

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION TO LUKE 17

Ver. 1. *Then said he unto his disciples*, etc.] In the Alexandrian copy, and in “three” of Beza's exemplars it is read, “his disciples”; and so read the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; that is, Jesus said to his disciples what follows, as the Syriac and Persic versions express, and the latter reads, he said “again”. About the time that he delivered the above parable concerning the rich man and Lazarus, he repeated to his disciples what he had before said to them on another occasion, (~~4087~~ Matthew 18:7)

it is impossible but that offences will come; considering the decree of God, the malice of Satan, the wickedness of men, the corruption both of their principles and practices. The Ethiopic version renders it, “temptation will come”; that which will be trying to the faith of the saints, and a stumblingblock to weak minds, as reproach and persecution, errors, and heresies, and the evil lives of professors:

but woe [unto him] through whom they come; (see Gill on “~~4087~~ Matthew 18:7”)

Ver. 2. *It were better for him that a millstone*, etc.] (See Gill on “~~4086~~ Matthew 18:6”) and (See Gill on “~~4092~~ Mark 9:42”).

Ver. 3. *Take heed to yourselves*. etc.] Or to one another, that ye neither give, nor take offence. Take heed to your spirits, to your doctrines, walk, and conversation, that you give no offence to any, that you are not stumbled by what you shall see in, and meet with from others:

if thy brother trespass against thee; (see Gill on “~~4085~~ Matthew 18:15”)

rebuke him; privately, and proceed according to the rules there directed to; lay his sin before him; endeavour not only to convince him of the fact, but of the evil of it; how contrary to the will of God; how unbecoming the Gospel of Christ, and the profession he makes; how hurtful to himself, as well as injurious to his brother; and how such evils give the enemy occasion to reproach the saints, to speak evil of the ways of God, and

blaspheme the name and doctrines of Christ, and harden sinners in their sins, as well as stumble weak Christians, and sadden the hearts of the righteous.

And if he repent; if he is made sensible of his evil, and is truly sorry for it, and ingenuously acknowledges it:

forgive him; the injury committed against a man's self; and pray to God for him, for an application of his pardoning grace and mercy to him; and comfort him with the hope of forgiveness with God, by the gracious promises and declarations of pardon made to such persons; drop all resentment and anger, and behave towards him with all sweetness of temper, and affability, and respect: and this is to be done immediately, as soon as a man repents: and so say the Jews ^{f520};

“says R. Chanina bar Papa, whoever commits a thing, and repents of it, they forgive him directly; as it is said, (^{<3985}Malachi 3:5) “and fear not me”: lo, they that fear me, forgive immediately:”

such were reckoned good men, men fearing God.

Ver. 4. *And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day*, etc.] For good men are frequently apt to fall into sin, and offend both God and man; (see ^{<1246}Proverbs 24:16) “and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent”; as often as he sins, and appears to be truly sensible of it, and humble for it, and makes acknowledgments of it; and not only barely in words professes his concern for it, but there is reason to believe that he is heartily grieved for it, and to hope that he will behave better for the future:

thou shalt forgive him; this seems to be occasioned by Peter's putting such a question to Christ, how often a brother might sin against him, and he forgive him; (see ^{<1821}Matthew 18:21,22). The Jews plead for great tenderness and readiness to forgive penitents, when they ask for forgiveness; which they insist upon should be done: they say ^{f521},

“it is forbidden an injured person to be cruel, and not forgive; this is not the way of the seed of Israel: but when he that has done the injury asks of him, and prays him once and again, and he knows that he has returned from his sin, and hath repented of his evil, he ought to forgive him; and whoever makes haste to forgive, is praiseworthy.”

But then, they say ^{f522},

“if he brings all the rams of Nebaioth that are in the world, he is not to have pardon, unless he asks it of him.”

And they seem also to have set times for it, as well as restrain the frequent repetition of it: they observe ^{f523};

“if a man returns by repentance, in the intermediate time, (i.e. as the gloss explains it, between the beginning of the year, or New Year's Day, and the day of atonement,) they pardon him; but if he does not return in the intermediate time, though he brings all the rams of Nebaioth in the world, they do not pardon him.”

A man that was always forgiving, was reckoned by them an extraordinary man: it is said ^{f524} of Mar Zutra bar Nachman, that he was מְוַיָּלְכֵבֵי יוֹמָם, “forgiving every day”; but yet they do not seem to care to carry it to so great a length, and to repeat it so often as our Lord directs; they allow a man to forgive three times, but not a fourth; (see Gill on “~~4182~~ Matthew 18:22”).

Ver. 5. *And the apostles said unto the Lord*, etc.] Either on account of what was now said by Christ concerning offences, and forgiving injuries; being conscious to themselves of their own weakness to withstand temptations; and fearful lest they should be stumbled and offended with what they should meet with; or that they should give offence to others: and being also sensible of what spirits they were of, and of the difficulties of conquering them, and mastering the resentment of their minds, when injured and provoked; and also the necessity of divine assistance, of having fresh supplies of grace, and of having their graces, and particularly faith, strengthened, and drawn into a lively exercise; or on account of their not being able to cast out a devil from one that was possessed, (~~4179~~ Matthew 17:19,20) when words, to the same purpose, were spoken by Christ, as in the following verse; on occasion of one or other of these, though more likely the former, the apostles addressed Christ in this manner,

increase our faith; both the faith of working miracles, and the grace of believing in him: by which, as they express their sense of the weakness, and imperfection of their faith; and their great desire to have it increased, which might be for their comfort, and his glory; so they acknowledge his divine power, and that he is the author and finisher of faith; and that as the

beginning, so the increase of it is from him: wherefore faith is not of a man's self, or the produce of man's freewill and power, but is the gift of God; and even where it is, it is not in man to increase it, or add to it, or to draw it forth into exercise; this also is the operation of God. And if the apostles had need to put up such a petition to Christ, much more reason have other men.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said*, etc.] In answer to the disciples. The Syriac version leaves out the word "Lord": and the Persic version, in the room of it reads, "Jesus":

if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed; (see Gill on "^{ⲁⲟⲓⲃ}Matthew 17:20")

ye might say unto this sycamine tree; which was near at hand; for in Galilee, where Christ now was, such trees grew, especially in lower Galilee: hence those words ^{f525};

“from Caphar-Haniah, and upwards, all the land which does not bear ^{ⲁⲓⲙⲙⲟⲥ}, “sycamines”, is upper Galilee, and from Caphar-Haniah, and downwards, all which does bear “sycamines”, is lower Galilee.”

This, by Maimonides ^{f526}, is said to be a wild fig tree; but the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, the “mulberry tree”: and that the sycamine and mulberry tree are the same, Beza shows from Dioscorides, Athenaeus, and Galen; though whether it is the same with the sycamore in (^{ⲁⲓⲟⲩⲁ}Luke 19:4) is not certain. The first of these writers makes them to be the same; and the last asserts they are different, and so they should seem by their different names.

Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you: for such a tree to be plucked up by the root at a word speaking, is very wonderful and miraculous, and beyond the power of nature; and much more for it to remove into the sea, and plant itself there, where trees grow not; and to believe this should be done, and such a word of command obeyed, one should think required very great faith; and yet, if it was but as a grain of mustard seed, which is very small, it might be done. The design is to show, what great things are done by faith, and what an increase of it they should have.

Ver. 7. *But which of you having a servant ploughing*, etc.] In order to keep the disciples humble in the performance of such miraculous works; and that they might not imagine they could have any thing at the hands of God by merit; and to excite them to go on from one duty to another; and never think they have done, or done enough, or more than what is their duty, Christ delivers the following parable.

Which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle; or “sheep”, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; or a “ploughman”, or a “shepherd”, as the Ethiopic version; which are both servile works, and done in the field: not that the disciples had any such servants under them, though the words are directed to them, for they had left all, and followed Christ; nor were they brought up to husbandry, but most of them in the fishing trade; Christ only puts this for instance, and supposes such a case:

will say unto him by and by; or straightway, immediately, directly,

when he is come from the field; and has done ploughing, and feeding his cattle, sheep, or cows, or whatever they are; as soon as ever he comes home; or “first”, as the Persic version; the first thing he shall say to him, upon his return from thence,

go; to the other side of the room, and to the table there ready spread, and furnished; or “go up”, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it; go up to the upper room where they used to dine or sup; (see ^{<2212>}Luke 22:12) or “come in”, as the Persic version renders it; and which some learned men observe, is the sense of the Greek word here used; come into the house,

and sit down to meat? or fall, and lie down on the couch, as was the custom in those countries at eating.

Ver. 8. *And will not rather say to him*, etc.] Or, “will he not say to him?” it is very likely, it is more agreeable to the language of a master, and the condition of a servant, that he should say to him,

make ready wherewith I may sup: by dressing the food, spreading the table, and putting the food on it; for it was the business of servants to prepare, as at the passover, (see Gill on ^{<4057>}Matthew 26:17) so at ordinary suppers:

and gird thyself and serve me; by giving him drink, or whatsoever he called for: and as they used to wear long garments in those countries, servants

girded them up about their loins, that they might be fit for service, expedite in it, and perform it more readily, and with greater ease and dispatch:

till I have eaten and drunken; finished his meal:

and afterward thou shalt eat and drink: the, Persic and Ethiopic versions read in the imperative, “then eat thou and drink”. If he was an Hebrew servant, he ate and drank the same as his master did: for so one of the Jewish canons runs ^{f527};

“every Hebrew servant, or handmaid, their master is obliged to make them equal to himself “in food and in drink”, in clothing, and in dwelling, as it is said, (^{f516}Deuteronomy 15:16) “because he is well with thee”: wherefore, thou shalt not eat fine bread, and he eat coarse bread, nor drink old wine and he drink new wine, etc.”

And even a Canaanitish servant was to be provided with proper food and drink: they say indeed ^{f528},

“it is lawful to cause a Canaanitish servant to serve with rigour: but though the law is such, the property of mercy, and the ways of wisdom are, that a man should be merciful, and not make his yoke heavy on his servant, nor oppress him; but cause him to “eat and drink” of all sorts of food and drink; and the former wise men used to give their servants of all sorts of food that they themselves ate of;”

which was using them as they did their Hebrew servants: yea, it is added;

“and they gave their beasts, and their servants, food, before they ate their own meal;”

but this was not commonly done: it does not appear to have been the practice in Christ's time; nor was it necessary.

Ver. 9. *Doth he thank that servant*, etc.] As if he had done him a favour, and what he was not obliged to;

because he did the things that were commanded him? for, as a servant, he ought to do them, and in so doing does but his duty: he may indeed be commended for it, but not thanked:

I trow not; or “I think not”; it do not seem so to me, as if he would, or, as though it was proper and necessary he should. The Ethiopic version leaves out this last clause.

Ver. 10. *So likewise ye*, etc.] This is the accommodation and application of the parable to the disciples of Christ, who whether ministers or private believers, are as servants, and should be as laborious as the ploughman, and the shepherd; and as their condition is, so their conduct should be like theirs: the employment of the ministers of the word lies in reading, prayer, meditation, and study; in preaching the word, and administering the ordinances; and in performing other duties of their office: and every private believer has business to do, which lies in the exercise of grace, as the work of faith, the labour of love and patience, of hope: and in the discharge of duty with regard to themselves, in their families, the church, and the world; and these servants should be continually employed; and when one work is done, another is to be taken in hand: saints should be always believing, hoping, waiting, loving, and doing one good work or another; as preaching or praying, reading, hearing, and doing acts of benevolence and charity; and God and Christ are to be served by them in the first place, and then themselves: but some that would be called the servants of Christ, mind their own bellies, and not the service of Christ at all; others in the service of Christ, seek nothing but themselves; others are for the serving themselves first, and then Christ; but the true servants of Christ, serve him in the first place, and seek first his righteousness, and his kingdom, and the honour of it, believing that all other things shall be added to them: and when these have done all that are commanded them, they are not to think their service thank worthy: as for instance, if the service be preaching the word, a man so employed ought to be thankful to God, that has bestowed ministerial gifts upon him, and makes his labours useful, and uses him as an instrument, to do much good to the souls of men, and for his glory, and has put such an honour upon him; but he is not to expect thanks from God, for his most diligent and faithful performance of his work, or imagine that he merits any thing at his hand thereby: or if the business be hearing the word, a man should be thankful to God, for the word, ordinances, and ministers, for liberty of waiting upon God in such a way; for health of body, and inclination of mind, for such service; and for all the good, profit, and advantage, he gains hereby; but he is not to think that he lays God under any obligation to him by so doing, or deserves thanks, or a favour from him on account of it: or if the employment be prayer, a man should be greatly

thankful to the God of all grace, that there is a throne of grace for him to come to; and for a mediator, who is the way of access to God; and for the assistance of the Spirit in prayer; and for all the blessings which are given, as an answer of prayer; but he is never to entertain such a thought, that God is obliged to him for his prayers, or should thank him for them: or if the work be doing of good with worldly substance, such should be thankful to God for their substance he has given them, and for hearts to make use of it; but ought not to conclude, that they hereby merit his favour, or that this is any gain to him: but on the other hand, Christ directs his disciples, saying,

when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you; as preaching, or hearing, or reading, or praying, and every other act of divine and religious worship; or all acts of justice and benevolence among men; every duty both for matter and manner, as it should be, according to the will of God, from right principles, and to right ends, and by the assistance of the Spirit and grace of God:

say we are unprofitable servants; not in such sense as unregenerate men are, who are disobedient, and to every good work reprobate and unfit, (⁴⁸¹²Romans 3:12 ⁵⁰¹⁶Titus 1:16) or as the slothful servant, who did not what his Lord commanded, (⁴²⁵⁰Matthew 25:30). Nor is this the sense, that they are unprofitable to men; for they may be, and are very useful and serviceable to men, and to the saints; but that they are so to God, by whose grace and strength they are what they are, and do what they do; and can give nothing to him but what is his own, and his due; and so can lay him under no obligation to them, nor merit any thing from him; no, not even thanks, and much less heaven and eternal life. The Persic version, quite contrary to the sense of the words reads, “we are pure or clean servants, for we have done”, etc. and the Ethiopic version leaves out the word “unprofitable”, and reads “we are servants”; we acknowledge ourselves to be servants:

we have done that which is our duty to do; wherefore, as diligence is highly proper, and reasonable in doing the work of the Lord, humility is necessary, that a man may not arrogate that to himself, which do not belong to him; or boast of his performances; or place any dependence on them: or have his expectations raised on account of them; since when he has done the most and best, he has done but what he should, and what he

was obliged to, and in that is greatly deficient: a saying somewhat like this, is used by R. Jochanan ben Zaccai^{f529};

“if thou hast learned the law much, do not ascribe the good to thyself; for, for this wast thou created.”

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem*, etc.] That is, Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it; though the Ethiopic version reads in the plural, “they going to Jerusalem passed”, etc. that is, the disciples, or Christ with his disciples; who was now going thither to eat his last passover, and suffer and die for his people:

that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee; or “between Samaria and Galilee”; as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; he steered his course through the borders of both these countries; and as he passed, Samaria was on his right hand, and Galilee on the left.

Ver. 12. *And as he entered into a certain village*, etc.] Whether in Samaria or Galilee, is not certain; perhaps it bordered on both, since there were both Jews and Samaritans in it, as appears by what follows; and since Christ was passing between both places:

there met ten men that were lepers; who either were confined to this place, this village, for they might not be in the larger cities, and walled towns; (see Gill on “^{<418D>}Matthew 8:2”) or else having heard that Jesus of Nazareth was going to such a place, got together, and met him as he entered in it, in hope of being cured by him:

which stood afar off; from Christ, by reason of their uncleanness, as they were obliged to by the law, in (^{<4134>}Leviticus 13:46).

Ver. 13. *And they lifted up their voices*, etc.] Together, and cried aloud, being at a distance, that they might be heard; as well as to express their vehement desire, and great importunity to be cleansed; (see ^{<4107>}Judges 9:7).

And said, Jesus, Master; or “Rabbi, Jesus”, thou great Master in Israel; who art a teacher come from God, and who dost surprising miracles, and art able to cure us:

have mercy on us; and cleanse us from our leprosy; we believe thou art able, if thou wilt; show compassion to us, miserable objects, as they were; their faith was the same with that of the other leper, in (^{<418D>}Matthew 8:2).

Ver. 14. *And when he saw [them], he said unto them,* etc.] When upon their loud cry he looked up, and towards them, and saw what a condition they were in, his compassion moved towards them, and he ordered them to do as follows;

go show yourselves unto the priests. The Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, “to the priest”, as in (^{408A}Matthew 8:4) whose business it was to inspect into this matter, to see whether a person was healed, or not; and if he was to, pronounce him clean, when a gift was offered according to the law, in (^{484B}Leviticus 14:2-4). So careful was Christ that the ceremonial law, which was as yet in force, might be strictly observed: though these ten lepers could not be viewed and examined by the priest together, but one after another; for so is the tradition of the Jews ^{f530},

“two leprosy are not looked upon together, whether they be in one man, or in two men; but he views one, and either shuts him up, or declares or dismisses him, and then goes to a second.”

And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed; before they came to the priests, whilst they were in the way, they at once found themselves entirely healed of their disease; as Christ very likely gave them reason to believe they should; whereby his power was seen in it; and it was a clear case, that it was owing to him, and not the priests, that they had their cleansing. On the nature of the disease of leprosy, and of the likeness there is between that and sin, and of the agreement between the cleansing of a leper, and the cleansing of a sinner by the blood of Christ, (see Gill on ⁴⁵²Luke 5:12”). Here it may be observed, that as these lepers had a cure while they were in the way of their duty, going, as Christ ordered them; so generally speaking, it is in the way of means, in an attendance on ordinances, that souls receive a spiritual cure from Christ: the man at Bethesda's pool waited long, and had healing at last; it is good to watch at Wisdom's gates, and wait at the posts of her door; faith in Christ, whereby the heart is purified, comes by hearing the word of God.

Ver. 15. *And one of them, when he saw that he was healed* etc.] When he felt perfect soundness in his body, and perceived that he was restored to his health, and saw with his eyes that the leprosy was gone from him, which must be visible enough:

turned back; either immediately, before he went to the priests; or afterwards, came back to Jesus, when he had been with them:

and with a loud voice glorified God; Jesus Christ, who is truly God, and whose proper divinity might be seen in this miracle; (see ^{<1287>}2 Kings 5:7) or God the Father, through Christ, and for his sake, by ascribing his cure to his power, and by returning thanks for it, and acknowledging with gratitude, Christ to be the author of it; which he did, with as loud a voice, as he cried to him for mercy; that all might know the miracle that was wrought, and join in giving glory to Christ: and it was but one of them that did so; gratitude is a rare thing, it is found but in few; unthankfulness cleaves to most persons; it is the general character of men to be unthankful and unholy; multitudes, even all men, share in the providential goodness of God, yet few take notice of, and are thankful for it; God is therefore said to be good, to the unthankful and to the evil, (^{<165>}Luke 6:35). Few there are who are of Jacob's spirit, that judge themselves unworthy of the least of mercies, and are heartily thankful for every favour: and this the leper did, when he was sensible that he was healed; no man will seek after a cure, till he sees, or is sensible of his sickness and his wound; and when he does, he will inquire after, and make use of the proper means of healing; and when he has got a cure, he is, or at least ought to be, thankful for it: and so it is in spiritual things, the whole need not a physician, or see no need of the physician, Christ; but those who are sick, and sensible of the sickness of sin, do; and when they perceive that their diseases are healed, and their sins forgiven, then they call upon their souls, and all within them, to bless the Lord, who has done this for them: and it becomes such who are cured of the leprosy of sin, to glorify God; not only with their mouths, by bringing their offering and sacrifice of praise to him, as the leper by the law was obliged to bring his offering, at the time of his cleansing; but by deeds also, with their bodies, and with their spirits; by a holy, humble, and spiritual conversation before men, signified by the leper's washing himself, and clothes, and shaving off all his hair; and by attending on the word and ordinances, by a professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, signified by the blood being put upon the tip of the right ear of the leper, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot, (^{<1844>}Leviticus 14:14).

Ver. 16. *And he fell down on his face at his feet*, etc.] For being cleansed, he might draw nigh unto Jesus; and which he did, with the most profound respect unto him, and reverence of him; and having a deep sense of the favour he had received from him, prostrated himself in this manner before him:

giving him thanks; who had shown compassion to him, had exerted his power on him, and had favoured him with such a singular mercy, as restoring him to health:

and he was a Samaritan; this is particularly remarked by the evangelist, because the Samaritans were reckoned by the Jews, to be ignorant and irreligious persons, and no better than Heathens; and yet this man behaved as a religious good man, who had a sense of his mercy, knew his duty, and his obligations, and performed them; when the other nine, who very likely were all Jews, acted a very stupid and ungrateful part.

Ver. 17. *And Jesus answering, said*, etc.] After the Samaritan had paid his respects to him, and made his acknowledgments in this grateful way:

were there not ten cleansed? so many applied for a cure, and so many had it:

but where are the nine? or nine of them; here was one, but where were the rest? they went and showed themselves to the priests, and then returned to their several places of abode, and took no notice of their physician and Saviour, to make any returns to him. They are many, that are cleansed by the blood of Christ; his blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins; and by his righteousness, he justifies many; at least there are many who profess themselves to be cleansed by him, and yet there are but few that glorify him, by keeping close to the rule of his word, by giving up themselves to the churches of Christ, and by walking with them in the ordinances of the Gospel: Christ's flock, which is separated from the world, and walks in Gospel order, within the inclosures of it, is but a little flock; they are but a few names in Sardis, who have not defiled themselves, with corruptions in doctrine and discipline; and these few are often such, who have been the worst of men, the vilest of sinners, from whom it has been least expected, they should glorify Christ: publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel church state, embrace its doctrines, and submit to its ordinances, when the Scribes and Pharisees, self-righteous persons, do not: ingratitude is a crime many are guilty of, and it is highly resented by Christ; instances of gratitude are few, but as one in ten; now and then a single Samaritan, a stranger, one that has been a vile sinner, comes and acknowledges the grace of Christ in cleansing him; comes to the ministers of Christ, and to the churches, and tells them what God has done for his soul: but where are the rest, the many others, who have received

spiritual advantages, and never come to relate them, and express by words and deeds, thankfulness for them?

Ver. 18. *There are not found that returned*, etc.] Or it do not appear, that any have returned:

to give glory to God; for inasmuch as they did not return to give thanks to Christ, and acknowledge him the author of their cure and cleansing they did not give glory to God:

save this stranger; for so the Samaritans were reckoned by the Jews, even as the Gentile, aliens from the commonwealth, of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise. Christ speaks in the language and dialect of the nation, and yet we find sometimes, that, *ytwk*, “a Cuthite”, or a Samaritan, is distinguished from, *yrkn*, “a stranger”, Or a Gentile: they might set up their beasts in the inns of the Samaritans, but not in the inns of “strangers”; and a man might let out his bath to a Samaritan, but not to a “stranger”^{f531}; but this must be understood of them in times past, before they were found out to be idolaters; when, as Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says^{f532}, they were as Israelites in all things, and kept the law and the precepts of it, and even more exactly than the Israelites themselves did^{f533}; but afterwards a Samaritan was reckoned a Gentile, and so he was in the times of Christ; and therefore he calls a Samaritan a stranger: that tradition of the Jews, requires some notice and consideration^{f534}; all are defiled

“with leprosies, except *pyrknh*, “strangers”, and the proselyte of the gate.”

And yet here is a stranger among the Jews, and reckoned unclean, on account of leprosy, and sent with them to show himself to the priest.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto him, arise*, etc.] For, as yet, he lay at his feet upon his face, adoring and praising him; nor did he attempt to rise till Jesus bid him: adding,

go thy way; to thine own country, town, or city, and to thy friends and relations, and about thy business:

thy faith hath made thee whole: or “saved thee”, in soul, as well as body; that is, Christ, the object of faith, had saved him; for his salvation is ascribed to his faith, not as the efficient cause of it, but as that was wrought in him, and drawn forth from him, and exercised by him, in

receiving this blessing from Christ, the author of it, even both corporeal and spiritual salvation.

Ver. 20. *And when he was demanded of the Pharisees*, etc.] Or “asked” by them; who expected the Messiah, and that when he was come he would set up a temporal kingdom, and deliver them from the Roman yoke; when they should enjoy great liberty, peace, and prosperity; so that they might put the following question to Christ in a serious manner, agreeably to these expectations: or it may be occasioned by the frequent mention that had been made of the kingdom of God by John, and Christ, and his disciples in their ministry, and so be put in a way of derision; or, as most of their questions were, with a view to ensnare or puzzle:

when the kingdom of God should come; either the kingdom that God had promised, or the kingdom of the Messiah, who is truly God, that had been so often spoken of by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles. The Ethiopic version reads, “the kingdom of heaven”, which is the same with the kingdom of God; for these phrases are promiscuously used. This question they need not have asked, had they carefully attended to the writings of the Old Testament they had in their hands; and had they diligently observed the signs of the times, in which they lived; and had they seriously regarded the ministry and miracles of Christ among them; from these things, they might have concluded, not only that the time was at hand, when the kingdom of God should be set up, but that it was already come: they might have observed, that not only the harbinger of the Messiah was come, who was John the Baptist; but that the Messiah himself was among them, by the many wonderful things which he wrought among them, and by the many Scripture prophecies which were fulfilled in him; they might have seen that the sceptre was manifestly departing from Judah; that all power and authority were falling into the hands of the Romans; and that only a mere shadow and appearance of it were among them; they might have known, by calculation, that the time fixed in Daniel's prophecy, for the coming of the Messiah, was now up, and therefore he must be come; and they had very good reason to believe that Jesus was he.

He answered them and said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation; or so as to be observed by the eye, or to be distinguished when it comes as the kingdoms of this world, by outward pomp and splendour, by temporal riches, external honours, and worldly power and grandeur; though it so far came with observation, that had they had eyes to

see, they might have observed that it was come, by what they saw done by Christ, particularly the power that he showed in the dispossessing devils out of the bodies of men; (see ^{<4023>}Matthew 12:28). The Syriac version reads, “with observations”; and some understand the words of the observances of the ceremonies of the law, of days, months, and years, and the difference of meats, and the like, which the kingdom of God is not in, and which were to cease upon its coming; but the former sense is best.

Ver. 21. *Neither shall they say*, etc.] Or shall it be said by any, making their observations, and pointing to this, or that place:

lo here, or lo there; in this, or that place, country or city, the kingdom of God is set up; the throne of the Messiah is there; and there are the “regalia”, or ensigns of his regal power; no such thing will fall under the observations of man, not but that this would be said, and was said by some persons, as it is suggested it should, (^{<4073>}Luke 17:23) and it appears from (^{<4025>}Matthew 24:26) that some would say he was in such a wilderness, and others, that he was in some private retirement in a house, or that he was in such a town or city; as particularly it was said in Adrian's time, that he was in a place called Bither, where Bar Cochab set up himself for the Messiah: but the sense of the words is, that no such thing ought to be said; and if it was said, it would not be true; nor should it be credited: and the Cambridge copy of Beza's adds, “believe not”; as in (^{<4025>}Matthew 24:26)

for behold the kingdom of God is within you: in the elect of God among the Jews, in their hearts; it being of a spiritual nature, and lying in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; in the dispossession of Satan, the strong man armed; in the putting down of the old man, sin, with its deceitful lusts, from the throne; and in setting up a principle of grace, as a governing one; and so escapes the observation of natural men, and cannot be pointed at as here, or there: hence it appears, that the work of grace is an internal thing; it is wrought in the hearts of men; it has its seat in the inward parts, and is therefore called the inner, and the hidden man: it does not lie in words, in an outward profession of religion: it is oil in the vessel of the heart, and is distinct from the lamp of a visible profession; it does not lie in external works and duties, but it is an inward principle of holiness in the soul, or spirit of man, produced there by the Spirit of God, and is therefore called by his name, (^{<4016>}John 3:6) and it also appears to be a very glorious thing, since it is signified by a kingdom: it is a rich treasure; it is gold tried in the fire, which makes rich; it is an estate,

that good part, and portion, which can never be taken away; it is preferable to the greatest portion on earth men can enjoy; even the largest and richest kingdom in the world is not to be compared with it; it is a kingdom which cannot be moved; and as it is glorious in itself, it makes such glorious who are partakers of it: “the king's daughter is all glorious within”, (~~1953~~ Psalm 45:13) and it is high in the esteem of God; it is the hidden man of the heart, but it is in his sight; it is in his view, and is in his sight of great price: it is likewise evident from hence, that it has great power and authority in the soul; it has the government in it; it reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life; and by it, Christ, as king of saints, dwells and reigns in his people. Now this is not to be understood of the Scribes and Pharisees, as if they had any such internal principle in them, who were as painted sepulchres, and had nothing but rottenness and corruption in them: but the sense is, that there were some of the people of the Jews, of whom the Pharisees were a part, who had been powerfully wrought upon under the ministry of John, Christ, and his apostles; and were so many instances of efficacious grace, and of the kingdom of God, and of his Gospel coming with power to them. Though the words may be rendered,

the kingdom of God is among you; and the meaning be, that the king Messiah was already come, and was among them, and his kingdom was already set up, of which the miracles of Christ were a full proof; and if they could not discern these signs of the times, and evident appearances of the kingdom of God among them, they would never be able to make any observation of it, hereafter, or elsewhere.

Ver. 22. *And he said unto his disciples*, etc.] Who also were expecting a worldly kingdom, and external honours, and temporal emoluments, and riches; and therefore to take off their minds from these things, and that they might not have their expectations raised this way, but, on the other hand, look for afflictions and persecutions, he observes to them,

the days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the son of man; *j yçmh twmy*, “the days of the Messiah”, a phrase frequently used in Jewish writings; that is, when they should be glad to enjoy one such a day in the personal presence of Christ, as they now did; and instead of looking forward for happy days, in a temporal sense, they would look back upon the days they have enjoyed with Christ, when he was in person among them, and wish they had one of those days again; when besides his corporeal presence, and spiritual communion with him, and the advantage

of his ministry and miracles, they had much outward peace and comfort: whereas in those days nothing but afflictions and persecutions abode them, wherever they went; so that by these words Christ would have them to understand, that they were not to expect better times, but worse, and that they would be glad of one of the days they now had, and in vain wish for it:

and ye shall not see [it], or enjoy it. Moreover, days and opportunities of public worship, of praying to the Lord, of singing his praise, of hearing his word, and of attending on his ordinances, may be called days of the son of man, or Lord's days; (see <4010> Revelation 1:10) even the first days of weeks, on which days the apostles, and primitive churches, met together for religious worship: and these may very well be called days of the son of man, since, on those days, he first appeared to his disciples, after his resurrection, (<4010> John 20:19,26) and on the same days his disciples and followers met together to preach in his name, to hear his Gospel, and to commemorate his sufferings and death, (<4010> Acts 20:7 <4010> 1 Corinthians 16:1,2) and still continue to do so; and seeing he often meets with his people at such seasons and opportunities, fills them with his Spirit, communicates his grace, and indulges them with fellowship with himself, which make those days desirable ones: but sometimes so violent has been the persecution of the saints, that they have not been able, for a long time, to enjoy one of those days openly, and with freedom, though greatly desired by them; which may be considered as a fulfilment, at least in part, of this prediction of our Lord's: and therefore, whenever this is the case, it should not be thought strange; it is no other than what Christ has foretold should be: and it may teach us to prize, make use of, and improve such days and opportunities, whilst we have them, we know not how soon our teachers may be removed into corners, when we shall wish in vain for them; and seasons of hearing them, as is here suggested: sad it is to know the worth of Gospel opportunities, by the want of them!

Ver. 23. *And they shall say unto you, see here, or see there*, etc.] That is, there is Christ; and in two of Beza's exemplars, the word Christ is added as in (<4010> Matthew 24:23) from whence it seems to be transcribed: and the sense is, it shall be said by one or another; Christ is in such a place, or he is in such a place, and he will quickly appear, and deliver the people of the Jews out of all their distresses and calamities by the Romans,

Go not after them nor follow [them]: the last clause, "nor follow them", is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions; the meaning is, give no credit to

them; as if Christ was come again in person, and was in such a place, do not go along with them, where they direct, as into the desert, or into the secret chambers; for to follow them will be very dangerous, of bad consequence, as well as vain and fruitless; (see ⁴⁴⁸⁶Acts 5:36,37).

Ver. 24. *For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one [part] under heaven*, etc.] The Syriac version reads, “out of heaven”, and the Arabic version, “in heaven”; which is the seat of lightning, and from whence it arises:

and shineth unto the other part under heaven; enlightens the earth, which is under the heaven: though the sense of the words, as they lie in the original text, seems to be, that as the lightning lightens at one end of the heavens, and shines to the other; which is done at once, in a moment, in a twinkling of the eye, and to which agrees the Ethiopic version;

so shall also the son of man be in his day: which is not to be understood of the swift progress of the Gospel, after his resurrection and ascension, and the pouring forth of his Spirit; but of his sudden coming, first to take vengeance on the Jewish nation for their rejection of him, and then at the last day, to judge both quick and dead. By his day, is meant his kingdom and glory, or his appearance with power, and great glory: Thus we read ^{f535}for Solomon, wt [çb, “in his hour”, that is, in his glory, in the time of his kingdom, when he was in his greatest magnificence.

Ver. 25. *But first must he suffer many things*, etc.] By cruel mockings, spitting, buffeting, scourging, and, at last, death itself; all which must be, and were before his day came, or he entered into his glory, or came in it:

and be rejected of this generation; as the Messiah, and be treated with the utmost scorn and contempt, and in the most base and ignominious manner: being put to the death of the cross, and hanged upon the accursed tree: all which were necessary, “must” be; on account of the purposes and decrees of God; the covenant engagements of Christ; the predictions of the prophets of the Old Testament, and his own; and the salvation of his people.

Ver. 26. *And as it was in the days of Noe*, etc.] Whilst he was building the ark, and before he went into it; for this respects the days of Noah before the flood, and not after it; for he lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years, (⁰⁰²⁸Genesis 9:28)

so shall it be also in the days of the son of man; some time before, and at his coming in power, and great glory, to destroy the Jews, their nation, city, and temple; and as then, so it will be when he shall come in person, at the last day, to destroy the world: the times of Noah's flood, of Jerusalem's destruction, and of the end of the world, bear a great resemblance to each other: and when the son of man comes in either of these senses, then will the kingdom of God come; or then will it appear that the Messiah is come, and has took to himself his great power, and reigns.

Ver. 27. *They did eat, they drank*, etc.] That is, the inhabitants of the old world ate and drank, not merely in a common way, with moderation, and for the support and comfort of life, which is not blameworthy, nor inconsistent with religious exercises; but they lived in an extravagant and luxurious manner; they indulged their sensual appetites, and put away the evil day far from them, that Noah told them of:

they married wives, they were given in marriage; not as should have been done by professors of religion among themselves; but the sons of God, or professors of the true religion, the posterity of Seth took them wives of the daughters of men, of the wicked, of the seed of Cain; and very likely gave their daughters in marriage to the sons of men; (see ^{<CORR>}Genesis 6:2,4) and so they went on in a secure manner, notwithstanding all the remonstrances, warnings, and threatenings of God, by his servant:

until the day that Noe entered into the ark; which he had built by divine direction, for the saving of himself and family, and the creatures that were with him, from the waters of the flood; and this was in the six hundredth year of his life, in the second month, the month of October, and in the seventeenth day of that month; (^{<CORR>}Genesis 7:11,13)

and the flood came and destroyed them all; all the inhabitants of the earth, every living substance, men, cattle, creeping things, and fowls of the heaven; all but Noah, and his wife, and his three sons, and their wives, and the creatures that were with him in the ark: the flood came not of itself, or by chance, or through the influence, or by the concurrence of second causes merely; though these were used, ordered, and directed by the first cause of all things; but it came by the power of God, according to his will; he brought it on the world of the ungodly; (see ^{<CORR>}2 Peter 2:5) The mode of expression is Jewish; it is said of Cain, who is supposed by the Jews to

have lived till the flood, **wpj çw l wbmab**, “the flood came”, and washed him away ^{f536}.

Ver. 28. *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot*, etc.] When he lived in Sodom, and before, and at the time of the destruction of that city with other neighbouring ones:

they did eat, they drank; (see Gill on “^{<-2172>}Luke 17:27”), and (^{<-2169>}Ezekiel 16:49). This is to be understood of the inhabitants of Sodom, and the other cities that perished with it:

they bought, they sold: they traded among themselves, and with their neighbours; and, as it appears from the text referred to, they had no regard to the poor and needy; they made no conscience of defrauding and oppressing them:

they planted; vineyards, and fruit trees; living in a very fruitful soil, like the garden of God, (^{<-0130>}Genesis 13:10)

they builded; houses for themselves and posterity; and thus, as a Jewish writer ^{f537} observes of them, in agreement with our Lord's design in all this, being filled with the increase of the earth, they lived in security, peace, and tranquillity.

Ver. 29. *But the same day Lot went out of Sodom*, etc.] Being plucked and brought from thence by the angels early in the morning; and a fine morning it was; the sun was risen, and shone out upon the earth, as Lot got into Zoar, (^{<-0195>}Genesis 19:15,16,23). “The Jews” ^{f538} say it was the sixteenth day of Nisan:

it rained fire and brimstone from heaven; the Syriac version reads, “the Lord rained”; so it is said in (^{<-0192>}Genesis 19:24) “the Lord rained from the Lord”; Jehovah the Son, rained from Jehovah the Father; or the word of the Lord, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it; and which is no inconsiderable proof of the deity of Christ: and the Persic version here reads, “God rained”; and so this amazing shower of fire and brimstone, and which was a violent storm of thunder and lightning, is ascribed to God in (See Gill on “^{<-0195>}2 Peter 2:6”). The Hebrew word, **tyrpg**, used in (^{<-0192>}Genesis 19:24) though it is rendered in the Targum of Jonathan, **atyrbk**, and by the Septuagint, **ψειον**; both which words signify “sulphur”, or brimstone; and which last word is used here, following the

Greek version; yet it is observed, by some learned men, that it rather signifies “pitch”, or “rosin”, which proceeds from some sort of trees; and indeed, by its derivation, it seems to signify something belonging to or that comes out of the wood of Gopher, of which the ark was made, (⁰⁰⁶⁴Genesis 6:14) which some think to be the pine tree, from whence comes pitch: and this, though it comes from the inside of a tree, may as well be said to be rained from heaven, as brimstone, which is taken out of the bowels of the earth: and the rather, since pitch is sometimes fluid; and especially it being combustible, may be joined with fire, as well as sulphur, or brimstone; though a shower of neither, can be accounted for in an ordinary way, but must be extraordinary and miraculous: the destruction of this city, with others, by fire from heaven, and the lake Asphaltites, being a bituminous and sulphureous one, into which the tract of land they stood upon was converted, are confirmed by the testimonies of Heathen writers; as Tacitus ^{f539}, Solinus ^{f540}, Strabo ^{f541}, Justin ^{f542}, and Pliny ^{f543}; as well as by Josephus ^{f544}, and Philo the Jew ^{f545}.

And destroyed them all; all the inhabitants of Sodom, and all of Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim; and which was an ensample of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the land of Judea. (⁰⁵²³Deuteronomy 29:23) and of the burning of the world, and of the perdition of the wicked in hell, (⁰⁰¹⁶2 Peter 2:6 Jude 7).

Ver. 30. *Even thus shall it be in the day when the son of man is revealed.*] In his power, when he comes to avenge himself on the Jews; and when he is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, at the last day. As in the days of Noah and Lot, men lived in great carnality and security, thoughtless and fearless of danger, so were the Jews before the destruction of their city and temple, buoying themselves up with deliverance to the last; and such will be the times of indolence and supineness, before the coming of the day of the Lord to judgment: and as the destruction of the old world, and men of Sodom, and the adjacent parts, was sudden and unexpected, so was the destruction of Jerusalem, and so will be the burning of the world; that day will come, as a thief in the night: and as in the above calamities, there was a remnant saved, who were taken care of; as Noah and his family in tim ark, and as Lot, and his wife and daughters were snatched out of Sodom, when the rest were destroyed; so when the Christians removed from Jerusalem, and went to Pella, being directed by a divine oracle, then came on the siege of Jerusalem ^{f546}; and when all the elect will be gathered in, and brought to faith and repentance, then shall the earth, and the works in it be burnt up:

and as these judgments were universal, so was that upon the people of the Jews: and such will be the general desolation in the last day.

Ver. 31. *In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop*, etc.] Either for diversion or devotion, when he shall hear that the Roman armies are approaching to Jerusalem, to besiege it:

and his stuff in the house; or “his vessels”, his goods and furniture; or his utensils, and instruments of trade and business:

let him not come down; the inner way of the house, from the top:

to take it away; with him in his flight, but let him descend by the steps, or ladder, on the outside of the house, and make his escape directly to Pella, or the mountains:

and he that is in the field; at work, and has laid down his clothes in some certain part of the field, or at home:

let him likewise not return back; to fetch them, but make the best of his way as he is; (see Gill on “^{<4047>}Matthew 24:17”) and (see Gill on “^{<4048>}Matthew 24:18”).

Ver. 32. *Remember Lot's wife.*] Whose name by the Jews, is said to be Adith, as some ^{f547}; or Irith, as others ^{f548}: and who, they also say, was a native of Sodom; and that the reason of her looking, was either to see what would be the end of her father's house and family ^{f549}; or as others ^{f550}, because her heart yearned after her daughters, and she looked back to see if they followed her; upon which she became a pillar of salt, (^{<01926>}Genesis 19:26) They say ^{f551}, that her bones were burnt with the brimstone, and along with which was salt, into which she was turned, according to (^{<01923>}Deuteronomy 29:23). They often speak of **tymwrs j l m**, “salt of Sodom” ^{f552}; where the gloss says, it is thick and hard, as a stone; and to which they sometimes ^{f553} ascribe this virtue, that it blinds the eyes: and there is a sort of salt, which they call ^{f554} Galilaean salt, of like hardness; and Pliny ^{f555} speaks of salt in the Indies, which they cut out, as stones out of quarries; and that, at Carthis, a town in Arabia, is salt with which they build houses and walls: of a very durable nature it is certain, was this pillar of “salt”, Lot's wife became; for Josephus reports ^{f556}, that he saw this pillar of salt in his time; and Irenaeus asserts ^{f557}, that it was in being when he lived; and modern writers, as Burchardus and Adrichomius, speak of it as still existing; and the Jerusalem “paraphrast” on (^{<01926>}Genesis 19:26) says it

shall endure till the time the resurrection comes, in which the dead shall live: the reason of her becoming a pillar of salt, the Jews say, is, that she sinned by salt, and so was punished by salt; and which is differently related, and in a very fanciful way: one writer ^{f558} reports, that when the angels came, Lot said to her, give me a little salt for these travellers; she replied to him, truly this is a bad custom, which thou bringest to be used in this place; and elsewhere ^{f559} it is said, that upon their coming, she went to all her neighbours, and said to them, give me some salt, for we have travellers; but her intention was, that the men of the city might know them: but leaving those things, our Lord's design in these words, is to instruct his followers by this instance, not to look back in their flight, or to turn back to their houses, to save their goods, when the desolation of Jerusalem was coming on, lest they should suffer in it; and to warn all professors of religion, in all ages, against looking back to things that are behind, or turning their backs on him, in a time of distress and persecution; since such are not fit for the kingdom of God; and in these God has no delight and pleasure.

Ver. 33. *Whosoever shall seek to save his life*, etc.] By fleeing to some strong hold, or by continuing in the metropolis, and strongest city in the nation, Jerusalem:

shall lose it: there he will be in the greatest danger:

and whosoever shall lose his life; or expose it to danger, by fleeing to the mountains, or going to Pella, a small town beyond Jordan, of no strength, and where there might be thought no security;

shall preserve it; he shall be safe; (see Gill on "⁴¹⁶⁵Matthew 16:25").

Ver. 34. *I tell you, in that night*, etc.] Of affliction and calamity, that shall be upon the Jewish nation, and which is before called that day, (⁴⁰⁷³Luke 17:31) and therefore is not to be understood literally of the night:

there shall be two [men] in one bed; this is said agreeably to the time, the night before mentioned, that being the time to be in bed, at rest and asleep; for they that sleep, sleep in the night; and still suggests the security the people of the Jews would be in, at the time of their destruction. The word "men" is not in the text, it is only, "there shall be two in one bed"; and may as well be understood of a man and his wife, since it is not so usual for two men to lie in one bed; and this the rather more strongly expresses the distinguishing providence of God in saving one, and suffering the other to be taken and lost: the words may be rendered, "there shall be two upon one

couch”: that is, sitting together at supper, which was also in the night season: it was the custom of the ancients to sit upon beds, or couches, at meals; and they had a bed, or couch, which held two persons only, and was called Biclinium^{f560}: and so this likewise intimates, that the destruction of the Jews would be at a time when they were thoughtless of it, and were eating and drinking, as in the days of Noah and of Lot, (^{<077>}Luke 17:27,28).

The one shall be taken; by the Roman soldiers:

and the other shall be left; being, by one providence or another preserved; which is mentioned, to show the distinction God will make in his providence, and to encourage believers to trust in it.

Ver. 35. *Two [women] shall be grinding together*, etc.] In (^{<1241>}Matthew 24:41) it is added, “in the mill”; in the house where the mill was, and at one and the same mill; and so the Ethiopic version here, “two shall grind in one mill”: and it was common for two women to grind at one hand mill; and though the word “women” is not in the text, it is rightly put into the translation; since the word used is of the feminine gender, and since grinding was the business of women; and so the Persic version here supplies it, as we do; (see Gill on ^{<4142>}Matthew 24:42”).

The one shall be taken and the other left; the Roman soldiers entering the mill, will lay hold on the one, and carry her away with them, and leave the other; and for which no other reason can be given, but the sovereign will and providence of God, which should overrule and dispose the minds of these men, to act in such a manner.

Ver. 36. *Two men shall be in the field*, etc.] At work there, tilling the ground, or sowing the seed in it, or reaping the corn; which of them soever was the work of the field, at the time of Jerusalem's destruction:

the one shall be taken, and the other left: the circumstances attending these several, instances show, that they cannot be considered as expressive of the use and effect of the preaching of the Gospel, that being the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others, some being effectually called by it, and others being left to die in their sins; since these men and women are said to be either in a bed asleep, or on a couch feasting, or grinding in a mill, or at work in the field, and so not in proper places, and at leisure to hear the Gospel preached. The whole verse is left out in the Ethiopic version, and in some Greek copies; though it is in

the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and in the Complutensian edition, and in some ancient copies, as Beza observes.

Ver. 37. *And they answered and said unto him, where, Lord?* etc.] That is, either the Pharisees put this question to Christ, who demanded of him when the kingdom of God would come, (^{<1717>}Luke 17:20) or rather the disciples, to whom Christ more especially directed his discourse, (^{<1722>}Luke 17:22) who hearing of the distinction that would be made of persons in these dismal times, ask where it should be; not where the persons would be left, but whither the others would be taken, and by whom: and he said unto them,

whersoever the body is; the carcass of the Jewish nation, as at Jerusalem chiefly, and in whatsoever place:

thither will the eagles be gathered together; the Roman army, whose ensign was the eagle; these will come, seize upon them, and take them and devour them, as they did: the Persic version renders it, “vultures”; (see Gill on ^{<4128>}Matthew 24:28”). These words can by no means be understood of sinners fleeing to Christ for eternal life and salvation; nor of the gathering of saints to him, at the last day; for how fitly soever such persons may be compared to “eagles”, the word “body”, or “carcass”, as in (^{<4128>}Matthew 24:28) and which is so read in some copies here, is not so suitable to Christ; and especially at his glorious appearing; and besides, the words are an answer to a question, where such persons would be, who would be taken and destroyed, when others would be left, or preserved; and manifestly refer to the body, or carcass of the Jewish people at Jerusalem, and other fortified places; where they should think themselves safe, but should not be so, the Roman armies gathering about them, and seizing them as their prey: it is yet a more strange interpretation, which is proposed by a very learned man ^{f561}; that by the “eagle” is meant, Christ; and by “the body”, or “carcass”, the church in the times of antichrist; and by “gathering” to it, the coming of Christ: for though Christ may be said to bear and carry his people, as the eagle bears and carries its young upon its wings, which he observes from (^{<1294>}Exodus 19:4 ^{<1521>}Deuteronomy 32:11 ^{<2379>}Isaiah 63:9) yet not a single eagle, but “eagles”, in the plural number, are here mentioned; which shows, that not a single person, as Christ, but many are here intended, even legions of Roman soldiers: nor can the church of Christ be compared to a dead and filthy carcass, in the worst of times, even in the times of antichrist; for however forlorn, distressed, and

afflicted her condition is, she is kept alive, and in some measure pure from antichristian pollutions; and is represented by a woman, to whom two wings of a great eagle are given (wherefore she should rather be designed by the eagles) to fly with into the wilderness, where she is preserved and nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, (~~6624~~ Revelation 12:14). Nor is Christ's coming ever expressed by the gathering of him to his people; but on the other hand, they are always said to be gathered unto him; (see ~~5111~~ 2 Thessalonians 2:1).