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Nor yet do the other Evangelists mention that last lament, when his murderers had almost gotten their victim within their toils: "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." What an

exalted view does the lamentation of our Saviour, at such a time, give of his generous, unselfish love!

“He thought not of the death that he should die;
 He thought not of the thorns he knew must pierce
 His forehead—of the buffet on the cheek—
 The scourge, the mocking homage, the foul scorn.
 And Golgotha
 Stood bare and desert by the city wall,
 And in its midst, to his prophetic eye,
 Rose the rough cross, and its keen agonies
 Were numbered all—the nails were in his feet,
 The insulting sponge was pressing on his lips—
 The blood and water gushing from his side—
 The dizzy faintness swimming in his brain—
 And while his own disciples fled in fear,
 A world’s death-agonies all mixed in his!
 Ay—he forgot all this. He only saw
 Jerusalem—the chosen, the loved, the lost!
 He only felt that for her sake his life
 Was vainly given; and, in his pitying love,
 The sufferings that would clothe the heavens in black
 Were quite forgotten. Was there ever love,
 In earth or heaven, equal unto this?”

And this is the love that sinners—this is the love that fools make a mock at! O thou, who prayedst over murderous Jerusalem, still intercede for our ruined race.

A few examples will illustrate the comprehensive brevity of Luke’s style. “Remember Lot’s wife.” “Occupy till I come.” “The Lord hath need of him.” “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” “Lord, that I may receive my sight.” “Increase our faith.” “God be merciful to me a sinner.” “But even the

very hairs of your head are all numbered." "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men." "But wisdom is justified of her children." "We have seen strange things to-day," &c. Besides, there are little, delicate touches to be found in Luke, and in no other Evangelist. In the parable of the good Samaritan, this is exhibited in the answer of the lawyer, "He that showed mercy on him." The Jewish prejudices of the bigot would not permit him to name the Samaritan; he therefore expressed himself in that indirect manner. The answer of Christ, "Go thou, and do likewise," is one of those concise speeches which Luke delighted to record. In the parable of the prodigal son, we have also exhibited those nice discriminations which Luke was so fond of noticing. The indignant elder brother, in his angry talk with his father, does not claim relationship with the prodigal, but reproachfully designates him to the rejoicing parent as "this *thy son*." The old man, by his reply, gently reproves this unnatural feeling, "for this *thy brother* was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

We see then, that Luke, in being the only Evangelist to record the fact that "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter," has preserved his individuality, both as a man and as a writer. As a man, he is more prone than the other Evangelists to notice the favour of Christ to even the chief of sinners. As a writer, he abounds in pathetic incidents, and in concise and sententious expressions. We furthermore observe,

that the omission of John to mention the penitence of Peter, is no less characteristic. John is the Evangelist for the believer. He writes to establish him in the faith of the divinity of his adorable Redeemer. He writes to point the thirsting disciple to Jesus as the fountain of living water, so that whosoever drinketh of him shall never thirst again. He writes to point the hungry disciple to Jesus as the bread of life, that came down from heaven: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." He writes to strengthen the weak, to comfort and console the discouraged and desponding believer: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you." He writes to teach the believer that his union must be close with Christ: "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." He writes to stimulate the love of the child of God: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. . . . Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Love for Jesus, belief and trust in him, are the

alpha and omega of John's theology. He, with his gentle, loving, inoffensive disposition, knew nothing of the rude, rough transgressor's agony of remorse. And so, too, he knew nothing of the sweetness of forgiveness, in comparison with the bold sinner who had been pardoned. And so we find, that the words *repent*, and *repentance*, are not to be found in his Gospel. Neither are the words *forgive*, and *forgiveness*, to be found there. But the word *believe*, and its derivatives, occur five times as often in his Gospel, as in the gospels of the other three Evangelists combined. John's heart, like Lydia's, was gently opened to receive the truth. He was a stranger to gross and outrageous sins, and therefore a stranger also to the pangs of anguish, felt by desperate offenders, when pierced by the arrows of the Spirit. As he was incapable of committing Peter's offence, so he was incapable of understanding the depth and intensity of Peter's sorrow. He has therefore omitted all mention of the bitter tears shed by the penitent disciple. Had John ever experienced similar suffering, he could not have passed over in silence the remorse of poor Peter. But the simplicity and guilelessness of character of the beloved disciple had preserved him from great crimes, and therefore he knew but little of the sting of a guilty conscience—that sting which gives a foretaste of the poisonous fang of the worm that never dies. The exceeding naturalness of John's omission to make mention of the repentance of Peter, is strong proof of the authenticity of his Gospel. We think that

the internal evidence furnished by this one circumstance, is sufficient to establish his integrity as a witness.

Moreover, the turning of Jesus to look upon his erring disciple was eminently characteristic. It was so like the forgiving, compassionate Redeemer, to try to recall Peter to a sense of duty. It was so like Him, who, "having loved his own, loved them to the end," still to feel a tender interest in the once faithful, and well-beloved follower. It was so like Him, who wept over the city of his enemies, and prayed for his murderers, to pity and forgive the man who had denied him with oaths and execrations. It was so like the Lamb of God, to rebuke with a look of love, rather than with words of harshness.

50. On summing up our evidence, it appears that the 61st verse affords a four-fold argument for the credibility of the witnesses; first, the preservation of Luke's individuality as the Evangelist for the sinner; second, the preservation of his individuality, as a writer; third, the naturalness of the omission by John of all allusion to the penitence of Peter; fourth, the characteristic incident of the Lord's turning and looking upon Peter.

Before leaving this subject, it may be well to call attention to that species of harmony, to which the term "fitness of things" has been applied. We have seen how Matthew and Mark, who alone record the boast of James and John, that they were able to be baptized with the same fiery baptism as their Master,

alone show that these boastful disciples could not watch a single hour. And so, too, with respect to the braggart Peter, who also yielded to drowsiness, and left the Master he professed to love so dearly, to struggle alone with the powers of darkness. Matthew and Mark, who alone give, in all its boldness, the self-laudatory speech of Peter, alone tell of his sleeping during the agony in the garden. And now we find that these same Evangelists alone tell of his profanity, they alone tell of the depth of degradation to which the vainglorious disciple sank.

In all this, there is a fitness of things, an obvious propriety, and a harmony with the whole scope of the Scriptures. And so also there is a fitness of things, in the omission of John, to notice the repentance of Peter. Certainly, it was more fit that John should make the omission, than for the other three Evangelists to make it. The first two could not do so, because they had told of the aggravated circumstances of the denial. Luke could not do so without a change in his idiosyncrasy, in his whole temper of mind and heart. By attention to this fitness of things in the gospel narratives, we could have prejudged that John alone could, with any propriety, omit to notice the repentance of Peter.

The 62d verse is in these words: "And Peter went out and wept bitterly."

Matthew and Mark agree substantially with Luke, in their account of the sorrow exhibited by the penitent disciple. Matthew says, "And he went out, and

wept bitterly." Mark says, "And when he thought thereon, he wept."

We remark upon these respective statements, that Luke and Matthew use exactly the same words. Our translators have made a little difference, but there is none in the original, except that Luke repeats the name Peter for the third time, and that Matthew omits the nominative to the verb *wept*.

According to our English version, Mark says nothing either of Peter's going out, or of the bitterness of his weeping. There is a word, however, in the original, which expresses both these ideas. It is a participle, and signifies "throwing over," or "casting upon," but the translators of King James's Bible have rendered it, "when he thought thereon." They supposed that it was used figuratively in this place, and applied to mental operations; meaning, therefore, revolving the matter in the mind, casting the thoughts upon it, &c. We have, however, as much right to suppose that the word refers to bodily actions, as to mental emotions; and some of the most eminent and judicious critics have put this construction upon it. Doctor Doddridge has rendered it "covering his head with his mantle." His paraphrase of Mark reads thus: "Peter, covering his head with his mantle, seriously reviewed that heinous crime, in which he had discovered so much weakness and ingratitude, &c." The Doctor gives, in support of his interpretation, the authority of the celebrated Polish theologian, Elsner, and distinctly states that no passage in anti-

quity will warrant the translation of the word *epibalōn*, "when he thought thereon." The rendering of Doddridge was first suggested by Theophylact, and afterwards defended by Salmasius, so distinguished as a critic, commentator, orientalist, and archæologist. We cordially adopt this translation, because it gives the most perfect harmony between the several accounts respecting Peter's repentance. Observe, that though Matthew and Luke tell us that Peter wept bitterly, they are careful to tell us that he *first went out of the palace*, before he gave vent to his tears. He was deeply and truly sorry; but with the same concern for his personal safety, which he had exhibited all through that memorable night, *he desired to conceal his emotion*, lest it should betray him to death.

It is plain that the exposition of Theophylact entirely reconciles the seeming difference between Mark and the other two Evangelists. We see that Mark tells of the same depth and bitterness of grief, accompanied by the same concern for security from danger. The muffling of the face, to hide the agitated features, manifested fear; and the necessity for covering the head, showed that no common emotion was disturbing the soul of Peter. Matthew and Luke inform us of the unmanly caution of Peter, by saying that he went out *before* he wept. They inform us of the intensity of his suffering, by saying that he wept *bitterly*, (*pikrōs*.) Mark expresses both these things, by the two words, "he wept, covering his face," (*epibalōn eklaie*.)

We are far from contending that the explanation afforded above is right, and that all other explanations are wrong; but we do contend, that by it we reconcile a seeming difference, and this is all we are bound to do in the way of proving the credibility of the witnesses. It will not answer for infidelity to say, that a different exposition has been given to the passage in Mark. If there were ten thousand different expositions, which harmonized the several accounts of the Evangelists, so much the worse for unbelief. The great truth cannot be too much insisted upon, that the burden of proof lies upon the objector to revelation. It is for the opposing counsel to prove the want of veracity of the witnesses, by showing that their testimony conflicts in an irreconcilable manner. The presumption is ever in favour of the truthfulness of the witnesses. It rests upon infidelity to demonstrate the falsehood of the Evangelists, and not upon Christianity to prove their truth. We have allowed the adversaries of our holy religion to occupy the vantage ground. Ours is not a position of defence, but one of attack. The alleged discrepancies ought never to have been placed behind intrenchments for protection, but ought to have been thrown, in massive columns of assault, upon the ranks of the enemy. The leaders of the cohorts of truth have made a fatal mistake in the disposition of their forces. The command of the Captain of our Salvation is, "Go into all the world," not, "Stand still in one place." He never intended his troops to remain passive in their squares, like the

British at Waterloo; on the contrary, his positive command to them is, to charge with resistless impetuosity upon the masses of the adversary.

51. However the unbeliever may be disposed to charge Luke with having copied from Matthew, he cannot charge Mark with the same offence. Mark's statement bears as strong internal evidence of genuineness and independence, as the greatest caviler could demand; and as it has been found, upon examination, to be in perfect harmony with the statements of the other two witnesses, the conclusion is inevitable, that all three accounts are true.



CHAPTER VII.

THE CHARACTER OF PETER.

WE think that there has been, and still is, a great misconception of the character of Peter. He has been regarded as præëminently courageous—the boldest apostle, and even the boldest disciple of the age in which he lived. Da Vinci, in his picture of the Last Supper, gave Peter a lion-like aspect, resolute yet calm, firm yet quiet, in the consciousness of power and courage. West has made a similar portrait, in his Christ Healing The Sick. How strange it is, that such a representation should be made of the most nervous and excitable of men. From the notion

about his valour, has arisen that other notion about his bellicose propensities. Dr. J. M. Mason once said, that "the grace which would make John look like an angel, would be scarcely sufficient to keep Peter from knocking down the next passer-by." What an opinion to entertain of a man, the whole of whose warlike exploits, so far as we know, consisted in striking a servant, and then running away!

The Scriptures describe men just as they are, with all their blemishes and imperfections. They depict no mythical heroes, no sinless saints. If we turn to them for the portrait of Peter, we will find it very different from that which fancy has limned. He is represented as ardent in his temperament, yet singularly cautious; excitable and impetuous, yet timid and wary; prompt to declare the truth, yet fickle and inconstant in maintaining it; warmly attached to his Master, but still more regardful of self; deeply penitent for his faults, yet ever prone to relapse into sin; full of reverential feeling, yet savouring the things that be of men, more than the things that be of God. His character was made up of the most opposite elements of strength and weakness, courage and cowardice, fiery zeal and womanish prudence, love to Christ and pitiful selfishness. The first account that we have of him, is from the pen of Luke, and it is just as characteristic of the writer as of him he describes. Peter and his partners, after toiling all night, and catching no fish, were induced by our Saviour to let down their nets for another trial. "And when they

had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." This extract clearly manifests the excitable nature of Peter. Astonishment at the miraculous draught of fishes, and alarm on account of the sinking condition of his ship, fill him with awe for Christ, and with a deep sense of his unworthiness, and operate so powerfully on his nervous temperament as to induce him to make the rash request, "Depart from me, O Lord."

The next occasion of special notice of Peter, was when Christ came walking on the water to the disciples in a ship, tossed with waves, at the fourth watch of the night. They were frightened, supposing that they saw a spirit, "but straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him, and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." And so we think it ever was with Peter, though impetuous enough to undertake anything, yet whenever he noticed the boisterousness of the wind, the

danger besetting him, he became afraid. True, when specially sustained, he did, at times, rise superior to his natural timidity, and witness a good confession; then, however, it was not Peter, but the grace of God which was with him. We next find him making a noble answer to the question, "Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Our Saviour commended him for his confession, and most likely at this time gave him the surname Peter. The praise of his Master elated the weak disciple, just as praise always elates men of weak natures, and filled him with so much confidence, that he presumed to rebuke our Saviour when he spoke of his sufferings and death. "Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Here is a description of Peter by one who knew him altogether. He is charged with savouring the things that be of men, with valuing too highly the opinions and authority of his fellow-worms of the dust. The fear of man was a snare to his feet. The next notice that we have of him, clearly shows this. When at Capernaum, the receivers of tribute came to him, and said, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" Instead of claiming exemption for his Master, as Lord of the temple, to whose service the tax was to be appropriated, Peter

answered, "Yes." For thus fearing public opinion, he was rebuked by our Saviour, who complied with the demand, but under protest against it.

Self is very prominent in the next notice we have of Peter: "Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee: *what shall we have therefore?*" Here is love to Christ united to a keen regard for personal interest. Here is just the spirit of boastfulness which exhibited itself in a claim of superior attachment at the last supper, and failed in the trial at Gethsemane. It is just the same spirit which prompted to strike one blow for the Master, and to put forth mighty exertion in flight for self. It is just the same spirit of generous sacrifice and selfish anxiety, which induced to risk life in following the Saviour, and diminished the risk by following afar off. It is just the same spirit which impelled to the gateway of the high-priest's palace, and filled with the fear of entering. It is just the same spirit which led to concern "to see the end," and prompted to the denial of Him about whom so much solicitude was felt. It is just the same spirit which moved to tears of penitence, and to the concealment of those tears.

We have two other instances on record, which exhibit the impulsiveness of Peter. The first, when Mary Magdalene made her report of the vision of angels to him and to John. He then seems to have been the first to go forth, and run to the sepulchre. His reaching there after John, may have been as much

due to the waning of his fickle zeal, as to his greater age. The second occasion was when Jesus appeared on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, while seven of his disciples were fishing. It is an impressive fact, that the eyes of love first recognized the Saviour. The loving and beloved disciple first exclaimed, "It is the Lord." "Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea." The act was eminently characteristic of the ardent and impetuous apostle. An old fisherman had little danger to apprehend from casting himself into the sea; otherwise the more prudential elements of his character might have been displayed.

The courage manifested by Peter after the resurrection of our Lord, on the day of Pentecost, on the occasion of healing the lame man, on trial before Annas and Caiaphas, and all the kindred of the high-priest, by no means proves that he was constitutionally brave. We must not forget how much remorse he had suffered for his cowardice in denying his Master; above all, we must not forget how he had been strengthened by many precious interviews with his risen Saviour.

Astronomy teaches us, that as the planets revolving in their orbits approach the sun, they receive an acceleration to their velocity; and this impulse carries them to the farthest point of their paths, and brings them back again for a new increment of motion. And so it is with the child of God; when he draws

near to Jesus Christ, the glorious Sun of Righteousness, he receives new zeal, new energy, new courage for the journey of life; and the fresh impetus thus given, carries him safely through that point in his secular avocations, the most remote from the influence of the central luminary, and brings him back again for fresh supplies of grace and strength. And just so it was with Peter—the point at which he was most likely to swerve from the path of rectitude, was where lay bodily danger to himself. But access to his risen Lord invigorated him, fortified his heart, carried him safely over the critical point, and brought him back once more.

The express declarations of the inspired writer of the Acts of the Apostles, confirm the view that we have given. We are explicitly told, that all the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. And so, too, we are told, that Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost when he so boldly addressed “the rulers of the people and elders of Israel.” His courage at this time was therefore supernatural, and proves nothing as to native boldness. And so thought the persons addressed; for “when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” The fearlessness of Peter was attributed to the true cause. It was not inborn valour, the natural inheritance of the brave man, but the courage inspired by having been with Jesus. It was the same sort of

contempt of danger and death, often exhibited by the most timid females, in times of fiery persecution.

The difficulty with which Peter was persuaded to go to the house of Cornelius, shows how much he feared the opinions and prejudices of his countrymen, the Jews. And this unmanly fear seems never to have left him; for, the very last account we have of him, tells of a rebuke that he received from Paul for being afraid to eat with the Gentiles in the presence of his brethren from Jerusalem. "But when Peter was come to Antioch," (says Paul,) "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For, before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."

52. We have now seen that the portraits of Peter, from the hands of four different artists, bear the most exact resemblance to one another, and to the man himself. And yet Peter was not a person whose likeness was easily taken. Of all who have lived upon earth, there probably has not been another more difficult subject for a picture. His features played with the most opposite emotions; his eyes sparkled alternately with love and hate, courage and cowardice; his complexion was as variable as the changing hues of the evening sky. We can only account for the life-likeness of the portraits under these circumstances, by supposing that pencil and brush were guided by the unerring skill of the great Artist of Nature.

Our adversaries are fond of flouting us with the discrepancies of the Gospels; let us bring home to them the consistencies in the representation of Peter's character. We must not stand on the defensive, we must wage a close aggressive warfare. When the fleet of Nelson was bearing down upon the enemy, near the mouth of the Nile, that gallant sailor cried out to the officer in charge of the signals, "What signal have you flying?" "Close action, my Lord." "Keep it so, sir, to the last." Let "close action" be the signal of the soldiers of the cross, and let it be kept so to the last; a victory equally as decisive, and infinitely more glorious than that of the Nile, will be their reward. The closeness of the action, and the heaviness of the firing, would serve too to bring out many friends, who now listen with cool indifference to the distant booming of the defensive cannonade.

The intrepid General Medows was not present at the commencement of the battle of Seringapatam; but Lord Cornwallis knew his man so well, that he exclaimed, when the action grew close and hot, "If Medows is above ground, this firing will bring him out." Christian warriors! if ye were more in earnest, if ye pressed more closely and vigorously upon the foes of the Captain of your salvation, your firing would bring out all who were above ground, all who were not dead in trespasses and sins. You have the noblest of causes, the greatest of leaders, the best of equipments, the most powerful of armaments; abandon then your intrenched position, and seek the enemy

in the plain. You may have thought, like Elijah, that your little band was left alone in Israel, but you will then find vast multitudes pouring from the hills and the valleys, from the mountains and the gorges, to rally around the banner of the Lord God of Hosts.

It is proper to notice that Matthew and Mark place the denial of Peter after the condemnation of Christ, while Luke places it before that event, and John speaks of it as occurring during the progress of the trial. We hope to be able to give a satisfactory explanation of this difference in their respective accounts. But should we fail to do so, the difference is not a contradiction. Observe that it is a matter of fact, and not of time. Had the Evangelists been called upon to tell the precise period at which the three denials took place, and differed totally in fixing the time, we would frankly acknowledge our inability to harmonize their statements. But the business of the writers is plainly to speak of the denial, without respect to the time when it happened. The references to the hour are only incidental, and of no sort of consequence in regard to the thing narrated. In questions of time, we have a right to expect accuracy even to a minute. In questions of fact, we have a right to expect accuracy even to the smallest particular. But inattention to fact in the first case, and to time in the second case, argues no want of truthfulness.

If a witness was called upon in court, to tell when a wound was inflicted, and a physician was required

to describe the nature and extent of the wound, surely no one would suppose that the two contradicted each other, should the physician incidentally speak of the wound as having been inflicted at a different time from that mentioned by the other witness. Too much attention cannot be paid to the distinction that we now make. Most of the much-boasted discrepancies are just of the character here described. They would not have the least weight with a jury of even moderate intelligence.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE NUMBER THREE.

THE three denials of Peter call our attention to the most remarkable fact, that everything connected with the passion of our Lord was in the triad form. The constant recurrence of the number *three*, has often surprised and astounded us. It scarcely comes within the design of the present work to notice every incident connected with this numeral. It will be sufficient for our purpose, to mention some of the events so related to this number.

Christ took three of his disciples apart with him in the garden. He prayed three times, and returned three times to them. The chief priests, elders, and scribes—the three orders of the Jewish theocratic

government—sent the party to arrest him in Gethsemane. Mark xiv. 53. He was tried three times—first before Caiaphas, then before Herod, and lastly before Pilate. He was denied three times in the house of Caiaphas. Three servants of the high-priest, two maids and the kinsman of Malchus, made themselves conspicuous as the accusers of Peter. Our Saviour was maltreated in three ways, in the house of Caiaphas. They spit upon him, buffeted, and smote him with the palms of their hands. Matt. xxvi. 67. In the judgment-hall of Pilate, he was mocked in three ways—with the crown of thorns, with the scarlet robe, and with the reed sceptre. Matt. xxvii. 28, 29. Pilate made three distinct efforts to save his illustrious prisoner. (John xviii. and xix. compared with Luke xxiii. 22.) Three nails were most probably used to fix our Redeemer to the cross—two in his hands, and one in his feet. There were three crucified at the same time—our Lord, and two malefactors. There were three superscriptions over him—one in Greek, one in Latin, and one in Hebrew. The writing set forth three things—the name, the country, and the title of the Sufferer, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” There were three vessels placed by the cross—one containing vinegar mingled with gall, (Matthew;) another, wine mingled with myrrh, (Mark;) a third, unadulterated wine, (John.) The first two drinks were stupefying potions, and were probably intended to be used at different stages of suffering. The pure wine was for the use of the soldiers. Our

adorable Saviour gave three manifestations of his humanity—by his thirst, by his cry of agony, and by the blood which flowed from his pericardium. There were also three glorious displays of his divinity—the darkening of the sun showed his dominion over the solar system; the earthquake, which rent the rocks, shook down the veil of the temple, and opened the graves, showed his lordship over earth; the raising of the dead, and the pardon of the thief, showed his authority in the world of spirits and the heaven of heavens. The sun withdrew his light for three hours. The earthquake accomplished three objects. Sinners, saints, and penitents, were severally represented by those he addressed in his hour of anguish—sinners, in the persons of his murderers, for whom he prayed; saints, in the persons of John and his mother; penitents, in the person of the repentant thief. To the first class, he manifested forgiveness; to the second, love stronger than death; to the third, pardon, and promise of eternal life. The cry of anguish, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” was doubtless addressed to the Father and Spirit. The name of God was not thrice repeated, because the glorious Sufferer was himself the third person of the mysterious Trinity. And thus, too, we have been disposed to account for the twice three hours on the cross. The justice of the Father, and the justice of the Spirit, each demanded satisfaction by three hours of suffering for man’s three-fold sins—in the lust of the flesh, in the lust of the eyes, and

in the pride of life. If it be an impressive truth, that

“There’s not a gift his hand bestows,
But cost his heart a groan,”

how much more impressive and solemn is it that there is no form of sin, which had not its appropriate hour of expiation in the anguish of the Son of God upon the cross! Surely, if there be any thought that can fill the disciple of Jesus with loathing for every species of wickedness, it is this painful reflection. Surely, too, this thought should afford abundant encouragement in the darkest season of distress, whether from bodily pain, bereavement, estrangement of friends, malice of enemies, pecuniary embarrassment, loss of reputation, or the assaults of the great adversary. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His pity and his love are just as strong now, as when he voluntarily endured the hiding of his Father’s face. Let us bear with patience, our hour of trial, since each kind of our sins had its double hour of penalty in “the pains, the groans, and dying strife” of our surety and substitute.

The body of our Lord was carried to its resting place in a garden. The first Adam lost his innocence in a garden, was driven out from his permanent home, and became a wanderer on the earth, with “the world all before him where to choose.” The rest of the second Adam in a garden, seems to typify the repossession of the forfeited Paradise; the reversal of the sentence of expulsion. And as Jesus gained

his great victory over the powers of darkness in the garden of Gethsemane, so he gained a triumph over the great destroyer of our race in this garden, in "the place of skulls." Thus, by an inscrutable providence, over-ruling and directing the wrath of man, the very name of the spot on which stood the cross, was suggestive of the desolation brought upon our race by man's disobedience, and emblematic of the conquest over the sting of death, and the victory over the grave, through the obedience of our precious Redeemer. And how the lesson taught by the three gardens, rebukes our proneness to judge by the specious show! "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Paradise, with its beauty, its bloom, and its fragrance, brought the defilement of sin, the decay of disease, the rottenness of the grave. The struggle in Gethsemane on that black, moonless night, brought deliverance from the powers of darkness. The bloody sweat of the Redeemer wiped all tears from the eyes of the redeemed. That third garden in Golgotha, with its burial place of silence and of gloom, "brought life and immortality to light," gave an earnest of the resurrection from the dead, and assurance to that hope

"Which looks beyond the bounds of time,
When what we now deplore
Shall rise in full immortal prime,
And bloom, to fade no more."

The mystic connection among the three gardens, may explain the remarkable promise of our Saviour

to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Did he not have in his mind his regaining, as the second Adam, the Paradise lost by the first?

Three women are specially distinguished for their care of the body of their murdered Lord—Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome. Our Saviour was three days in the sepulchre. Three angels came to minister unto him at his resurrection. One of these rolled away the stone, and kept guard at the entrance. (Matthew and Mark.) The other two went in to their Lord, served him as attendants, and wrapped up and laid by his grave-clothes. (Luke and John.)

Was this triplex concurrence of events accidental? Did a God of infinite wisdom have no design in it? Can we account for it upon the infidel scheme of the fortuitous arrangement of chance? No mortal man can explain the deep, hidden significance of the repetition. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." The preceding conjectures are then mere speculations, it may be, idle and unprofitable speculations. But the impossibility of an explanation makes most powerfully against infidelity. This constant recurrence of the number *three* cannot be accidental. Any one, the least acquainted with the mathematical theory of probabilities, knows that the

hypothesis of the happening of so many *threes*, by mere chance, is too absurd to be entertained a single moment. There must then have been a controlling mind, either to direct the triple events, or to direct the relation of them. The first view gives us God disposing of all the affairs connected with the crucifixion. If God interposed, and arranged all these matters in this remarkable form, Jesus of Nazareth was no ordinary sufferer. We take the infidel on his own ground; he constantly denies the intervention of the Creator in the minor operations of creation. The doctrine of a special Providence finds no favour with those who "have not God in all their thoughts." The conclusion, then, is inevitable, the Providence of God displayed in so many little particulars, must demonstrate that He who died on Calvary was no ordinary being.

But, let us take the second view, and see whether it helps the cause of unbelief. Let us suppose that the events did not occur, and that the Evangelists fraudulently and designedly gave us this concatenated series with its triple links. The question then arises, what was the motive for throwing in so many curious facts in their narrative? How did they happen to select this precise number *three*? And why have they repeated it some twenty times? Was their object to produce something novel, a sort of Chinese puzzle? But the inventors of rare and ingenious machinery are careful to display their works of art. This cannot be said of the Evangelists, for the triple

ply has been woven in their story in such a manner that the world has not perceived it at all. That which is so singular and wonderful in their story, has completely escaped the notice, as well as the comment of mankind. We are not aware that a single individual has ever called attention to it. But even if this has been done, it is certain that the vast majority of readers of the gospels have not observed the tri-form nature of the occurrences connected with the Crucifixion. Remember that we have shown that so many particulars, all in this form, could not have been related without some design on the part of the narrators. The accidental concurrence of so many circumstances in a tale, is mathematically impossible. Upon the infidel hypothesis, that the Evangelists were writers of fiction, we are driven to the absurd conclusion, that four men agreed to connect the number three with almost every incident related by them, and yet to conceal the connection so carefully, that it should escape observation. The individual who can believe that the Evangelists could commit such an absurdity, may disbelieve their record, but it is from no want of credulity in his mental organization. He is certainly credulous enough to believe anything. It is a notable fact that those who are most sceptical in matters of religion, are generally most credulous in all other matters. The boasted free-thinker is generally the veriest slave of superstition. He gives his doubts to the gospel of the Son of God, and his faith to everything else. There is nothing too wild, too unnatural,

and too preposterous for him to believe; God has given him over to "strong delusion that he should believe a lie."

Man is so constituted that he must have one sure object of belief, else his faith will lay hold upon ten thousand absurdities. The anchor, loosed from its hold on firm ground, catches the drifting seaweed in its flukes. Men lose the knowledge of the true God, but to people the groves, the fountains, the hills, and the valleys, with imaginary deities. All the delusions that have perplexed, maddened, and cursed our race, have had their root in unbelief of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

An incident in the life of the infidel, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, exhibits most strikingly the grossness of the superstition into which the rejecters of the gospel are prone to fall. After he had written his deistical work, called *De Veritate*, he had doubts about publishing it. "Being thus doubtful in my chamber," writes he in his Memoirs, "one fair day in summer, my casement being open to the south, the sun shining clear, and no wind stirring, I took my book, *De Veritate*, in my hand, and kneeling on my knees, devoutly said these words:—'O thou eternal God, author of the light which now shines upon me, and giver of all inward illuminations, I do beseech thee, of thy infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make. I am not satisfied enough, whether I ought to publish this book, *De Veritate*. If it be for thy glory, give me some sign

from heaven; if not, I shall suppress it.' I had no sooner spoken these words, but a loud, though yet gentle noise came from the heavens, (for it was like nothing on earth,) which did so comfort and cheer me, that I took my petition as granted, and that I had the sign I demanded; whereupon also I printed my book." "This," he adds, "how strange soever it may seem, I protest, before eternal God, is true: neither am I in any way superstitiously deceived herein, since I did not only clearly hear the noise, but, in the serenest sky that I ever saw, being all without cloud, did also, to my thinking, see the place from whence it came."

And so Lord Herbert, who could not believe that God would deign to manifest himself to save millions of our race from eternal death, yet could believe that this great Being did manifest himself to him, in order to encourage the publication of a paltry book!

Lord Herbert was but the representative of his class. It is notoriously true, that the sin-darkened mind will believe any thing, save that the Bible is from God, and that Jesus is the Author of eternal salvation. It is notoriously true, that the most extravagant and dangerous speculations prevail most extensively in those regions where the gospel of Christ has the least influence. Athens was celebrated for its schools of sceptical philosophy, when Paul, standing in the midst of Mars-hill, proclaimed, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." Nearly eighteen hundred years after this

declaration, France rejected the true God, and worshipped a veiled prostitute, as the goddess of reason! And so we account for the idolatrous devotion of the French soldiers to Napoleon. He became as God, to those who had no God. "Why do you weep," said he to a wounded grenadier, "am I not with you?" "True, sire," replied the dying man, "I had forgotten that." And so the poor fellow was consoled.

There is no difficulty in explaining why the infidel is so grossly superstitious. God avenges his insulted majesty. He has made faith in himself a cardinal principle of our moral constitutions. When we do violence to our faith, we do violence also to our spiritual natures. When there is no one legitimate object of belief, there will be hundreds of false and pernicious objects. The vitiated appetite, which rejects wholesome and nourishing food, craves that which is vile and hurtful.

Believers have been content to defend themselves against the charge of superstition. This defensive policy has been bad policy, to say the least of it. "Tell my lord prince," said the gallant old Suwarrow, "that I know nothing of defensive warfare. My strategy is, to seek the enemy, and to fight him, when and wherever found." Let Christians imitate the conduct of the brave Russian. Let them carry the war into the enemy's country. Let them show, that those who boast the most of their freedom from idle fancies and religious impressions are, of all men, the most childishly credulous, the most completely given

up to the rioting of loose imaginations. Let them show that these boasters are, of all men, the most apt to believe in dreams, omens, prognostics, presentiments, foreshadowings, spiritual agencies, and every species of delusion. Let them tell how Hume, the great infidel leader, could chatter about the river Styx, and Charon the boatman, until death stopped his frivolity. Let them tell how the puerilities of heathenism, instead of the solemn realities of eternity, occupied the mind of the dying philosopher. Let them then ask, What is gained by substituting pagan mythology for the religion of the Son of God?

Poor, miserable sceptic! Has your freedom from superstition ended in this? Have you given up the glorious light of the gospel, to return to the darkness of heathenism? Have you ceased to worship God, that you might worship devils? Have you left Mount Moriah and the temple of the Lord, to go down into the polluted vale of Hinnom, and there sacrifice to demons and unclean spirits?

Father in heaven! help us to adore thee in spirit and in truth, that we may not be given over to the bondage of superstition, and the madness of unbelief.

53. The sum of our argument is this. The recurrence of the number three so many times, could not have been accidental. There must then have been some design in the mind of God, to make the events occur in this triple form, or there must have been some design in the mind dictating the narrative. Take the first view, and we have a special Providence

controlling all the transactions connected with the crucifixion. But the infidel denies the interposition of Providence in the ordinary affairs of life. Hence, upon his own principles, the death of Jesus could have been no ordinary affair. Take the second view, and we have some mind dictating the story of the cross, according to a preconceived plan, of giving a triad shape to the principal occurrences. But this directing mind must have been the mind of the Spirit of God. It is utterly impossible to believe that the Evangelists would frame designedly so singular a tale, and strive to conceal its singularity from their readers. We can account for their silence touching that which is so extraordinary in their narration, upon the supposition that they wrote, as the Holy Ghost dictated, and were not themselves aware of the remarkable recurrence of the number three. But, according to the infidel scheme, they had a design without a motive, a plan without a reason for it, a pre-arranged system without any definite object in view! Surely, human credulity can go no farther than to believe such an absurdity as this.

We leave the unbeliever to take his choice in the dilemma; either to suppose design in controlling the events connected with the crucifixion, or design in controlling the recital of them. Whichever horn he takes, will push his infidelity to the last extremity.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRIAL OF JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS.

WE must now leave Luke, and turn to Matthew and Mark, for some particulars recorded only by them.

MATTHEW xxvi. 59-68.

“Now, the chief priests, and elders, and all the council sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high-priest arose and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high-priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.”

MARK xiv. 55-65.

“And the chief priests, and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days, I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together. And the high-priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high-priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.”

These verses afford a fine specimen of the supply-

ing, by one writer, the omissions of another; moreover, what is declared in them, is substantiated by the collateral declarations of the last two Evangelists. We will first notice the supplementing, and then the concurrent testimony of Luke and John.

We have seen before, that when Caiaphas "asked Jesus of his disciples and his doctrine," our Lord referred him to his hearers. "Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I have said." The false and malignant high-priest availed himself of the hint, not to call in those who would truly report the sayings of Jesus, but those who would pervert and misrepresent them. The great object of this cold-blooded villain, was to find "false witness against Jesus, to put him to death." But Matthew tells us that he could procure none; "Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none." This assertion of Matthew seems absurd and contradictory. How can we reconcile the conflicting declarations, that many witnesses came, and that none could be found? We could not understand this language at all, without the explanation of Mark. "For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together." We now perceive what Matthew means by saying that they found none. They found none, whose witness agreed, and shameless as were the Jews, they could not proceed to condemn Christ without some show of consistent testimony against him. Caiaphas and his infernal associates were now in a

strait, ravenous for blood, as a bear robbed of her whelps, and yet so accustomed to obey the letter of the law, that they could not act without some plausible pretext for passing sentence of death. But Satan did not long leave them in a state of perplexity. They had served him too faithfully for him to desert them in their extremity. Accordingly, the arch-fiend put it into the hearts of some of his followers to appear as witnesses; and so Mark tells, that "there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, We have heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together." There are two things left indefinite by Mark. We do not know how many witnesses there were, nor do we know in what their testimony disagreed. Matthew removes the first difficulty, by directly telling us that there were *two* witnesses; and he indirectly removes the other difficulty, by giving a different version of the declarations of the two witnesses. We can, by comparing Matthew and Mark, tell exactly in what the testimony did not agree together. One witness testified that our Saviour said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God." The other witness testified, that he said he *would* do it. The difference is immense between the ability to do a thing, and the determination to do it. A man, with a deadly weapon in his hand, might innocently say that he was able to kill a bystander with it; but he would be amenable to the

law for saying that it was his intention to kill that bystander. The testimony of the two false witnesses differed essentially; but without comparing the Evangelists, we could not have discovered the disagreement.

Moreover, Matthew, in mentioning the precise number of false witnesses, has not merely supplemented, he has also given us a fine specimen of natural evidence. Matthew, a Jew, and writing for his countrymen, the Jews, would naturally mention the fact, that *two* witnesses, the precise number required by the Mosaic code, appeared against our blessed Redeemer: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death, but at the mouth of one witness shall he not be put to death." Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15; Numb. xxxv. 30. From another Evangelist, writing about another matter, we learn that it was the practice of the Jewish courts to establish important points by just *two* witnesses. (See John viii. 17.)

Now, we ask the candid reader, How did Matthew happen to confine himself to precisely the number two, if that number of witnesses did not present themselves? If we are answered, that he got the idea from his education, from his Jewish notions of justice, then he has given us a natural stroke, and has preserved his individuality as a writer. We must not forget, too, that he wrote for those who knew all about the trial of Christ. If, then, but one witness appeared, or if more than two appeared, with this story of

Christ's destroying the temple, there were those living when Matthew wrote, who could have convicted him of falsehood. His circumstantiality is, therefore, a strong presumptive proof of his honesty; and that, taken in connection with the naturalness of a Jew's mentioning to his brethren the compliance with Jewish law, demonstrates his truthfulness.

But to proceed with the narrative. It seems that the statements of the two witnesses were too glaringly discordant to be taken by Caiaphas, although he was thirsting for the blood of his victim. He therefore sought to make our Saviour testify against himself: "And the high-priest arose and stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" But Jesus was not caught in the snare thus artfully laid: "But he held his peace, and answered nothing." And so the prophet had foreseen, with all this scene before him, more than seven hundred years anterior to its occurrence: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." But Caiaphas was actuated by too keen a hate, not to make another effort to extort a confession: "Again the high-priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark.) This second appeal was effectual: "And Jesus said, I am." If we had only the Gospel of Mark, we would be at a loss to know why it was that our Lord

now answered, since he had declined to criminate himself before any witnesses were called, (John xviii. 21,) and after the false witnesses had contradicted one another. On turning to Matthew, however, the mystery is cleared up. We there learn that he responded, in consequence of a solemn adjuration on the part of the high-priest. "And the high-priest answered, and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

It would seem that the high-priest, according to the Jewish code, had a right to administer an oath to the person under trial, and the person was required to make true answer, though he thereby criminated himself. (See Numbers v. 19.) Dr. Doddridge has thus paraphrased the language of Caiaphas: "And again the high-priest answered, and said to him, Think not that such evasions will answer in an affair of such importance as this: thou knowest that I have a way of coming at the certain truth, and, therefore, I adjure thee, in the most solemn manner, by the name and the authority of the living God, whose high-priest I am, and to whom he has committed the power of administering this oath, that thou tell us directly, in the plainest terms, whether thou be the Messiah, the son of the ever-blessed God, or not?" And in proof of the right of the high-priest to administer an oath, the learned expositor quotes various passages from the Old Testament Scriptures. So we see that Matthew, in stating that the high-priest put Jesus upon

his oath, has told us nothing inconsistent with the judicial proceedings among his own people. Dr. Alexander says, "This was an attempt (on the part of Caiaphas) to make the prisoner supply the want of testimony by his own confession, a proceeding utterly abhorrent to the spirit and practice of the English law, though familiar to the codes and courts of other nations, both in ancient and modern times." Our Saviour, then, answered the question of Caiaphas, because the high-priest had a right to put him on oath, and, therefore, by his response, he showed his obedience to law and his determination to "fulfil all righteousness." Matt. iii. 15.

We introduced the testimony of Matthew to explain why our Saviour broke his long silence, and answered the artful question of Caiaphas. But the statement of this Evangelist not only removes the obscurity of Mark's evidence, it comports moreover with what is known of the Israelitish jurisprudence. Notice, too, the naturalness of an allusion to Jewish laws, by a Jew writing to those of his own nation. There is an obvious propriety and fitness of things, in the allusions coming from Matthew.

54. A review of our testimony shows that we have a four-fold argument for the credibility of the witnesses—first, Mark's explaining what Matthew meant by saying that no witnesses could be found, though many witnesses came; second, the comparison of the two Evangelists, showing in what the witnesses disagreed; third, the removing by Matthew of an ob-

security in Mark; fourth, the natural alluding of Matthew to the laws and customs of the Jews.

We come now to the second part of the proposed discussion of the preceding verses. We will try to prove, that though Luke and John differ greatly from the first two Evangelists in regard to the proceedings in the house of Caiaphas, yet there is really the most perfect harmony of spirit pervading all four of their narratives. We will begin with John, who notices but one incident in the palace of the high-priest—the blow inflicted on Jesus, when he refused to answer the questions propounded to him. Though John gives us so little of the transactions before Caiaphas, we will find that he corroborates the full accounts of Matthew and Mark, in the most natural and undesigned manner. First, we find agreement in regard to the declaration that “the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death.” John substantiates this most fully, by showing that the Jewish rulers had sought the death of Christ on many occasions. Thus, he tells us that “the Jews did persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath-day.” This was in the first year of our Lord’s ministry. So we see, that though John omits to mention the desire of the Jews to put our Saviour to death, when a prisoner in the house of Caiaphas, yet he dates the beginning of this desire at least two years back. So too, John tells us, that after Jesus delivered his discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, he “walked

in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." So too, John tells us how our Lord went up secretly to the Feast of Tabernacles, to escape the observation of his enemies: "Then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret." And he tells us, too, of the disappointment of the Jews, when they could not find him: "Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit, no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews." From this it appears that so intense was the hatred of the Jews, that it was dangerous for any man even to speak of Christ. How imminent, then, must have been his risk, in coming to the feast, and how great must have been his courage! John too, tells us of an effort to entrap Christ, by bringing an adulterous woman to him, that he might condemn her to be stoned, according to the Mosaic law: "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him." John too, tells us of the attempt made at Jerusalem to stone our Saviour: "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." So too, John speaks of another effort to kill Jesus, at the Feast of the Dedication: "Then the Jews took up stones again to stone

him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father. . . . Therefore they sought again to take him; but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John first baptized; and there he abode." The plain inference is, that he went thus far away to find a place of safety. John too, tells how the chief priests and Pharisees held a council to consult what could be done against Christ; and he adds, "Then from that day forth, they took counsel together for to put him to death." John too, tells us that after the raising of Lazarus, the Jews were so exasperated that they determined to put him also to death: "But the chief priests consulted, that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him, many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." The adverb also plainly points to Christ, and shows that they consulted about slaying him, before they consulted about Lazarus.

John has therefore mentioned eight occasions on which either an effort was made or a desire expressed to destroy our Lord. This testimony is peculiarly valuable, as showing that the wish to put Jesus to death had long burned in the malignant hearts of Caiaphas and his wicked associates. It is peculiarly valuable, as corroborating the statements of Matthew and Mark, and yet doing it in such a way that it is impossible to suspect collusion. Nothing could be more absurd than to suppose that in recording the several attempts upon the life of his Master, John was

thinking of supporting the declaration that "the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death." John's narrative is too natural to admit any such extravagant hypothesis; he evidently relates his incidents for their own intrinsic importance, and not with the secret design of harmonizing with the accounts of the first two Evangelists. No story was ever more free than that of John from all appearance of having extraneous matter violently foisted in, with some ulterior object in view.

55. Now, suppose that two witnesses deposed to the fact, that C. and certain of his abandoned associates had made an attempt upon the life of J. And suppose that a third witness, testifying about a totally different matter, mentioned eight occasions in which the same wicked wretches had either tried to kill J., or had expressed a wish to see him slain. Would not such an unintentional confirmation of the allegations of the first two witnesses be regarded by any intelligent jury as completely establishing their truthfulness?

Luke has not told us as much as John, about the previously expressed wish of the Jewish rulers to slay Christ; still, he has said enough to make his narrative consistent with the narratives of Matthew and Mark. He tells us that when our Saviour healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath-day, the Scribes and Pharisees "were filled with madness; and communed with one another what they might do to Jesus." He tells us that when our Lord had rebuked

the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were dining with him in the house of a certain Pharisee, they "began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth." Here is exhibited exactly the same trick that was shown on his trial—the same mean, ungenerous artifice to entrap him into saying something to his own ruin. Luke tells us that after Christ had driven the traders out of the temple, "the chief priests, and scribes, and chief of the people sought to destroy him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him." There was murder in the hearts of the rulers of the Jews, and they were restrained from its commission solely by fear. Luke tells us that when our Lord had ended the parable of the wicked husbandmen, "the chief priests and scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him: and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them." Luke tells us how the Pharisees sought to entangle him in his talk, by their crafty questions about the lawfulness of paying tribute. "And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor." This statement of Luke not only corresponds to what Matthew and Mark tell us of the cunning effort to make Jesus convict himself, but it explains several other matters that

are otherwise obscure. For instance, it satisfactorily accounts for the presence of Roman soldiery in the party which arrested Christ. It shows that the great aim was to get our Saviour in the power of the Romans for some alleged violation of Roman law; so that his rescue by the common people would be impossible, and so that the Scribes and Pharisees would not have the odium of his murder. We propose to make hereafter, a still more important use of the foregoing declaration of Luke. For the present, we employ it merely as harmonizing with the accounts of Matthew and Mark.

Luke tells us that when the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, "the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him: for they feared the people."

We see that Luke has not, like John, told of murderous assaults upon Christ, through the instigation of the chief priests, scribes, and elders. We have left out the attempt at Nazareth against the life of our Lord, for we have no proof that the Jewish rulers suggested it. We are rather inclined to think that it was the spontaneous movement of the common people. We have also left out of our summary from Luke, several conversations which were held with Jesus, more for the purpose of annoying and perplexing him, than of getting some dangerous confession from him.

After making these deductions, the extracts from Luke are sufficiently copious to show that the Jewish rulers had often exhibited the very same temper of

mind and disposition of heart, which prompted them to call in false witnesses during the trial before Caiaphas. The extracts show, moreover, that it had long been a favourite scheme with the Scribes and Pharisees, to get Christ transferred to the hands of the Roman governor.

56. The omission of Luke to notice the bringing in of false witnesses, makes a strong point in favour of the credibility of the witnesses. It shows plainly, that there was no collusion between him and the first two Evangelists; it proves that the three had not concerted together a consistent story; and yet there is in their several accounts, that sort of agreement which carries the most sure conviction of truthfulness to the minds of intelligent jurors. Matthew and Mark tell of a wish to destroy Christ, and of a base, underhanded method employed to effect his destruction. Luke shows us that the wish was no stranger to the bosoms of the chief priests, scribes, and elders, and that there was no species of meanness which they would not be guilty of to gratify their malice.

The question might here be asked, Had Jesus at any time used language at all like that which the false witnesses ascribed to him? The Evangelists who speak of the false witnesses, are entirely silent on this point. Luke too, gives us no clue to our inquiry; and we might, but for the testimony of John, have concluded that it was out and out a manufactured tale. But from him we learn, that in the first year of our Lord's ministry, after he had driven the traders

out of the temple, the Jews came to him, saying, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body." From this it appears that Jesus did really declare his ability to raise up *a* temple in three days, and it would seem that the Jews understood him to refer to *the* temple at Jerusalem. How then could that witness, who testified to Christ's declaration of his power to build up the temple, be called a false witness? If he really understood Jesus to refer to the temple of God, and not to the temple of his body, he was a mistaken witness, but surely not a false witness. Did he really misapprehend the meaning of our Saviour? Did the Jews really misapprehend his words? Now, it is very remarkable, that the only Evangelist who records this speech of our Saviour, leaves us in entire ignorance as to whether he was understood or not, while Matthew, who does not record it, makes it clear that the Jews were fully apprised of the mystic import of our Lord's words. Matthew says, "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, 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.”

It is evident from this passage that the Jews did not misunderstand Christ. They knew that he alluded to the temple of his body, and therefore they came to Pilate, that they might falsify his words, and show that he was not able to raise it up in three days. Matthew could therefore, with great propriety, call him a false witness, who had truly reported the words of Christ. The essence of falsehood consists in the intention to deceive. One may use true language, and yet, by a jesting or an ironical manner, produce a false impression. The witness knew the significance of Jesus' words ; but while truly reporting them, he aimed to make his hearers believe that they had another meaning. He was therefore guilty of lying, and is appropriately designated as a false witness.

57. A review of our testimony shows that John most admirably supplements the first two Evangelists, by recording language of our Saviour, similar to that attributed to him by the false witnesses. Moreover, we find, by a careful examination of Matthew, that the Jews did not misunderstand the meaning of Jesus, and therefore a second reason is afforded us, in addition to that already given, why the witnesses are called false.

We will pause here a moment to comment upon the natural stroke which the Evangelists give us, touching the Jewish character as exhibited on the trial of

Christ. A reference to all that is known of Pharisæism, especially to what our Lord has said of it in his Sermon on the Mount, shows that its wickedness consisted in perversion of truth. It never inculcated the wrong directly, but always twisted and distorted the right. It never taught anything diametrically opposed to the Scriptures; but by forced interpretations and unnatural constructions, it always "made the commandment of God of none effect." It was tenderly scrupulous with regard to the letter of the fact, but in spirit, it partook of the temper and disposition of the Father of all lies and deceit. And so we doubt not that the Pharisees wished their suborned witnesses to tell that which was literally true, but which would convey an impression altogether erroneous. The false witnesses, however, had not learned their part well, and unfortunately made a verbal discrepancy in their statements. It was this want of verbal accuracy which so nonplussed the Scribes and Pharisees. They would have cared nothing about the lie in fact, had there been no disagreement in word. But their strangely constituted consciences could not bear anything that look like a lingual difference in the evidence. They, therefore, regretted the testimony of the false witnesses, and proceeded to invent some other pretext for the condemnation of Jesus, according to the letter of the law.

We will develop this subject more fully hereafter; for the present, we wish merely to call attention to this delicate stroke of the Evangelists. They have,

with a few off-hand touches, given us a finished portrait of Pharisaism, and yet they were evidently ignorant themselves of the perfection of their picture. The natural descriptions of character so frequently met with in the Scriptures, are of infinite value in establishing their divine origin. It is difficult to conceive how any one who has noticed the nice harmony of proportions and adjustment of parts in the biblical representations of sects and individuals, can resist the belief that they were suggested and dictated by the Spirit of God.

We have seen that Matthew is the only Evangelist who informs us of Caiaphas putting our Saviour on his oath, that he might extort from him a confession that would afford ground for his condemnation. This act of the high-priest manifests an intensity of zeal for our Lord's destruction—an earnestness of determination to sacrifice him at all hazards, which Matthew has nowhere accounted for. But, on turning to John, the conduct of the high-priest is most fully explained. We there learn that he was inflamed with the madness of fanaticism. John tells us, that after the raising of Lazarus the chief priests and Pharisees were much troubled, and held a council to consider what was to be done. While they were discussing ways and means to destroy Christ, "one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high-priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

And this spake he not of himself; but being the high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad." It appears from this, that God so far honoured the office of high-priest, as to give even the wicked Caiaphas some glimmering of the truth in regard to the mission of his Son. But having given the revelation, he left the malignant creature to interpret it according to the dictates of his own corrupt heart. And we have, accordingly, a remarkable instance of the hardening effect of unsanctified religious knowledge. The necessity for a victim was construed by Caiaphas into the right to sacrifice the victim. This was his first serious error, and the next followed as a matter of course, viz., that any means were lawful to secure the sacrifice.

That we have put the right construction upon the conduct of the high-priest, is evident from the comment of John upon Christ's being brought before him. "Now, Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." John here intimates that the issue of the trial could not be doubtful, because Caiaphas had prejudged, and precondemned his prisoner. He intimates that nothing but a sentence of death could be expected from a judge who had previously expressed the opinion, that it was expedient for the good of the nation, that the very man should die, who was now arraigned before him.

And so Dupin, the learned French counsellor, has interpreted the language of John. His words are: "This was that same Caiaphas, who, if he had intended to remain a judge, was evidently liable to objection; for in the preceding assemblage he had made himself the accuser of Jesus. Even before he had seen or heard Him, he declared him to be deserving of death. He said to his colleagues, that it was expedient that one man should die for all. Such being the opinion of Caiaphas, we shall not be surprised if he shows partiality."—*Trial of Jesus. By M. Dupin, Advocate and Doctor of Laws.*

The impatience of Caiaphas to condemn Jesus, his undignified conduct as judge, his unworthy attempts to entrap his prisoner, his resort to an expedient to get his prisoner criminate himself—all these are now fully explained. The enthusiasm of the zealot, the intolerance of the fanatic, the persecuting spirit of the bigot, goad him on to madness and fury. In a sort of prophetic phrensy, he had long before determined that Jesus should die; and now he is resolved to leave no effort untried which may lead to the accomplishment of his cherished wishes.

58. The intemperate zeal and mean artifices of the high-priest, as recorded by Matthew and Mark, are most satisfactorily accounted for by the above hint in John. But it is absurd to suppose that John alluded to the prophecy of Caiaphas with any such intention. No allusion was ever made more naturally, none had ever less the appearance of a covert intention con-

nected with it. And yet without it the conduct of Caiaphas would be wholly inexplicable, and we would be constrained to think that Matthew and Mark had drawn a most unlikely portrait of the highest officer known to the Jewish theocracy.

We will now proceed with the account of the trial, as given by Matthew and Mark. The former tells us that Jesus responded to the adjuration of the high-priest in these words: "Thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death."

The expression, "Thou hast said," is of doubtful meaning, and we would be at a loss how to interpret it without the aid of Mark's Gospel. But we there find the equivalent expression to be, "I am." Jesus then acknowledged his Messiahship before the highest sacerdotal officer, as he afterwards did his kingly authority before Pilate, the highest civil officer in the country. With the deepest reverence we would say, that it is evident therefore that the silence of our blessed Redeemer did not proceed from either obstinacy or want of courage. How then are we to account for it? The two Evangelists who tell of his refusal to speak, give us no explanation of this extraordinary conduct. We might have inferred that it

proceeded from an unwillingness to criminate himself; and so it in part may be attributed to that cause. But he might have refuted the testimony of the false witnesses, without saying anything to his own disparagement. It was his right unquestionably, according to our ideas of justice, to hold his peace; but his speaking or not would be determined by the expediency of the case. Now we cannot learn from Matthew and Mark, whether it would have been advisable for our Lord to make a defence; but on reference to Luke, the inutility of a defence is clearly set forth. This Evangelist tells us that when Caiaphas asked him, "Art thou the Christ?" he answered, "If I tell you, ye will not believe. And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go."

Three things are here stated—that they would not believe him, that they would not answer him, and that they would not let him go. Leaving out of consideration for a moment the second point, we will notice the first and third. The first charges the Jews with confirmed, hopeless, obstinate unbelief, and therefore argues the uselessness of any reply. The third charges the Jews with a predetermination to put him to death. No demonstration of his innocence would satisfy his prejudiced and bloodthirsty judges, nothing could induce them to let him go; and hence the absurdity of making a defence.

So we see that Luke incidentally confirms what John had directly declared, in regard to the previously formed judgment of Caiaphas. The confirma-

tion is just as explicit as though Luke had said, in so many words, that Caiaphas had resolved upon the death of Christ before he was arraigned at the bar. But the undesigned manner in which the confirmation is made, adds infinitely to its importance. Every impartial and enlightened jury in the world regards these casual correspondences of testimony as the highest form of proof of the truthfulness of witnesses.

59. Reviewing the evidence, we notice that Matthew and Mark tell us of a most inexplicable refusal of our Lord to say anything in vindication of himself. Luke shows us that his silence was in consequence of his knowledge of the confirmed and hopeless infidelity of the Jewish rulers, and of their having pre-judged his case. John confirms what Luke says of the pre-judgment, by telling us that the presiding officer of the tribunal which thought our Lord worthy of death, had actually expressed a wish for his sacrifice, long before his most unrighteous trial. Were it possible to collect all the testimony given in all the courts on earth, there would not be found nicer harmony. And yet nothing could be more preposterous than to think that this harmony was the result of an effort on the part of the four Evangelists to make their narratives *tally* (as Paley expresses it) with one other. In truth, the agreement has been shown to exist, where there is the greatest lack of verbal conformity; and the correspondences have been made manifest in the midst of the greatest seeming discrepancies. The man who can believe that fabulists would disguise accordant

statements, so that a rigid examination alone can reveal their accordance, is prepared to believe any absurdity whatever.

There is another undesigned agreement, which we wish to be observed, though we will not make a separate point of it. John is very brief in his account of the trial before Caiaphas; still he harmonizes in one essential particular with the other three Evangelists. He tells us that the high-priest asked Jesus "of his disciples and his doctrine." This corresponds exactly with what Matthew, Mark and Luke affirm, in regard to the repeated attempts of Caiaphas to draw Jesus out, and to entrap him into a confession.

But we return from this digression, to inquire what our Lord meant, by saying, "And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me." As they had been asking him about the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, it is natural to suppose that his question to them would have referred to the same being. We might then conjecture that our Lord meant to signify that he might, with propriety, decline to answer any question touching the Messiah, since they themselves would decline to be interrogated about the person, claims, and office of the expected but mysterious Redeemer of Israel. What reason had our Saviour to suppose that Caiaphas and his associates would refuse to tell him what sort of a being they looked for in the promised deliverer? Had they ever refused to express their opinion on this subject, on any previous occasion? On referring to the twenty-second chapter of

Luke, we find that on a certain day, “the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection,” came to our Lord with what they supposed would be a very perplexing question. He answered it, however, in such a way as to confound and silence them. So pleased were the Scribes at the silencing of their old adversaries, the Sadducees, that they even deigned to compliment Jesus, saying, “Master, thou hast well said.” Immediately after this, “He said unto them, How say they that Christ is David’s son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord; how is he then his son?”

We are not told here directly, to whom our Lord directed his interrogatory, nor yet what effect it had upon his audience. We might suppose that it was addressed to the Scribes, and that they were unable to make any reply, since none is given. From Mark, we learn that the question was proposed *for* the Scribes, if not *to* them; “and Jesus answered while he taught in the temple, How say the Scribes that Christ is the son of David? For David himself saith,” &c. Neither does Mark inform us of any answer, but still we could not certainly conclude that none was made. Matthew, however, leaves us no room to inquire who were the persons challenged, nor whether they were able to explain the difficulty—the same which puzzles Socinianism at the present day: “But when the Pharisees had heard that he had

put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. . . . While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? . . . And no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask him any more questions.”

We have, in these separate statements of the three Evangelists, a fine specimen of concurrent, yet independent testimony. Mark supplies an omission of Luke, and Matthew supplies an omission of Mark. Moreover, the verbal discrepancy between Mark and Matthew is in itself a beautiful harmony. The latter says that Christ propounded his question to the Pharisees; the former says that he propounded it to the Scribes. In this there is perfect agreement; for the Scribes belonged to the sect of the Pharisees. But all points of the law and theological questions were referred appropriately to the Scribes, as the chosen expounders of the Scriptures. While Matthew and Mark are therefore both right, the latter, in designating the Scribes, is more minutely accurate than the former.

We pause a moment to notice how little our blessed Lord was influenced by considerations of worldly policy. At the very moment when the Scribes and Pharisees had gathered together to congratulate him upon his victory over the Sadducees; at the very moment when they paid him their first and only compliment, he turned upon them, and confounded them likewise, by asking them to explain the two-fold

nature of the Messiah. Here was an opportunity offered him of conciliating the friendship, and gaining the support of the most powerful sect among the Jews, numbering among its members, rulers and interpreters of the law, the learned, the wealthy, and the influential. But our Lord was no time-serving seeker of popularity. The approbation of God, and not the favour of man, was the great wish of his heart, the great aim of his life; and therefore, instead of courting the good-will of the Pharisees, he availed himself of the opportunity of their being gathered together, to warn the people in their presence, of their errors. Does this seem captious conduct? Let the reader remember that the Jewish people belonged generally to one or the other of the two great sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Our Saviour's silencing of the latter would have produced the impression that he favoured the former, had he not taken occasion to warn the multitude that the doctrines of the Pharisees were no less pernicious than the heresies of the Sadducees. Therefore, when the exulting Scribes came around him with their specious flattery, he said to his audience, "Beware of the Scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market-places, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

Here is honesty in the great Teacher, rising above the seductions of flattery, the suggestions of policy,

the considerations of self-interest, and the promptings of fear. May every religious teacher be inspired with the same disinterested zeal for the truth, and keep not back any of the whole counsel of God!

In order to discover what our Lord meant by saying, "And if I ask you also, ye will not answer me," we have gone back in his history, and called in the first three Evangelists to explain the expression; and we have found that they tell us of an actual refusal of the Jews to answer our Lord when he questioned them about the Messiah, as they were now questioning him on his trial. It is manifest that our Saviour's words refer to this refusal, and that he gives it as a reason for refusing to answer them: "Ye will not answer me, when I ask you about the Messiah—why may I not decline to answer you, when you question me on the same subject? Ye will not tell me, if I ask you, what sort of a being you expect the Christ to be—how then can I convince you that I am the Christ?"

60. The account given us by the first three Evangelists, of our Lord's controversy with the Scribes and Pharisees, explains an otherwise obscure phrase used by him on his trial; and we hold it to be utterly idle to charge these writers with being forgers, and making the phrase fit the account of the controversy. The coincidence is as manifestly undesigned, as it is possible to imagine a coincidence to be. There can be but one rational view taken of it, and that is, that the dispute with the Jews, and their refusal to answer

Christ, actually happened; and that he had this in his mind, when he said, "Ye will not answer me." Moreover, in showing the correspondence between the language of Christ, and an occurrence, alleged to have taken place, we found several other undesigned agreements among the witnesses, in their statements with regard to this occurrence. So that the argument, which we now make, does not rest upon a single point of support, but upon a broad and stable base.

We come now, in the regular course of the narrative, to consider more attentively the language already quoted of the high-priest to the council. We observe that Matthew and Mark record it somewhat differently. "Then the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now, ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered, and said, he is guilty of death." (Matthew.) "Then the high-priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death." (Mark.) The essential point of difference in these parallel statements is, that, while Matthew tells us that the council merely said that he is guilty of death, Mark tells us that the council condemned him to be guilty of death. A superficial examination of the latter Evangelist has led most persons into the belief, that the council formally passed sentence of death upon our Lord in the house of Caiaphas. We trust to be able to prove that an

informal opinion in regard to his worthiness of death, was taken on the night of his trial; but that formal sentence was not passed until next morning, and that the Court was then sitting in the Sanhedrim room in the temple. We think that the commonly received opinion of but one sitting of the court is erroneous, and we will endeavour to prove that the preliminary proceedings were held in the house of Caiaphas, and that the council adjourned to its appropriate chamber within the walls of the temple, to pass sentence of death. We believe that Jewish writers and Christian theologians unanimously agree in this, that, according to the Mosaic code, sentence of death could not be passed at night. (See *Dupin passim*.) This has been admitted even by M. Salvador, the accomplished apologist for Caiaphas and his associates. And we have seen that the high-priest, in every instance, obeyed the letter of the law, though entirely indifferent about violating its spirit. Now, as the proceedings in his palace were at night, it is not at all probable that Caiaphas would permit any departure from the literal requirements of written law. It is also conceded that meetings of the Sanhedrim out of the temple, were irregular. Such meetings might be held on extraordinary emergencies, for the purpose of consultation. (Matt. xxvi. 3;) but we have no reason to believe that executive business was ever transacted out of the room, *gazith*, in the temple set apart for that object. The condemnation of our Lord by night in the palace of Caiaphas would then

have involved a double irregularity. It would have been both out of time and out of place. Now, remember that the council was made up chiefly, if not entirely of Pharisees—a sect which made its boast of keeping the whole law according to its literal construction. Is it likely that a body thus constituted, would have twice violated the letter of their code of jurisprudence? So far do the recorded proceedings come short of encouraging such a thought, that they actually show the most rigid compliance with the requisitions of the judicial polity of the Jewish nation. Caiaphas and his colleagues acted throughout the whole trial of Jesus upon the principle, that however unjust their conduct might be, it should at least be lawful in all respects. They cared not how outrageous their proceedings might be, provided that they were consonant with the prescribed legal forms. Thousands feel now, in this nineteenth century, just as the Sanhedrim felt then, that there is no sin in a wrong committed with the sanction of law.

Our first reason, then, for believing that no formal sentence was passed upon Christ in the palace of Caiaphas, is founded upon our knowledge of the character of the Sanhedrim. It was composed of great sticklers for the forms of the law, and it is inconceivable that they would so grossly violate its letter. Our second reason is deduced from the language of Caiaphas, and the reply of his associates. Observe that he does not say, What is your sentence? but, “What think ye?” literally, how does it seem to

you? We doubt not, too, that the expression, "they said, He is guilty of death," of Matthew, is exactly equivalent to the expression, "they all condemned him to be guilty of death" of Mark. The word rendered "guilty," signifies really liable, or obnoxious to death. And so the word rendered "condemned," might have been translated judged, decided, or thought. We can, therefore, construe Mark's language thus, "and they all judged him to be obnoxious to death—they all decided that he had committed an offence worthy of death—they all thought that they might justly condemn him." But this Evangelist does not by any means tell us that they *did* actually sentence him to die. Give the utmost latitude to the words of the council, and we have nothing more than an expression of opinion, that Jesus of Nazareth might lawfully be condemned for blasphemy. The decision in the house of Caiaphas corresponded somewhat to the finding of a true bill by our grand-juries, and the after proceedings in the room *gazith*, to the regular trial by the court. Or we may compare the investigation in the palace of the high-priest to the trial; and the subsequent proceedings to the arraignment of the prisoner at the bar, to hear the sentence of death pronounced.

The view that has just been given of two sittings of the Sanhedrim, removes difficulties that have long been felt. It may be well to state that two very opposite opinions have been held. Calmet and others suppose that all the proceedings against our Lord

were in the council chamber in the temple, and that it is called by Caiaphas's name, simply because he was the presiding officer. To this, it is a sufficient answer that Luke uses the appropriate word (*oikon*) to designate a private residence. But in addition, the allusions to the court, the porch, and the servants of the high-priest, all demonstrate that the Sanhedrim met, at first, in the building occupied by Caiaphas and his family. There is another and much larger class who hold the opinion that the trial of our Lord began and ended in the palace of the high-priest. We have already given two reasons for thinking differently, and we will now add a third, which we think ought to be decisive. Matthew tells us that on the next morning, "Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pices of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple," &c.

There are three things to be specially noted here; this transaction was on the morning after the night-trial before Caiaphas; it was in the presence of the chief priests and elders; and it was in the temple. Now, we do not think it at all probable, that men inflamed as were the chief priests and elders, with the most rancorous hate towards our Lord, would leave him to go to the temple. Dr. Robinson, Thomson, and Barclay, place the palace of Caiaphas on the

north-eastern slope of Mount Zion, and so it is located in Bagster's map and in the Biblical Atlas of the American Sunday-school Union. We presume, therefore, that there has been no disagreement between the Greek and Latin traditions, with respect to this spot, however much they may have differed about other localities. If, then, our Lord was not taken to the room *gazith*, the chief priests and elders whom Judas met in the temple, must have left their victim on Mount Zion, crossed the Tyropœon, or valley of cheese-mongers, and ascended to Mount Moriah. Moreover, Judas on one hill must have known of the condemnation on the opposite hill, immediately after it happened—and this eighteen hundred years before the invention of the telegraph.

The presence of the chief priests and elders in the temple, and the prompt acquaintance of Judas with their proceedings, seem sufficient to prove that Jesus had been brought to the Sanhedrim room, to hear his most unrighteous judges pronounce his sentence, according to the due forms of law. We are far from supposing that the Evangelists relate the events in the order in which they occurred. But it is plain that Judas must have come to the temple before Jesus was crucified, else Matthew, instead of saying, "Judas when he saw that he was condemned," would have said, "Judas, when he saw that he was crucified." And it is equally plain, at least to our mind, that the malignant chief priests and elders never left their victim, until they heard that last cry, "It is

finished." Nay, they were not willing to leave the inanimate body even then, until they had gotten a guard to watch it! How utterly improbable is it, then, that they would leave their living, active prisoner, in the house of Caiaphas, and go off to the temple on the other hill! Their hate was too bitter to permit this; their fear of Him, who had escaped out of their hands so often, was too great to permit this. But we know certainly that they were in the temple soon after the condemnation of Jesus, therefore we know with almost equal certainty that he was there also.



CHAPTER X.

THE MALTREATMENT OF JESUS.

WE have made these remarks preparatory to our return to the record of Luke. The 63d verse of his twenty-second chapter reads thus, "And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him."

Now it is to be observed, that Matthew and Mark place the maltreatment of Jesus *after* the opinion had been expressed by the council, that "he was guilty of death." Luke, however, seems to place the maltreatment *before* that expression of opinion. The discrepancy is easily reconciled upon the hypothesis of two sittings of the Sanhedrim. Luke passes over the preliminary trial in the house of Caiaphas, and records only the more formal proceedings in the room *gazith*,

of the temple. Matthew and Mark relate the trial in the palace of the high-priest, and pass over the arraignment of Christ in the Sanhedrim-room, to hear his sentence. Omissions are not contradictions. Matthew and Mark do not contradict Luke, when he says expressly, that "As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes, came together, and led him into their council." On the contrary, we have seen that Matthew incidentally confirms this statement, by his allusion to the interview between Judas and these same chief priests and elders, within the precincts of the temple. Luke, moreover, does not contradict Matthew and Mark, in what they tell of the informal proceedings against our Lord in the house of Caiaphas. On the contrary, by placing the maltreatment of Jesus *before* the removal of the court to the council chamber, he has incidentally confirmed their direct declarations. It is unnatural to suppose that the menials or officials about his sacred person would have dared to offer him so many indignities, before they heard the opinion of their superiors that he was worthy of death. It is true that John tells us of his being struck in the very presence of the high-priest; but this blow was given in a moment of anger, and for an alleged want of respect to the high-priest. We think it altogether unlikely that Caiaphas, with his strict attention to legal technicalities, would have permitted a series of outrages to be perpetrated upon his prisoner, before the informal decision was given.

The Romans were accustomed to treat condemned criminals with the utmost barbarity. It was common with them to scourge sentenced malefactors, before putting them to death. The Jews, from their long intercourse with their conquerors, had doubtless learned to borrow some of their notions, and to imitate at least their worst customs. Men are ever prone to imitate evil rather than good; and as the Jews had the example of the Romans for the maltreatment of those under sentence of death, Caiaphas could easily reconcile to his strangely constituted conscience the wanton insults to Christ, after the Sanhedrim had pronounced him to be worthy of death. He would most likely have interfered to prevent this treatment, had it occurred before the informal action of the council. Nor do we think it at all improbable that the misuse of Christ first began with the Roman soldiers. Luke explicitly tells us that the cruel sport was started by the men who held Jesus. And we have already seen the anxiety of the Jewish rulers to get our Lord into the hands of the Romans. It is exceedingly probable then, that Caiaphas committed the keeping of our Lord to those soldiers from the garrison of Antonia, who accompanied the arresting party to Gethsemane. If so, the high-priest would not feel himself called upon to interrupt these custodians of Christ in a course of conduct, which, however unjust and improper, was entirely consonant with their customs and ideas of propriety. And when the servants and retainers of the high-

priest joined the Romans in their wicked fun, he could still justify his non-interference, upon the ground that the Romans, who led the way in the deviltry, would be offended at any expression of disapprobation of their proceedings.

61. The point, which we make here, is one of great importance. There seemed to be an irreconcilable discrepancy between Luke and the first two Evangelists. But the hypothesis of two sittings of the Sanhedrim has brought harmony out of disagreement. Yea, it has done more; it has shown that what seemed difference, was really coincidence of the most delicate and convincing character. Luke incidentally confirms what Matthew and Mark say of the informal sentence against Christ, by placing the maltreatment of Christ in the house of Caiaphas. Matthew confirms what Luke says of the adjournment of the court to the council-room, by an incidental allusion to an interview between Judas and the chief priests, within the walls of the temple.

It is utterly impossible to exhibit stronger proof of the reliability of evidence than is here presented by an examination of the testimony of the first three Evangelists. The agreement between them is perfect, and yet so casual and undesigned as to preclude the suspicion of collusion. The fact that so much difficulty has been felt and acknowledged by those who have attempted to reconcile them, proves, incontestably, that the very last thing thought of by the witnesses, was the harmonizing of their statements.

Our solution of the difficulty removes it entirely, and throws the burden of proof upon the objector. Every plausible explanation of an alleged discrepancy knocks down one prop of his system of error. He has to go to work and try to build it up. He has to go to work to show that the explanation does not cancel the discrepancy. For (we cannot too strongly reiterate it) the presumption is always in favour of the truthfulness of witnesses. It is incumbent on him who denies their veracity, to show that their statements are inconsistent, improbable, or contradictory.

The Evangelists, in their account of the maltreatment of our blessed Saviour, have exhibited the progressive nature of wickedness in the most natural manner. Never was "the mirror held up to nature" in a more undesigned manner. The verse above quoted from Luke might be rendered "the men that held Jesus made sport of him, striking him." By reference to the other Evangelists, we find that they began their cruel sport with spitting upon him, then as their blood warms with their devilish mischief, they buffet him, and strike him with the palms of their hands. And so their appetite for wrong-doing grows with the things that it feeds upon; until at length, those who had mocked, and insulted, and struck him in a sort of infernal by-play, while in the house of Caiaphas, exhibit the most monstrous ferocity before the judgment-hall of Pilate. The men, who had been content with derision and buffoonery, now cry aloud for blood, and raise the fierce shout, "Away

with him! Crucify him! crucify him!" Father in heaven, is this a true picture of thy fallen creatures? Is wicked fun so soon changed into malignant hate? Is malicious sport so soon changed into murderous violence? Is godless merry-making so soon changed into "fire-brands, arrows, and death?" Is the profane jest so soon changed into the howl for blood? Alas! we know too well how the carousing and festivity of sinners generally terminate. And yet what eloquent pleas are made for innocent sports and harmless fun, as though there could be anything innocent and harmless without the blessing of God upon it!

But our object has been to call attention to the natural stroke given us by the Evangelists in their exhibition of the rapid downward progress of the wicked. The wretches, who surrounded our Lord, were satisfied at first with raillery and rough pleasantry, but grew fiercer and fiercer by their indulgence in violence, until nothing will appease their morbid craving for fresh excitement, but the mortal agony of their insulted victim. History and experience confirm what the gospel writers have taught incidentally in regard to the quick advance in crime. The brothers of Joseph were first jealous of him, next they hated him; and, finally, they wished to slay him. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing!" was the indignant reply of Hazael, when told by the prophet of the atrocities that he would commit. And yet Hazael advanced step by step in wickedness, until he had perpetrated all the enormities

which had been predicted. "When King Saul had once disregarded the divine authority in his treatment of the Amalekites, there were no bounds to the evil workings of his mind. Full of jealousy, envy, and malignity, he murders a whole city of innocent men; repairs to a witch for counsel; and at the last, with his own hands, puts an end to his miserable life. . . . And so too with David—having first outraged decorum, he betakes himself to intrigue, in hope to cover his crime: and when this fails him, he has recourse to murder; and this being accomplished, the horrible event is, with an air of affected resignation, ascribed to Providence: 'The sword devoureth one, as well as another'! Nor is this the only instance wherein that which began in a wanton look, has ended in blood."—*Andrew Fuller.*

But turning from sacred history, (whose authority the infidel does not recognize,) we can find numerous instances given by profane writers, of the progress of sin.

The appetite for blood was not developed in a day, in the monster Nero. When the first death-warrant was brought to him for his signature, he said that he wished that he had never learned to write, so that he might have been spared the painful duty of sanctioning a single execution. And this was the speech of him who afterwards fed his wild beasts with the bodies of Christians, thrown in alive to them. This was the speech of him to whom, in after years, the sweetest music was the cranching of the bones of those "of

whom the world was not worthy." And thus too was it with the bloodthirsty wretch Caligula. The first eight months of his reign were distinguished for moderation, mercy, and justice. And so too was it with Commodus, who has perhaps gained a more infamous notoriety than any of the other emperors that proved a curse to Rome and to the world. "During the first three years of his reign, the forms, and even the spirit of the old administration were maintained by those faithful counsellors to whom Marcus had recommended his son, and for whose wisdom and integrity Commodus still entertained a reluctant esteem. The young prince and his favourites still revelled in all the license of power; but his hands were yet unstained with blood; and he had even displayed a generosity of sentiment which might perhaps have ripened into solid virtue. A fatal incident decided his fluctuating character."—*Gibbon*. But the luxurious inclinations and sensual appetites of the young sovereign had already hardened his heart, and prepared the way for his bloody career; and therefore it was that "his cruelty, which at first obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling passion of his soul." And thus too was it with most of the incarnate fiends who, under the illustrious title of Cæsar, made themselves drunk with the blood of their subjects. Few of them grew up immediately to the full stature of giants in iniquity. Slow and almost insensible was their progress in sin, until they became monsters of depravity and cruelty.

And if we come down to the darkest and most melancholy chapter of the world's history—that which records the French Revolution—we will find the same rapid progression in crime. Not one of the ruthless actors in the dreadful scenes of that period seems to have been born with a naturally ferocious disposition. Danton may perhaps constitute an exception; and yet the hands of Danton were not so deeply imbrued with blood as were those of Barrère, whose natural disposition was mild and amiable. “A man who, having been blessed by nature with a bland temper, gradually brings himself to inflict misery on his fellow-creatures with indifference, with satisfaction, and at length with hideous rapture, deserves to be regarded as a portent of wickedness; and such a man was Barrère. . . . He tasted blood, and felt no loathing; he tasted it again, and liked it well. Cruelty became with him, first a habit, then a passion, at last a madness. So complete and rapid was the degeneracy of his nature, that within a very few months from the time when he passed for a good-natured man, he had brought himself to look on the despair and misery of his fellow-creatures with a glee resembling that of the fiends whom Dante saw watching the seething pitch in Malebolge. He had many associates in guilt; but he distinguished himself from them all by the bacchanalian exultation which he seemed to feel in the work of death. He was drunk with innocent and noble blood; he laughed and shouted as he butchered, and howled strange songs, and reeled in strange dances,

amidst the carnage.”—*Macaulay*. And this reveller in blood was considered, until past his thirtieth year, a mild, gentle, and humane man! The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—who can know it?

The loveliest cities are sometimes desolated by an eruption of fiery lava, which had lain for ages unseen and unsuspected beneath the fairest surface; but which had, all the while, been slowly eating away the crust of earth that restrained it. So, in the bosom of every unregenerate man, there is a seething mass of corruption, which, when the restraints of God’s providence are removed, will burst forth into the most desolating wickedness. Maximilian Robespierre, before the seed of evil in him had been germinated by the atrocities of the Revolution, was distinguished for his tenderness to his brother and sister. Desmou-lins, who severed by the guillotine the marriage ties of so many of the noblest men in France, might have lived and died in any other period of history, remarkable only for his ardent attachment, and faithful devotion to his beautiful and accomplished wife. And what a fearful thing it is to reflect that the sanguinary St. Just, the blasphemer Cloutz, the obscene Chau-mette, and all of the infernal Jacobin Club, were once innocent babes, and were hushed to sleep on the breasts of gentle mothers! We are prone to think of them as devils let loose from the pit of darkness, and to forget that they once romped about in all the exuberance of childish delight, and boyish glee. Ah,

how little are we inclined to remember that the children who gladden our hearts by their sinless mirth, and cheer us by their bursts of innocent laughter, have within them the elements of a depraved nature, which may be developed into the most blood-thirsty ferocity, and heaven-daring impiety! Slowly, but surely, will Satan and sin work their eternal ruin, unless God interpose with his sovereign grace. O thou that keepest thy covenant with thy people, take charge of the little ones of the flock!

But if the degeneracy of individuals be thus rapid, how much more so is that of communities! There is always a demoralizing influence in numbers. This is due to various causes. The majority in assemblages of men are generally godless, hence the balance is against truth and righteousness. Add to this, the inclination to imitate evil rather than good, and the preponderance of the majority becomes tremendous. Throw into the account, also, the natural desire for preëminence, which makes men unwilling to be outstripped even in wickedness. "The workers of iniquity boast themselves;" yea, they will boast of their iniquity to one another, when they have no nobler object of ambition. Add once more, the encouragement to sin afforded by the presence, the sympathy, and the counsel of evil companions. "They encourage themselves in an evil matter," was the experience of David in his day, and has been the experience of the world in every age. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of

his friend." And so it is, whether the sharpening be for weal or for woe, for happiness or destruction. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Yes, a true image will be reflected back, whether the features be hideous with vice, or lovely with virtue.

All the causes enumerated above, and many others, combine to accelerate the progress in wickedness of promiscuous gatherings of men. How often have mobs, which had assembled with a comparatively harmless design, proceeded to the most outrageous acts of indecency and cruelty, after they had stimulated one another with a recital of real or imaginary grievances, and encouraged one another in violence and wrong-doing! How often do they begin with a little playful rudeness, and end with pouring out blood like water!

62. We have called in history and experience to prove that the Evangelists have not done violence to nature, in their representation of the conduct of those who maltreated our adorable Redeemer. On the contrary, their representations entirely correspond with all that is known of the rapid progress of vice. But, alas! unbelief will not see, and will not admire the truthful picture presented by the sacred writers. So far from it, the very men who extol the genius of Hogarth in exhibiting by a series of paintings the "Rake's Progress," from the first slight departure from virtue to the last crowning act of guilt, can see nothing to commend in the same truthful representa-

tion by the Evangelists of the ever downward course of sin. History and experience go for nothing with the poor benighted infidel. Philosophy herself may come forward and show that the Evangelists describe the laws governing the moral world, just as she describes the laws governing the physical world. She teaches that falling bodies descend with an ever accelerating velocity; they teach that the wicked run the downward road to hell with an ever-quickenning speed. All this harmony of the gospels with history, with experience, and with nature, will have but little weight with the deluded sceptic. But the child of God will have his faith strengthened by it, and will be the better enabled to "give to every man a reason for the hope that is in him," of the blessed truths of the book divine. His faith, too, will be more firmly established, by observing how little design there is in the harmony. The Evangelists give their evidence like men too much in earnest to tell their own tale, to be concerned about harmonizing with anybody, or with anything. They have, with a few rapid touches, given us a faithful portrait of human nature; but they have done this in such an artless manner, that the most brazen effrontery cannot charge them with preconcerted design.

We will now examine the maltreatment of our Lord in detail. Matthew says, "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" We learn from this that two distinct sets of persons were engaged in

the outrages upon our Lord. The one set began the wicked sport by spitting on him, as a mark of contempt, and then proceeded to buffet him. The other set smote him with the palms of their hands, and demanded him to designate the smiters. Who were these two sets of persons? We cannot find out from Matthew who they were. Neither can we find out, from anything that he has said, how it would be difficult for Christ to point out those who smote him. He required but the use of his eyes to see them. Why then did his tormentors assume that the spirit of prophecy was requisite, in order to know who they were? Let us see whether Mark throws any light upon these points. His account is as follows: "And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy; and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands."

Mark, then, answers explicitly one of our questions. The second set were servants, probably the servants of the high-priest. But still we are left in ignorance as to the first set. Here, however, as we have already seen, Luke supplies the deficiency, and tells us that the first set were those who held Jesus—most likely Roman soldiers. A comparison of Mark with Matthew, will remove the other difficulty. We observe that while both Evangelists agree in saying, that the first set spit on Jesus, and buffeted him, Mark mentions a circumstance omitted by Matthew. He tells us that the first set covered our Lord's face.

Hence, he could only tell who smote him, by being imbued with the prophetic spirit. So then, Mark clears up the obscure passage in Matthew, but his own narrative would be just as unintelligible, if left by itself. Note that he says that they commanded Jesus to prophesy, but he does not tell what they required him to prophesy about. These mutual omissions are readily accounted for, upon the supposition that the Evangelists were honest and truthful men. We explain them, by saying, That they arose from the excess of familiarity of both writers with the whole subject. Men who are thoroughly conversant with any matter themselves, are very apt to assume unconsciously some degree of knowledge on the part of their hearers, and to make most important omissions in their narratives. But how can the infidel account for these palpable omissions, with his theory of a cunningly devised fable?

63. On summing up our evidence, we see that we have a beautiful specimen of independent, but concurrent statements. Luke tells us who were the ruffians that began the assault on Jesus; but does not tell who took up the infernal amusement, and continued it. Mark does not say who started the cruel fun, but explicitly states that the servants prosecuted it, after it was once begun. Moreover, Mark speaks of a demand to Christ to prophesy, when his face was covered; but he does not say what he was required to prophesy about. For all that appears to the contrary, it might have been about future events, and then, of

course, the covering of the face would be no impediment. But now Matthew comes in, who had said nothing about the blindfolding, and tells us that the demand was to prophesy (or say) who was the smiter. So we see that the accounts of the witnesses are, in their individual capacity, obscure, confused, and even unintelligible; but when taken collectively, are clear, complete, and unmistakable. How are we to account for the fact that statements so diverse in themselves, yet when put together, constitute a family group—all bearing the same family likeness.

A far less striking resemblance between the numerous asteroids discovered between Mars and Jupiter, has induced astronomers to ascribe them to a common origin. "It is evident," says a recent writer, "that these small planets sustain to each other a relation different from that of the other members of the solar system. We see a family likeness running through the entire group; and it naturally suggests the idea of a common origin. This idea occurred to the mind of Olbers, after the discovery of the second asteroid, and led to his celebrated theory, that all these bodies originally constituted a single planet, which had been broken into fragments by the operation of some internal force." But whether this theory be true or not, "it seems, nevertheless, difficult to avoid the conclusion that similar causes have operated in determining the orbits of this zone of planets. The most striking peculiarity of these orbits is, that they all lock into one another, like the links of a chain, so that if the

orbits are supposed to be represented materially as hoops, they all hang together as one system. . . . Indeed, if we seize hold of any orbit at random, it will drag all the other orbits along with it. This feature of itself sufficiently distinguishes the asteroid orbits from all the other orbits of the solar system."

May we not, by parity of reasoning, trace up the gospel narratives to the same source—even the source of eternal truth? We have seen in them a far nicer interlocking than the astronomer discovers in the asteroid paths. We have seen link welded in with link, supporting all the rest, and in turn supported by them.

The next verse (64th,) of the chapter under consideration, is in the words: "And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee."

Our translators have made a little difference in their rendering of the same word. The blindfolding in the original is expressed by the same word, as that rendered *covering*, in Mark—covering his face. It has, however, the participle form in Luke, and is a verb in Mark. But, passing over that point, we notice that Mark unequivocally ascribes the demand to prophecy to the first class of tormentors. There can be no doubt that he means to say that those who spit on our Lord, buffeted and blindfolded him, were the same persons. The language of Luke conveys the same impression. Matthew, on the contrary,

ascribes with equal distinctness, the demand to prophesy, to the second class of persecutors: "and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" Here then is discrepancy, and that, too, of the very kind which infidelity has gloated over and exulted in. But we will see how little comfort unbelief can derive from this source. The second set of persecutors were servants; the first set were the custodians of Christ—most likely Roman soldiers. Now, how natural the supposition, that the servants imitated the language, as well as the behaviour of their superiors! How natural to suppose that the menials thought it noble to imitate the Roman taunt, as well as the Roman blow!

So the whole difficulty is removed by the simple hypothesis, that the guard around Christ first began the jeering about his prophetic claims, and that the servants afterwards joined in the jeering, under the impression that it was very witty, or very severe. But we are far from being content with merely cancelling the discrepancy. We trust to be able to show, that there is in the testimony, a fine example of the preservation of individual characteristics, by the respective witnesses. Observe that Matthew puts two words, "thou Christ" in the mouths of the second class of ruffians, which the first class did not use. "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" Now, remember that this second class was composed of servants, Jewish menials. We do not

care to enter into the discussion of the proper meaning of the word rendered "servants." It matters not whether they were the servants of Caiaphas, or the attendants of the Sanhedrim, or the guard of the temple. John vii. 45. At any rate, they were Jews, men to whom the nature, the office, and the dignity of the Christ, were perfectly familiar. From his earliest childhood, the Jew was accustomed to hear of the Christ—the promised Messiah—the expected deliverer of his nation. These menials, servants or officials, (call them by what name you please) knew full well that the Christ was to be a prophet like unto Moses. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken." Deut. xviii. 15. Therefore, they knew full well that when Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be the Christ, he also claimed to be the Prophet foretold by Moses. There was then a devilish sarcasm in connecting the words, "thou Christ," with the command, "Prophecy unto us." But this sarcasm could only have entered into the mind of a Jew. It would have had no point, no force, no meaning, to one of another nation. Hence the Roman soldiers, who first taunted our Lord with his claim as a prophet, did not employ the words, "thou Christ." Their whole system of mythology made them familiar with the idea of a prophet, but they had no conception of a Christ.

We see from this, that Matthew has given us a natural stroke, marking the line between Jew and

Gentile, discriminating between the Romans and those of his own nation. The faithful representation by the Evangelist, of a national characteristic, is no mean proof of his reliability; and this proof is greatly strengthened by the undesigned, spontaneous manner in which it is given. But we will not even let the argument rest here. We will show that Luke teaches directly, what Matthew only teaches inferentially, in regard to the different phraseology employed by the Jews and Romans, in their reviling of our blessed Redeemer. If we go forward in the narrative, to that dreadful scene on Calvary, we will observe a marked distinction in the epithets of derision. Luke says, "And the rulers also with them (the people) derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers (Roman) also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself." Here is the very distinction that Matthew had previously made. The idea of "the Christ" is still prominent in the mind of the Jews, and they jeer Jesus of Nazareth with his vain claim to that title. The Romans knew nothing of the Messiah; they join in the scurrility; they join in giving a mocking appellation of honour—but this is "King," and not "Christ." How naturally, how artlessly have the Evangelists brought out national peculiarities. The Jewish scoffer upbraids the Sufferer with his pretension to be the Christ; for that was his crime, in the estimation of the Jews. The Roman

soldier upbraids him with his claim to kingly authority; for that was his crime, in the estimation of the Romans.

64. A review of our testimony shows that we have a threefold argument for the truth of the witnesses. We have the cancellation of a discrepancy; a natural exhibition of national temper and tone of thought; and a direct, though wholly undesigned, confirmation by Luke, of the inferential teaching of Matthew.

We attach more than ordinary importance to the point just made. Matthew puts into the mouth of the second class of tormentors, words which a Jew alone would have thought of using, and which a Jew alone would have thought of recording. But Matthew does not tell us that these ruffians were Jews; we are indebted to Mark for that information. Now, according to the scheme of infidelity, Mark gave this information in order to give consistency to Matthew's lie; and Luke put similar language in the mouth of the scoffers around the cross, in order to give consistency to the joint lies of Matthew and Mark. The man who can believe this double absurdity, does not reject the gospel from any lack of credulity in his composition. Alas! how sad the reflection, that unbelievers are unbelievers of truth alone; and that they can give credence to any system of error, delusion, and wickedness. Thousands of miserable wretches in France, at the close of the last century, treated the word of God as a myth, a fable, an imposture, but to believe in all the wild dreams, the vagaries, the extravagancies, and

the prophecies of the mad fanatic, Catharine Theot. Jesus of Nazareth rejected for a crazy woman! And this is the gain of infidelity! How fearfully does the Father avenge the insult to his co-equal Son!

The 65th verse of the twenty-second chapter of Luke reads thus: "And many other things blasphemously spake they against him."

None of the other Evangelists contain a similar comment upon the conduct of those who maltreated our precious Saviour. Notice, moreover, that Luke's comment is upon the language, and not upon the acts of the persecutors. To arrive at a right understanding of the state of mind which prompted the Evangelist to make this remark, we must go forward a little in his narrative. We will find, by comparing his record of the proceedings in the temple with his record of the preliminary trial in the house of Caia-phas, that he has made a singular omission in both cases. He does not mention the appeal of the high-priest to his colleagues—"Ye have heard his blasphemy." But his very omission furnishes an unanswerable argument for the credibility of the gospel narratives. How did Luke get the idea of blasphemy in his mind? Was he not thinking at the very time he penned the above paragraph, that they who charged Jesus with blasphemy, were themselves the real blasphemers? To this it may be objected, that it was exceedingly natural for Luke to comment on the maltreatment of our Lord. Yes, but it scarcely seems natural that he should comment on the opprobrious

words, and not on the outrageous acts—the spitting, the buffeting, and the smiting with the palms of the hands. We must, therefore, ascribe the language of Luke to some other cause than naturalness. The real cause, it seems to us, was his recollection that Jesus had been accused of blasphemy—“he hath spoken blasphemy.” The charge against Jesus was on account of his words. The Jews often tried to wrest his words to his own destruction. Never did they dare to try to entrap him into unlawful deeds. The false witnesses brought no accusation against him, of even a single wrong deed in his public and private life. Caiaphas himself sought to condemn him by his words. There was no act of that sinless career which the malignant high-priest could censure. And therefore, he sought to secure a judgment against our Lord, for the utterances of the mouth, and not for the works of the hand. The artful villain succeeded in his infernal design, and the Son of God was judged worthy of death, on account of the confession of his own lips. With this in his mind, Luke makes the natural comment, that although his Master was informally condemned for words of alleged blasphemy, yet the real blasphemous expressions were spoken, not by him, but by his tormentors.

There is a consideration which greatly strengthens the view just taken of the language of Luke. Many of the incidents connected with the arrest, the trial, the condemnation, and the suffering of Christ, furnish a broad and affecting contrast of weakness and power,

of the real and the false. He, who could have commanded twelve legions of angels, was deserted by his twelve disciples. He whose mere presence was sufficient to overthrow the arresting party, stood, a few moments after, a helpless, bound prisoner in the midst of them. The Prophet foretold by Moses was first accused by the false witnesses, on account of the words of his own prophecy. The real High-Priest of Israel was arraigned at the bar of the high-priest in type. The King of kings and Lord of lords was brought before Pilate, the representative, the shadow of an earthly monarch. One more instance presents this contrast in a still more striking light. Olshausen has adduced sufficient proof to make it at least very probable, that the given name of Barabbas was Jesus, and that the other was his surname. At any rate, the word Barabbas means, "Son of the Father." And so the Jews preferred the robber and murderer, the son of an earthly father, to the holy, harmless, and undefiled Son of God. "It is a most striking circumstance," says the learned German critic, "that two Jesuses should have thus met, and that Pilate's question should have taken the form, 'whether do you wish that I should release *that* Jesus who is called Christ, or *that one* who is called Barabbas?' How applicable the words 'ludit in humanis Divina potentia rebus' to this transaction! We find more than once, particularly in the history of Christ's suffering, similar marvellous instances of providential control in matters apparently unessential. But even the other name,

Barabbas, is specially significant—it means ‘Son of the Father.’ All, therefore, which in the Redeemer existed in *essence*, appeared in the murderer in *caricature*. It is not improbable even, that his whole enterprise had been a caricature of the Most Holy; and that probably he had pretended to the plenipotential character of the Messiah. But the blinded multitude, in their phrenzy, chose the hellish caricature in preference to the heavenly original.”

The verse that we are considering calls attention to the same sort of contrast—the blasphemers charging the sin of blasphemy on the blasphemed. It is consistent, then, with the whole scope of the respective narratives; and this consistency of narration the infidel is bound to recognize as an argument for the credibility of the witnesses, whether he believe the narratives or not. He must take the record just as it is; and if he find it homogeneous throughout, he is bound, as an honest man, to confess that the homogeneity is against him.

65. The review of our testimony shows that we have a twofold argument for the truthfulness of the Evangelists. Matthew and Mark tell of the charge of blasphemy against our Lord. Luke, who is altogether silent about the charges, uses, nevertheless, an expression which shows that he had it in his mind. This casual correspondence pleads powerfully in favour of the credibility of the witnesses. And if we add the consistency of Luke, in presenting another contrast to the many exhibited in the proceedings against Christ,

it is difficult to resist the conclusion, that the writers of the gospel history wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.



CHAPTER XI.

JESUS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM.

THE next verse in order (the 66th) reads thus: "And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes, came together, and led him into their council, saying—"

This verse has given the critics no little trouble. They cannot reconcile it with the three preceding verses; and so they settle the difficulty by a very summary process. Dr. Robinson, in his *Harmony of the Gospels*, places this verse and the five that follow it, before the 63d, 64th, and 65th verses. So does Dr. Doddridge; and so probably do all the harmonists. But these violent transpositions of the text are exceedingly dangerous. Once admit that a verse is out of place, and where is the process of transposing to stop? What limit is to be put upon the re-arrangement of the canon of Scripture? Who is to decide what verses are in, and what are out of place? All tampering with the word of God is calculated to weaken our reverence for it, and to shake our faith in the integrity of the text. We are far from supposing that all the events recorded by the Evangelists,

took place in the very order in which they are related. But we do believe that we have the record itself, just as it was written, and that the writers had their reasons for their peculiar methods of narration. John, for instance, being an eye-witness to the transactions in the house of Caiaphas, mentions, with great precision, the time of Peter's first denial, and places it before the arraignment of our Lord. Matthew and Mark do not withdraw their eyes from the great central figure, Jesus, before the high-priest, to notice the side-scene between Peter and the servants. They first see what will be the fate of their Master, before they turn their eyes to his denying disciple. The three Evangelists have followed their own tastes and inclinations, in their account of a matter where the point of veracity was in regard to a fact, not in regard to the time of its occurrence.

Select any two witnesses of an event, in which great and small incidents were mixed up, and you will most likely observe the same difference in their accounts. The one may group the great incidents together, and speak of them first; the other may relate every thing, without regard to its relative importance, just in the order in which it happened. Luke differs from John and the other two Evangelists, in his location of the denial of Peter. Whereas John places the first denial *before* the arraignment of Christ, Matthew and Mark, all the denials *subsequent* to this maltreatment, Luke places the three denials just *before* the outrageous proceeding in the house of Caiaphas.

We have no doubt that John and Luke are both right in what they intend to convey. We believe that the first denial of Peter was before the arraignment of our Lord, and that the last two, which (as we have seen) occurred close together, were after his informal condemnation, but before the soldiers and servants began their rude and wicked sport. Peter was with the group around the fire in the court, watching, with the most intense interest, the progress of the trial. As soon as the men about the fire perceived that informal judgment had been pronounced against the prisoner, they turned upon Peter, and urged that if the Master were guilty, so must be the disciple. Peter, in rapid succession, denied twice, even with oaths and cursing, all knowledge of Him from whom he had received so many distinguished marks of kindness and love. The glorious prisoner, so soon as the council judged him to be "guilty of death," was placed in the hands of the Roman guard for safe-keeping. These soldiers, according to their national custom, began a course of wanton and brutal treatment. The servants around the fire soon joined in, and Peter seems to have been entirely overlooked and forgotten. This seems to us a natural account of the whole matter, drawn from the narratives themselves. The internal probability is strongly in favour of Luke's location of the last two denials. We cannot think that after the soldiers and servants had once begun their abuse of the leader, they would any longer trouble themselves about the follower. But

while we believe that Luke is strictly accurate in regard to the time of the last two denials, we can see nothing improper in his mentioning the first denial in the wrong place. He thought it most suitable to notice all three denials in the same connection. We cannot blame him for this, any more than we can blame the historian for grouping together in a single chapter the events of different periods. Matthew and Mark dispose of the trial and maltreatment of our Lord before they mention the several denials of Peter. Neither can we blame them for this, any more than we can blame the historian who treats of military transactions in one chapter, and of trade, agriculture, and mechanic arts in another. We all recognize his right, when treating of facts, to make such an arrangement of them as suits him best.

We have returned once more to the case of Peter, because we had promised an explanation of the discrepancy between the Evangelists, and because it illustrates our objection to the system of transposing verses of Scripture. We object to transposition, because we believe it to be latitudinarian and dangerous, and because we believe that the Evangelists have had a design in the order of their narratives, which is frustrated, or least liable to be frustrated, by interchanging their verses. Matthew is remarkably inattentive to time and place. He may, for example, appear to speak of a thing as happening in Judea, which really took place in Galilee. But he may thus place two things together to make a contrast, or to

show a connection between them, or to deduce a moral. The motive of the writer, whatever it may be, is interfered with by this transposing process. In the case under consideration, there is a still more serious objection to the transposition. It violates the truth of history.

We have no doubt whatever, that Luke, in the 66th verse, describes the removal of the Jewish court from the house of Caiaphas to the council-chamber within the temple. Conybeare and Howson call this chamber *gazith*, but Calmet calls it *hanoth*, and says that the room *gazith* had long ceased to be used. It matters not by what name we call it, provided we mean by it a room in the temple. The word employed by Luke in the 66th verse, does not settle the question. They led Jesus "into their council," not into their council-room. The equivalent expression with us would be, they led him into court, whether that body was sitting in the court-house, or in any other building appropriated to its use. We cannot decide, then, by the phraseology, that the Sanhedrim removed from the house of Caiaphas to the temple. But we can decide with absolute certainty that there was a removal, after daylight, to some place. "And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying," &c.

Now, remember that Luke had most explicitly stated that the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, were present at the arrest in

Gethsemane. What does he mean, then, by speaking of their coming together at daylight, as though for the first time? A simple and natural solution of the difficulty is, that the court adjourned, after the informal judgment in the palace of the high-priest, to meet again in the council-room of the temple. As it was not quite day when sentence was passed, the members may have dispersed in all directions, and even gone home to report their proceedings. They all went off, with the full purpose of meeting again, according to adjournment. And it is this assembling in the temple which Luke speaks of, in the verse under consideration.

Moreover, the words, "led him into their council," naturally suggest a change of location. And as all the transactions before, which Luke had mentioned, occurred in the house of Caiaphas, it seems reasonable to infer that this Evangelist means to say, that Jesus was led to some other place. The language does not absolutely imply this; but we may surely, without extravagance, draw this deduction from it. At any rate, we are constrained to believe that Jesus was led from the spot where he was maltreated, to some other place. And if we take this, in connection with the specific mention of daylight, we may safely conclude that he was taken to the temple. There would then be no technical objection to his condemnation, either on account of the time *when* it was made, or the place *where* it was made. And we have already seen, that he could not be condemned legally,

neither could he be condemned anywhere else than in the temple, without an irregularity.

The view just given of two sittings of the court, is fully endorsed by the learned Dr. Scott. He says: "From the narratives of the two preceding Evangelists, it appears, that after the council had condemned Jesus, they separated, and met again early in the morning; and the words here used, 'as soon as it was day,' &c., seem to refer to this latter meeting of the council. Nor is it improbable that the high-priest should put the same questions to our Lord, that he had done the night before; both to see whether he would stand to what he had said, and that such members of the council as had been absent might hear his answers." But while Dr. Scott recognizes two sittings of the court, he does not perceive that the second sitting was in the temple. Nor are we aware that any critic has noticed the change of venue.

Some hold that all the proceedings were in the palace of Caiaphas; others, that all were in the council chamber within the temple. Not one, so far as we know, has noticed that the informal trial was in one place, and the regular trial in another. And yet, we think that the two scenes were present to the mental vision of the prophet, when he wrote, "He was taken from prison, and from judgment." Hengstenberg says, that the word rendered *prison*, means, properly, "confinement," and then, in a subordinate sense, "violent oppression." Rosenmuller renders it "restraint." Dr. Alexander interprets it to mean

“distress.” Bishop Horsley says that it means “constraint of power, just or unjust, lawful or unlawful.” And so there have been hundreds of different translations of the original Hebrew.

Of course no argument can be based upon language so ambiguous and so doubtful. The two things specified seem, however, to point to different localities, and we throw out this suggestion for whatever it is worth. We have something stable to rest our opinion upon, in the parallel statements of Matthew and Mark. The former says, “When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders took counsel against Jesus, to put him to death.” The word rendered *counsel*, might have been rendered *council*, with just as much propriety; and this is the rendering of it in Acts xxv. 12: “Then Festus, when he had conferred with the *council*,” &c. With this slight change, Matthew would say, that the Jews held a council, organized a court against Jesus, not with the design of giving him a fair trial, but of putting him to death. There is then the most perfect agreement between Matthew and Luke. The latter speaks of the Jews leading Jesus into their council; the former, of the organizing of this council. There can be no doubt that the Sanhedrim is designated. The first three Evangelists mention, with great precision, those who composed the council; and they were the same three orders of chief priests, scribes, and elders, which constituted the Sanhedrim. Mark says, “And straitway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes, and

the whole council, and bound Jesus," &c. The conjunction *and*, before *bound*, is omitted in the text of some versions. The literal translation would then be, "and without delay in the morning, the chief priests held a council with the elders and scribes, and the whole council binding Jesus, carried him away and delivered him to Pilate."

It is evident from this examination, that the first three Evangelists agree, in speaking of the assembling of the Sanhedrim, the highest tribunal of the Jews, at early dawn. Now, observe that Matthew had distinctly stated that the arresting party, on their return from Gethsemane with our Lord, found the scribes and elders assembled in the house of Caiaphas, (chap. xxvi. 57.) Remember, too, that he expressly states that the whole Sanhedrim sought false witness against Jesus. "Now, the chief priests, and elders, and all the council (*sunedrion*) sought false witness against Jesus." If all were assembled in the house of Caiaphas, why call a second meeting? The object could not be, as Dr. Scott supposes, that those who had been absent at the first sitting, might hear for themselves the confession of our Lord. We are explicitly told by Matthew that all were present, none then could be absent. Nor is it at all likely, that in the exasperated state of the minds of the Jewish rulers, any would desire to be absent. Furthermore, why are the Evangelists so specific in their allusion to daylight? Even John, who is so brief in his notice of the trial, is particular in stating that Jesus was

led at an early hour to the judgment-hall of Pilate. Take the view that the court met after daylight in the temple, because sentence could not be passed legally at night, and elsewhere than in the council-chamber; the whole difficulty will then disappear in regard to two meetings, and in regard to the specific allusion to the time of the second meeting.

66. "The trail which hunters and Indians follow (says the *Scientific American*) is not so much composed of tracks or footprints, as of indescribable little signs, such as leaves and blades of grass bent or turned, twigs broken, and other things so small and faint that they cannot be shown to any one, yet which, when all put together, make a kind of line along the ground." Who so silly as to suppose that the enemy sought by the Indian, or the game sought by the hunter, made purposely this impalpable path, in order to be pursued and overtaken? If so, why did they not make it broader, better beaten, and more distinct? By like delicate signs, something dropped here, a slight mark made there, have we been enabled to trace up the coincidence between the Evangelists. Who, then, can accuse them of designed correspondence? If such had been the object, why did they not make the harmony more perceptible, more evident, more unmistakable? So far is their agreement, in regard to the two sittings of the court, from being palpably plain, that it has only been discovered by rigid scrutiny and careful search. Fabulists would not write in this manner. Whatever har-

monies there might be in their respective statements, would be brought out too conspicuously to be overlooked.

The last five verses of the twenty-second chapter of Luke are in these words: "Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe. And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."

The Sanhedrim had met for the sole purpose of condemning Jesus on his own confession. With a specious appearance of fair dealing, and with all regard to their legal forms, they now inquire whether he will adhere to his former acknowledgment of his Messiahship, "Art thou the Christ? tell us," now convened in the right place, and at the right hour, whether you still claim to be the Christ. Your confession will now be made under more solemn circumstances, do you still abide by it?

Such, we understand, to be the meaning of the question propounded to Jesus. And however repugnant may be to us the thought of condemning a man on his own confession, a condemnation of this kind would not be inconsistent with a Jew's ideas of justice. We must not forget that the Jewish government was a theocracy, and that the Mosaic code appealed

largely to the conscience. The guilty person was to be his own accuser, and was required to make public confession of his most secret sins. The whole system of trespass and sin-offerings rested upon this principle: "And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, for his sin, which he hath sinned." Lev. v. 5, 6. "Then they shall confess their sin, which they have done; and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed." Numb. v. 7. And so we read of public confessions of sin by Hezekiah with his people, by Ezra, by Nehemiah, &c.

The case of Achan furnishes a fine illustration of the Jewish idea of the duty of the public confession of sin. After the lot had fallen upon Achan, Joshua said unto him, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done." Joshua vii. 19, 20. This extract shows the assumption on Joshua's part, that God would be glorified by the confession of sin to the ruling power. And this idea seems to have been thoroughly instilled into the Jewish mind. Criminals, on their way to execution, were required to confess the justice of their sentence. The man who had

wronged his neighbour, even unwittingly, was compelled to make acknowledgment to him of the wrong committed. And the sin-offering to the Lord was virtually a public confession, before all Israel, of some sin committed. The whole Mosaic dispensation thus familiarized the people with the notion that it was incumbent on the transgressor to confess his guilt; so that they seemed to feel that a man could not be lawfully put to death, without his own acknowledgment of guilt. Observe, that Achan had been detected by the casting of the lot. God had thus given his testimony against him; but Joshua seems to have been unwilling to execute him until he had heard his own confession. So too was it in the case of Jonah, when the lot fell upon him; the force of his Jewish education manifested itself; his whole system of training forbade the concealment of his sin, and he cried aloud, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. . . . Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." How clearly does this prove that the Israelite was reared up in the belief that it was a sacred duty to confess his sin. When the fugitive prophet was a little boy, his Jewish mother had taken him up to the temple, and he there saw the people weeping, and praying, and confessing their sins—he looked around, and saw smoking altars and bleeding victims—all making public proclamation of guilt. And when he had acquired the rudiments

of learning, the roll of the sacred Scriptures was put in his hands, and he read of the sin of hiding his transgression. And when he became a well-grown lad, and followed his father to see the whole congregation stone a malefactor, without the walls of the city, he heard the doomed man confess the justice of his sentence.

67. The point which we now make, relates to the harmony of Luke's statements with the Jewish judicial system. He tells that a confession was demanded of Christ, as the basis of a verdict against him. Such a proceeding is utterly repugnant to our notions of justice and fair-dealing. We might then be disposed to reject Luke's evidence, because of its unnaturalness; but, upon investigation, we find that the Evangelist is sustained by the whole scope of the ceremonial and civil laws of the Mosaic economy. It is difficult to give too much weight to this point. A fact is related, which seems too absurd and preposterous for belief; but we find it corroborated by parallel facts of the same or similar kind. All this looks but little like a forgery. The framers of a fiction, which they wished to be believed, would be guarded in stating things that would excite doubt and suspicion. The boldness of the Evangelist furnishes, then, a presumption of his honesty; and this presumption becomes proof, when we find that his seeming rashness is but the natural stroke of a writer, too absorbed in his narration to think of accommodating it to the views and sentiments of his hearers.

We have assumed, in the foregoing argument, the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures, or at least the existence of the Mosaic economy, with its sacrifices and confession of sin. We need only to assume the existence of the Jewish theocratic polity, and we will find Luke's account consonant with it. But suppose that the infidel has the effrontery to deny the existence of the Hebrew system of sacrifice and confession, he cannot deny that there was a record of such a system, long before Luke wrote. And this acknowledgment will make as much against the unbeliever as the reality of the Jewish code. For it amounts to an acknowledgment of the correspondence of Luke's testimony, with that of a whole "cloud of witnesses," who preceded him. We care not which horn of the dilemma the poor sceptic may choose; either of them will be found sufficiently troublesome.

There is a delicate and plainly undesigned harmony between Mark and Luke in regard to the second assembling of the Sanhedrim. We have seen that the 1st verse of the 15th chapter of Mark expresses the promptness with which the council met at the first dawning of light. The whole verse evinces the utmost eagerness and impatience, on the part of the court to dispose of the case of Jesus of Nazareth, as soon as they could do so, consistent with the letter of the law. Luke, in his 66th and 67th verses, harmonizes with Mark in the most casual and undesigned manner. He shows that the members of the court, in their feverish and excited state of mind, do not wait

for the high-priest, as the presiding officer, to interrogate our Lord. They all speak together, and demand of him with united voice, the confession before made in the house of Caiaphas. And this intemperate zeal the wicked judges show throughout the trial. Once more they vociferate together, "Art thou then the Son of God?" (Verse 70.)

Now, we have here exhibited as perfect an example as can well be conceived, of complete, and yet wholly unintended agreement. It is idle to suppose that Luke, by his casual allusion to the eagerness of the council, meant to make a correspondence with Mark's allusion to the earliness of the hour. But we will not let the matter rest here. The hurried meeting in the morning, the rapid despatch of business, the clamorous speaking together, the dispensing with witnesses, (verse 71,) these are all in perfect harmony with what had been said before, of the Sanhedrim's fear of the common people. They are all in keeping with the arrest of Jesus by night, beyond the walls of the city. They are all in keeping with the association of a portion of the Roman guard with the arresting party, so as to awe the friends of Jesus, and prevent a rescue of the prisoner. They are all in keeping with the effort of the high-priest in his own house, to hasten a verdict, by extorting a confession through the means of a solemn adjuration.

68. We have had occasion more than once, to call attention to the difficulty of making a consistent narration. The novelist is justly thought to have achieved

a miracle of art, who commits no solecism in his representations of character, no discrepancy in the several parts of his tale. We believe that this feat has never been accomplished by any uninspired writer; the mere approximation to it confers distinction. But if it be next to impossible for a narrator, with his own conception, his own plan, his own arrangement, to make a congruous story, it is altogether impossible for him to frame a fiction that shall comport in all respects with three other fictions, having the same slight distinction here, and the same faint resemblance there, the same shade of meaning in this place, and the same delicate colouring in that place. With facts to guide them, four men can produce agreeing narratives; just as four boys, with the same model of penmanship before them, can produce copies strikingly similar. Each copy may have its distinctive peculiarity, but the inclination, the curvature, the general shape of all the letters will be the same. But let them attempt this similarity, without a model to guide them, and an experienced scribe will detect at a glance, the greatest difference in the sloping, pointing, and turning of the letters in the respective copies. The Evangelists have given their several accounts, all bearing marks of individual manner and style, temperament and tone of thought, but, at the same time, so closely resembling, as to prove that they were shaped after the same model of truth.

We notice that our Lord promptly answers the question, "Art thou the Christ?" and does not re-

quire to be adjured, as in the house of Caiaphas, before he will speak. It is true that he answers, under a sort of protest against the question, and gives reasons that would justify silence—reasons which had previously influenced his mind. In all this, he has left a noble example for our imitation. He did not rashly precipitate himself into danger. So long as there was a chance for life, humanly speaking, he did not disdain to use the lawful means for its preservation. Therefore, he declined to criminate himself in the palace of the high-priest, until he was put upon oath, and could not refuse to respond, consistently with the Jewish jurisprudence. Now, however, when informal sentence had been passed, and nothing remained but to confess the offence with which he was charged, he no longer hesitates about answering. He determines to “fulfil all righteousness,” and to comply with the minutest requirements of the Hebrew law. Therefore, as he had responded to the adjuration of the high-priest, in obedience with the Mosaic code, so now he makes confession, in compliance with the same stern system. His conduct is thus seen to be the very farthest removed from the mad enthusiasm of the fanatic on the one hand, and the shrinking policy of the worlding and the coward, on the other hand. He did not court danger in the spirit of wild and intemperate zeal, or vainglorious bravado; neither did he seek to shun it by the tricks of the timid and the fearful. He neither exhibited the fiery ardour of the zealot Jehu, nor the weakness and vacillation of the

feeble Peter. He neither sought nor avoided danger. Therefore, he took all proper precautions for his own safety, consistent with truth and the requisitions of the Mosaic code. Never was there manifested a nicer blending of regard for personal rights with regard for the letter of the law. Never was there manifested a juster mingling of a due care of life, with a calm disposal of the issue into the hands of Him who controls all events. And it was this fearlessness of death, united with a proper appreciation of the value of life, which gave such calmness, dignity, and propriety to the deportment of the Son of God, in the presence of his murderers. This it was that made his conduct free alike from the weakness of cowardice, and the recklessness of religious phrenzy.

69. The point which we now make, relates to the consistency of the Evangelists, in the representation of the character of our blessed Redeemer. They all mention incidents in his life, which show a courage far superior to that displayed on fields of blood and carnage. They all mention incidents in his life, which show the most consummate prudence; so that, in his whole career, it is equally impossible to point out a single act of timidity, or a single act of fanatical audacity. One of the first of his public deeds, of which we have any record, required the highest degree of intrepidity. It was no common exercise of courage to drive the traders out of the temple, in face of the opposition of those interested in the speculation; and in face of the opposition of the priests and Levites, to

whom was committed the care of the temple, and who would naturally resist all interference with their prerogatives.

When he talked with the woman by Jacob's well, he frankly told her that salvation was of the Jews; and did not seek to conciliate her favour by pandering to her Samaritan antipathies and prejudices. In Nazareth, he proclaimed fearlessly the doctrine of God's sovereignty; but when the irritated multitude attempted to cast him down headlong from the brow of the hill, upon which the city was built, he prudently passed "through the midst of them, and went his way." When the Pharisees censured his disciples for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath, he confronted and confounded their accusers by a reference to the conduct of David; so that the boldness of the defence was admirably tempered with the skill and tact with which it was made. In like manner, he did not hesitate to heal the man with the withered hand; but he gave such cogent reasons in justification of doing works of necessity on the Sabbath, that the Pharisees were afraid to lay hands on him, seeing that he had satisfied the minds of the common people with regard to his act of healing. When the Scribes and Pharisees gathered about him, demanding a sign from heaven, he did not fear to say, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." Here was independence shown in refusing a sign, and courage in denouncing the inquisitiveness

of those who wished to pry into the secret things of God, while neglecting to reform the secret sins of their lives. At the table of the Pharisee, he exposed the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who "tithed mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and passed over judgment and the love of God." And when questioned by a lawyer, in the dining party, he boldly said, "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers; for ye lade men with burdens, grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burden with one of your fingers." In the synagogue of Capernaum, on a certain occasion, he proclaimed the truth so faithfully, pungently, and powerfully, that even his own disciples were offended, and "many of them went back, and walked no more with him." Here was exhibited heroism as a *religious teacher*; but it was not associated with reckless hardihood.

As a *man*, he took all proper care of his life: for we are told, that after these things he walked no more in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Notice, that it is not said that he feared the Jews—he merely took those precautions which a brave man would take, who did not fear death in the path of duty; but who, nevertheless, would not rashly expose his life. And with what calm dignity, and indifference to danger, did our Lord rebuke, in his Sermon on the Mount, the false doctrine and wicked practices of the Scribes and Pharisees! And so too at Capernaum, he seized the opportunity afforded by his defence of his disciples for eating with unwashen

hands, to refute the vain traditions of those who were constantly weakening the word of God to strengthen the commandments of men. On his final departure from Galilee, he would not go up with his disciples, because his time was not yet come: "But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret." When, however, he had made his appearance at the feast, "He went up into the temple and taught," so fearlessly, that the people said, "Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing to him." Here we have again the faithfulness of the preacher of righteousness united with the prudence and caution of the man. The chief priests were so indignant at the scathing rebukes then administered, that they sent officers to arrest him; but the officers returned, saying, "Never man spake like this man." At this same feast, so boldly did he reprove the unbelieving Jews that they "took up stones to stone him." Again, he did not disdain to use the means for personal security, and therefore he "hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." At the festival of the dedication, when the Jews, offended at what he taught in regard to his oneness with the Father, sought once more to kill him, "He escaped out of their hand, and went again beyond Jordan, into the place where John first baptized; and there he abode."

Matthew, in his twenty-third chapter, tells us of the

fearful woes uttered by our Lord against the Scribes and Pharisees, but a few days before his crucifixion. Never were hypocrisy, false teaching, cunning, fraud, and all wickedness, so fully and so fearlessly exposed, rebuked, and denounced. The most influential, malignant, and revengeful sects of the Jews were publicly reprov'd, in the very seat of their power, and in the very presence of their friends and partisans. And remember, that this was done by "the carpenter's son;" the man who had "not where to lay his head;" the man who had but twelve timid adherents, and these doubtful too about his character, his person, and his office.

We admire the bravery of the warrior, who, surrounded by his armed host, can look with composure upon danger. But there is a courage higher than that of the battle-field. Luther showed more true greatness of soul at the Diet of Worms, than MacDonal'd in the bloody charge at Wagram. There is a sort of shoulder-to-shoulder courage inspired by discipline, which even timid men may acquire. But there is a loftiness of spirit, which enables the possessor to stand unmoved, though alone and friendless, in the midst of the jeers, the taunts, the threats, and the insults of an assembled multitude: and this was the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. The summary that we have given of the incidents of his life, has been purposely brief, and is therefore incomplete and imperfect. Still it has shown that no danger could intimidate him, and that no collections of

men could deter him from proclaiming the truth. But while, as a religious teacher, he always declared the whole counsel of God, yet, as a man, he never wantonly risked life. And thus he united in himself, in the highest degree, the qualities which he recommended to his disciples—the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove. He acted out himself the directions which he gave to them—“when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.”

We do not expect the infidel to believe the recorded incidents of our Lord's life, but we expect him to believe that there is in existence a record of those incidents. And this latter belief will be fatal to his creed, or rather to his want of creed; for consistency of narration is ever considered to be a strong proof of the veracity of witnesses: and none can deny that the Evangelists have been consistent in their account of the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. They represent him as uniting throughout his entire life, the greatest prudence with the highest courage; they tell of his combining the most fearless denunciations of error and wickedness with the strictest attention to the preservation of life. They show that no flattery could seduce him, and no danger could divert him from reproving sin in every guise and shape; and yet that he did not court death in a spirit of religious fanaticism. And this consistency of narration, the Evangelists preserve to the last. They tell of the arrest of Jesus, when he had gone out privately by night, away from the vicinity of his enemies and per-

secutors. They tell of his dignified silence in the house of Caiaphas, and his refusal to say anything to his own prejudice. They tell of his calm acknowledgment of his Messiahship, when it became his duty to make confession.

How has it happened that the Evangelists alone, of all the multitudinous writers of the world, have succeeded in describing a consistent character? Three of those who accomplished what thousands have attempted in vain, were illiterate men; two of them were fishermen. How has it happened that a few despised Galileans have surpassed so many myriads, possessing genius, taste, learning, refinement, and cultivation? We do them but faint justice, when we acknowledge the perfection of their description. The perfection of the character described must also be taken into account. If Jesus were a mythical hero, how did these rude fishermen get the idea of such a man? History afforded no exemplar, the traditions of mankind furnished no model. The heroes, the sages, the demigods of antiquity bore no resemblance to Jesus of Nazareth. What then guided his biographers, in their narration of his mighty works, his wonderful discourses, his consummate prudence, his matchless courage, his patience, his love, his forbearance, his indomitable zeal, his untiring industry, his calm resignation to the will of God, his cheerful submission to the laws of man, his touching devotion to kindred and friends, his exalted patriotism, his kindness to enemies, his forgiveness of persecutors, his indifference to

the seductions of flattery, his superiority to the prejudices of his age and nation, his refusal of proffered honours and distinctions, his contempt of all the tricks and artifices by which popular favour is won, his uncompromising integrity, his habitual prayerfulness, his attention to the weak, the poor, the despised of the world; his tenderness with children, his kindness and gentleness with his friends, his serene and dignified deportment with opposers of the truth, his affectionate sympathy with the afflicted and the bereaved? Whence did these toilers on Lake Gennesareth get the idea of such a man, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners? How are we to explain the fact that we are indebted to these rude and unlettered men for the representation of the only perfect Being, uniting all that is bold and resolute in man, with all that is gentle and lovely in woman—yea, combining god-like intelligence and powers with all that can be imagined of the generous, the noble, the disinterested in unfallen and uncorrupted humanity? Well might Rousseau think that the conception of such a character would be as great a miracle as the existence of the character himself. Aye, there is one trait of the character of Jesus of Nazareth, which could never have entered into the heart of man. Not one of our apostate race could ever have conceived of a being so perfectly unselfish as the man of Gethsemane, the man of Calvary.

The predominant characteristic of our degraded natures is utter, uncompromising selfishness. “The

trail of the serpent is over us all." "Man walks in a vain shadow," a shadow of his own casting. However lofty and erect may be his bearing, he is ever accompanied by this image of himself flitting on the ground, reminding him of his dual egoism, his double selfishness, and of his alliance with all that is low, earthly, and grovelling. The first wail of the infant is the plaint of selfishness. *My* and *mine* are among the first words formed by his childish lips. His rattle, his toys, his play-things are jealously watched and contended for. The sports around the school-house must be conducted according to his selfish notions; his school-boy rights are battled for with selfish zeal and determination. Parents and teachers, equally regardless of the claims and privileges of others, strive in vain to check the growing evil. Selfishness is now the ruling element of the boy's life. He comes out into the world, armed *cap-à-pie* with a complete panoply of egotism. He will thrust out of his way, all who are weaker than himself, and he in turn will be pushed aside by the more powerful. And hence the world is full of wars and fightings, fraud and treachery, wiles and stratagems, intrigue and double-dealing, professed friendship and real hate, affected humility and unbounded pride, want of sympathy with others, and tender concern for self, "hatred, emulation, wrath, strife."

All these have their root in unmitigated selfishness. This is the fountain and the origin of the whole evil. From this cause the whole head is sick, and the whole

heart is faint. This it is that leaves its slime and defilement upon all that is lovely and beautiful in the universe of God. This it is that rejects the Son of God, and treats with contempt the proffers of his gospel. But for the sovereign interposing grace of the Spirit, none could be found so unselfish as to be willing to be a mere cypher, a negation, a nullity in the plan of salvation. But for this interposing grace, all would want to be saved by their own works, and not by the righteousness of Christ. The unbounded, the immeasurable, the infinite pride and selfishness of man, rise in rebellion against the humbling doctrines of the cross. He will give glory to himself for his salvation, and not to the sovereign Father, the merciful Son, and the interceding Spirit. Thus he ever compasses himself about with his own sparks, and walks in the light of his own fire, and the sparks he has kindled. Isa. l. 11. Thus, he is not merely selfish with his fellow-worm of the dust, but also with his Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. All history, all experience, and all observation confirm what the Scriptures teach, that death alone can extinguish man's selfishness. It is seen as a flickering flame around the cradle, it burns with a lurid glare in the walks of life, it goes out with a ruddy glow in the grave. Alas! for poor, miserable, degraded human nature!

The annals of our race, the eulogies of friends, even the apotheoses of mythology furnish not a sin-

gle example of an unselfish being. Whence, then, did the Evangelists draw their idea of such a personage? They uniformly represent Jesus of Nazareth as superior to the motives, the principles, the views, the feelings, that influence our selfish natures. Satan, with his three temptations in the wilderness, appealed to selfishness—to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—to the pain arising from hunger, the love of power and dominion, and the love of display and vainglory. But Satan addressed in vain these selfish considerations to our precious Redeemer. There was no selfishness in his nature upon which these temptations could take hold. He who left his Father's bosom, and his home in the skies, to endure the contradiction of sinners, to suffer, to bleed, and to die for enemies and persecutors, could not be other than a purely disinterested being. In nothing were his own inclinations and his own interests consulted: yea, his very will was lost in that of the Father. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" was his reply, when a lad of but twelve years of age, to the earnest remonstrance of his mother. He said to the gainsaying Jews, "I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me." And when his disciples wondered at his not eating after a long journey, he replied, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." And this will was ever carried out in weariness and watching, in hunger and thirst, in

suffering and sorrow, in trial and temptation, in peril and persecution, at home and abroad, at all times and under all circumstances.

Equally unselfish was the Saviour in his intercourse with the creatures his own hands had formed. And so he talked with the woman by the well of Samaria, about the waters of salvation, when he was faint with fatigue, and thirsty, from his dusty travel. And so he went about doing good, consulting not his own ease and comfort, but thinking only of healing the sick, curing the diseased, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, making whole the halt and the maimed, and preaching the gospel to the poor. And so he rebuked the proud hypocrite who needed to be rebuked, and gave grace to the humble penitent who needed to be encouraged. And so he washed the feet of his own disciples, and permitted them to sit at the table, while he administered to their wants as a servant waits on his master. And so he allowed his chosen watchers to sleep in Gethsemane, and he contended alone with the powers of hell and the spirits of darkness. And so, when the arresting party came, with the infernal Judas at their head, he thought not of his own safety, but of that of his fickle and faithless followers; and therefore he boldly advanced before them, acknowledged that he was the person sought, and demanded that his disciples should be let go. And so in the palace of Caiaphas, he refused to name his disciples, that none might be convicted through his words. And so on the way

to Calvary, he who had wept over false and bloody Jerusalem, turned to the wailing women, and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." He forgot the dreadful agony awaiting him, in his tender solicitude for the daughters and children of the city of his slanderers and murderers. And when the nails were rending his flesh, and tearing his nerves, he was thinking not of his own excruciating suffering, but of the wrath of God against his enemies; and therefore he prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

"Amazing pity! grace unknown,
And love beyond degree."

And now one of his revilers, included in the same condemnation, is touched with the spectacle of his godlike patience and fortitude, and is led by the Spirit to put faith and trust in him who is hanging by his side, and to cry aloud, "Lord, remember me." Once more Jesus turns away from the contemplation of his own anguish, to comfort and console the poor penitent. But the powers of life are beginning to wane fast; the breath to come short and quick; the pulse to beat low and feeble. He turns his glazing eye on the multitude, and beholds his mother! Even in that last, dreadful moment, she is not forgotten. His voice is husky with the approach of death; but it is heard distinctly—"Woman, behold thy son!" and thou, my well-beloved, "Behold thy mother!" All his earthly

duties are now performed: but he remembers that there is one prophecy of the Father still unfulfilled; therefore he rallies expiring nature, and "saith, I thirst." And now, "It is finished." The matchless life, the unparalleled death, are finished! But, blessed be God, the influence of them has not yet ended, and will not end throughout eternity. "The ransomed of the Lord will return with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads;" and the burden of their song, and the source of their joy will be, the triumph of Jesus over death and the grave. And who can estimate the unending influence of his sinless life?

It was an ancient myth, that the milky-way was the bright track made by the flashing wheels of the car of Phaëton. But the Man of Calvary has left a far brighter and more glorious path than that made by the fabled son of Apollo. Apostles, saints, and martyrs have trodden it, and found that it was "the way, the truth, and the life;" and that it led to mansions of eternal rest. Yea millions who will never see God, have admired, revered, and, to some extent, imitated the example of his Son. There is scarcely a corner of the earth which has not heard and been influenced by the story of his disinterested life and unselfish death. Eternity can alone reveal how much the views, the sentiments, and the conduct of mankind have been modified, directly or indirectly, by the narration.

The stone thrown into the bosom of the placid lake, makes its impression only upon the water in

contact with it; this moves the adjacent particles, and so in ever-widening circles, until the whole surface is tossed and agitated. And thus the sinless life of our Redeemer may have impressed only a few at first; but these influenced others, and they in their turn still more, until the whole world has felt the divine impress. Even sceptical philosophers and infidel writers borrow the traits of character of Jesus of Nazareth, to deck and adorn their imaginary heroes. All that is noble, generous, magnanimous, and disinterested in their ideal representations, have been taken without acknowledgment from the records of the Evangelists. Unbelievers are ever prone to overlook and ignore the indebtedness of the world to the picture given it of the holy life and martyr death of the Son of God. We have often noticed, after the sun had sunk beneath the horizon, the western sky tinged with golden hues, and presenting ever-changing forms of loveliness. And then the evening star was seen shining dimly at first, but gradually increasing in splendour, until it shed its benign lustre over the whole landscape. In a little while, the moon came forth walking in brightness, and diffusing its mild radiance everywhere, beautifying, softening and chastening all objects in nature. By and by, another planet starts up, and yet another, as though wishing to blend their beams also in this glorious hymn of light to the mighty Architect of the stellar system. We look up and behold the heavens glittering in effulgence, we look around and see the earth radiant

with beauty, and we forget, in our admiration of the gorgeousness of the scene, that the sky, the moon, and the planets derived all their brilliancy from the sun that has disappeared from view. And thus it is in the moral as well as the physical world. Jesus of Nazareth no longer walks among men, but all the light that gilds the dark places of the earth is derived from the Sun of Righteousness. All our ideas of purity and goodness, of benevolence unmingled with selfish motives, of heroism and gentleness, of tenderness with friends and generosity with foes, of kindness to the poor, the weak and the friendless, of truth and honesty, of reverence for God, and world-wide philanthropy, are drawn from the deathless life of Jesus Christ. The very men who reject and despise him, have nevertheless taken him as their model of perfect manhood. There is not a virtue, not a grace, not a merit ascribed by them to their model heroes, which did not exist in the lowly Nazarene, and which has not been found in perfection in him, and in him alone.

And this brings us back to the question with which we set out, How did the Evangelists get the idea of such a man? Caspar Hauser was shut up in a dark cavern until manhood, and debarred the privilege of beholding the natural sun. What sort of a conception could he have formed of its magnitude, shape, heat, and light? The world was debarred for four thousand years from the privilege of personal intercourse with the Sun of Righteousness, though he may

have paid it an occasional visit as the Angel of the Covenant. Would it have been idle to have asked the wild boy of the cave for a description of the great luminary of day? How much more preposterous is it to suppose that fishermen of Galilee could describe, without the living reality before them, the Maker of the central orb of our system; yea, it may be, the Maker of infinite systems in that boundless space of which our universe forms but a portion, a fragment, an insignificant speck!

The verses above quoted present still another point which claims our attention. Olshausen has satisfactorily shown that the Jews, in the days of our Saviour, were not aware of the identity of the Messiah and the Son of God. They expected the former to be a temporal prince, their deliverer from the Roman yoke; the latter was universally believed to be a divine personage. The commendation of Peter for his noble confession may have been partly because of his perception of the Sonship of the Christ. Matt. xvi. 16, 17. Nathanael, under the enlightening influences of the Spirit, had equally clear views; for he said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." The Samaritan woman, on the other hand, looked for a prophet in the promised Messiah. "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." Martha believed the truth, but Martha had been under no ordinary teaching. "She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ,

the Son of God, which should come into the world." The great body of the Jews, however, and even their rulers, had confused and imperfect ideas of the being, office, and attributes of Christ. "Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him." We see from this, that they knew that the Christ must be the son of David, and that they say nothing of the higher claim of Jesus to be the Son of God.

The union of the Divine and human natures in the Messiah, was the very thing which perplexed the chief priests, scribes, and elders. They were confounded when called upon to explain how David's son could be David's Lord. And so completely were they confused, that "no man was able to answer him: neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask him any more questions." How great must have been the embarrassment which forbade those malignant creatures from seeking any more to annoy him by captious and querulous questions! The silencing of the Jews proves, incontestably, that they had different notions about the Messiah from those entertained by Nathanael, Peter, and Martha. They believed that the Christ was to be the son of David, but they did not know that he was also to be the Son of God. The claim of being the Christ could only be established by evidence of mighty works, miracles, and prophecy. Some

of the people thought that Jesus had this evidence in proof of his Messiahship, and therefore they said, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these, which this man hath done?" Not one of them seems to have suspected that he was the Son of God. In fact, the several attempts on his life were not because of his claim to be the Messiah, but because of his claim to be the Son of God.

The chief priests and elders had too much cunning to make the former claim a ground of complaint, in the presence of the common people. There was abundant proof to establish its justness, and they knew it. Hence they confined their accusations to the latter claim, which, in their view, could be established by no amount of miraculous power. It was blasphemy against God, and to be punished with death. Hence they took up stones to stone him, whenever he spake of his Divine origin. Hence he appealed in vain to his mighty works. The Jews did not deny these mighty works; but they denied that the gift of performing miracles could demonstrate the union of the creature with the Creator. Jesus constantly addressed himself to this unreasonable opinion: "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." And so we might quote other passages bearing on the same point;

but those given are sufficient for our purpose. They show that Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be both the Messiah and the Son of God; and that his disciples recognized him as such a being. They show that the Jews accused him of blasphemy, whenever he professed to be the Son of God. They show that the Jews refused to admit his miracles and mighty deeds, in proof of his Sonship. They show that the Jews never charged him with professing to be the Messiah; and that such a profession would not have been regarded by them as blasphemous, and worthy of death.

Keeping these facts in view, we will find that Luke's testimony is in entire accordance with them. We observe, that he separates the two counts of the indictment against our Lord, while Matthew and Mark blend them together. Matthew tells us that the high-priest asked him whether he was "the Christ the Son of God?" And Mark, that the question was, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Luke, however, shows that when Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrim, they first demanded to know whether he claimed to be the Christ; and afterwards, whether he claimed to be the Son of God. There is really no discrepancy among the three Evangelists. We have only to suppose that Matthew and Mark have condensed the two questions or two accusations into one, and that Luke has marked the distinction between them. Such differences of narrative are perfectly allowable, and constitute no contradiction.

Having thus reconciled the seeming disagreement,

we are now prepared to show that Luke harmonizes with all that the other Evangelists tell of the claims of our Lord, and of the opinions of the Jews with respect to those claims.

To use the language of military tribunals, Jesus of Nazareth was arraigned under the charge of being an impostor, or deceiver of the people. The first specification to this charge set forth that he professed to be the Messiah or Christ. The second set forth that he professed to be the Son of God. The court begin with the first specification, and ask him what he pleads to it, "Art thou the Christ?" His reply is a frank and an ingenuous acknowledgment of his claim to be the Christ. "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." They did not misunderstand him; he had constantly called himself the Son of man, and they therefore knew his meaning to be, "though I am now a prisoner before you, I shall hereafter sit on the right hand of God the Father, his co-equal in power and glory." His confession, then, amounted not merely to the claim of being the Christ, but also of being the Son of God. And so the Sanhedrim thought—"then said they all, Art thou *then* (literally *therefore*) the Son of God?" In the original, the first word rendered *then*, is different from the second, which has the same rendering. The first relates to time, the second has the force of our word *therefore*. The Sanhedrim say, "Thou hast used language consistent only with equality with God, Art thou, *therefore*, his Son?" To this Jesus replies

with the same candour as to the former question, "Ye say that I am." His answer, as we have before seen, was a direct affirmative, and equivalent to "Yes, I am." And so the council understood it, and cried out, "What need we any further witnesses? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth."

The question might now be asked, why the Sanhedrim judged the words just spoken as being sufficient for his condemnation. Luke affords us no explanation. But on turning to Matthew and Mark, we learn that the last words of Jesus were regarded by the Sanhedrim as blasphemous, and therefore sufficient to justify them in pronouncing sentence of death against him, in accordance with the Mosaic code.

70. Well may we exclaim, on closing our summary of evidence: "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful." We derived from John most of the proofs given above, that Jesus taught that he was both the Messiah and the Son of God, and that the Jews were ignorant of the oneness of these two personages. We derived altogether from John, the proof that the Jews regarded the claim to Sonship as blasphemous, and too preposterous to be established by the performance of miracles and mighty works. We learn, too, from John, that the Jews attempted to stone our Lord whenever he claimed to be the Son of God. Now, Luke, who had not said a word about the distinction that the Jews had made between the Christ and the

Son of God, shows, nevertheless, that they observed this distinction in the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrim. Moreover, Luke shows that although the Sanhedrim made this distinction, Jesus himself did not. For when he acknowledged his Messiahship he acknowledged his Sonship also; and thus made his confession consistent with the whole scope of his previous teaching. We notice, too, that Matthew and Mark supply an important omission of Luke, who does not tell why the Sanhedrim regarded our Lord's acknowledgment of his Sonship to be a sufficient ground for his condemnation. The omission they supply by stating that the council construed the acknowledgment into blasphemy. And thus Matthew and Mark harmonize with John, while they are supplementing Luke. We notice, yet again, that the accounts of the first two Evangelists of the trial in the house of Caiaphas appear, at first glance, to conflict with what had been said elsewhere, of the distinction made by the Jews between the Messiah and the Son of God. But Luke removes the difficulty, by showing that there were two separate specifications, which have been consolidated into one by Matthew and Mark.

How is it possible to believe that this most perfect, and yet most complex and intricate harmony among the Evangelists is the result of a wicked collusion? There can be but one rational explanation of this cordial agreement, amidst seeming differences, and that is, that the variant language and style of the Evangelists were controlled and directed by the Spirit of

God. The royal Psalmist could run his fingers over his harp of many strings, and make the peculiar and distinctive notes uttered by them severally blend in delightful unison, and form a concord of sweet sounds. Thus the Spirit of truth, while permitting the greatest differences of phraseology, manner and arrangement in the gospel narratives, has so guided and controlled their peculiar and distinctive statements, as to blend them into consistent and concordant union. The supervision of the Spirit can alone account for the fact, that discrepancies of narration are real agreements, that differences are concealed harmonies, and that contradictions are strong confirmations.

“Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.”

THE END.



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The crucifixion of Christ.

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