

CHAPTER 27

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW 27

Ver. 1. *When the morning was come*, etc.] Or, as soon as it was day, as Luke says, (~~4226~~ Luke 22:66). The sanhedrim had been up all night, which, after eating the passover, they had spent in apprehending, trying, and examining Jesus, and the witnesses against him; and had come to an unanimous vote, that he was guilty of death; upon which they either put Jesus out of the room for a while, or went into another themselves, to consult what further steps should be taken: or if they went home to their own houses, they very quickly got together again, and met in the temple, where they seem to be, (~~4276~~ Matthew 27:5), unless the story of Judas is, by anticipation, inserted here; and in their council chamber, where they led Jesus, and examined him again concerning his being the Son of God; (see ~~4226~~ Luke 22:66), all which shows how intent they were upon this business, and with what eagerness and diligence they pursued it; their feet ran to evil, and they made haste to shed blood. This was the time of their morning prayers, of their saying their phylacteries, and reciting the “shema”, “hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord”, according to their canon, which is this ^{f1622}:

“from what time do they read the “shema” in the morning? from such time that a man can distinguish between blue and white: says R. Eliezer, between blue and green; and he finishes it before the sun shines out. R. Joshua says, before three hours had elapsed:”

but religion, rites, ceremonies, and canons, must all give way to the accomplishment of what their hearts were so much set upon:

all the chief priests and elders of the people. The Syriac and Persic versions leave out the word “all”, but it is retained in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, and that very rightly. The Scribes and elders met at Caiaphas’s house before, (~~4167~~ Matthew 26:57), but it being in the night, they might not be all together; Annas particularly seems to have been absent, (~~4184~~ John 18:24),

but now they all assemble together, as in a case of necessity they were obliged to do: their rule was this ^{f1623};

“the sanhedrim, consisting of seventy and one (as this was), are obliged to sit all of them as one, (or all, and everyone of them,) in their place in the temple; but at what time there is a necessity of their being gathered together, ^{^l wk ^yxbqtm}, “they are all of them assembled”; but, at other times, he who has any business may go, and do his pleasure, and return: yet so it is, that there may not be less than twenty three sitting continually all the time of their sitting; (their usual time of sitting was from the morning daily sacrifice, to the evening daily sacrifice ^{f1624};) one that is under a necessity of going out; this looks upon his companions that remain, and if twenty three remain, he may go out; but if not, he may not, until the other returns.”

This being now a case of necessity, and great importance, they are all summoned and gathered together, unless we except Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus; who yet might be there, though they did not consent to their counsel and deed, as is certain of the former, (^{<4251>}Luke 23:51), these

took counsel against Jesus; God’s holy child Jesus, his anointed, the Messiah; and which was taking counsel against the Lord himself; and so the prophecy in (^{<4910>}Psalm 2:2), had its accomplishment: what they consulted about was

to put him to death; it was not what punishment to inflict upon him, whether scourging or death; that was before determined; they had already condemned him to death: but now they enter into close consultation what death to put him to, and in what manner; whether privately, he being now in their hands; or whether by the means of zealots, or by the Roman magistrate; or whether it should be by stoning, which must have been the case, if they put him to death according to their law; and by their authority; or whether by crucifixion, which they chose as the most ignominious and painful; and therefore determined to deliver him up to the Roman governor, and use their interest with him to put him to death, according to the Roman law.

Ver. 2. *And when they had bound him*, etc.] The captain, and officers, bound him when they first took him, and brought him to Annas, and Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, (^{<4982>}John 18:12,24). Perhaps he might be

unloosed whilst he was examining before the high priest, under a show of freedom to speak for himself; or they might bind him faster now, partly greater security, as he passed through the streets, and partly for his greater reproach; as also, that he might be at once taken to be a malefactor by the Roman judge;

they led him away: the chief priests and elders of the people led him, at least by their servants, and they themselves attending in person, that they might awe the people from attempting a rescue of him, as they passed along; and that they might influence the Roman governor speedily to put him to death; and lest he should be prevailed upon to release him, through his own commiseration, the innocence of Jesus, and the entreaty of his friends.

And delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor; and so fulfilled what Christ had predicted, (⁴⁰⁰⁹Matthew 20:19). This they did, either because the power of judging in cases of life and death was taken away from them; or if it was not, they chose that the infamy of his death should be removed from them, and be laid upon a Gentile magistrate; and chiefly because they were desirous he should die the death of the cross. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions leave out the first name Pontius, and only call him Pilate: the Ethiopic version calls him Pilate Pontinaeus; and Theophylact suggests, that he was so called because he was of Pontus. Philo the Jew ^{f1625} makes mention of him:

“Pilate, says he, was **επιτροπος της Ιουδαιας**, “procurator of Judea”; who not so much in honour of Tiberius, as to grieve the people, put the golden shields within the holy city in the palace of Herod.”

And so Tacitus ^{f1626} calls him the procurator of Tiberius, and Josephus also ^{f1627}. It is said ^{f1628} of him, that falling into many calamities, he slew himself with his own hand, in the times of Caligula, and whilst Publicola and Nerva were consuls; which was a righteous judgment of God upon him for condemning Christ, contrary to his own conscience.

Ver. 3. *Then Judas, which had betrayed him*, etc.] Before, he is described as he that shall, or should, or doth betray him; but now having perpetrated the horrid sin, as he that had done it.

When he saw that he was condemned; that is, that Jesus was condemned, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, either by the Jewish sanhedrim, or

by Pilate, or both; for this narrative concerning Judas may be prophetically inserted here, though the thing itself did not come to pass till afterwards; and the sense be, that when he, either being present during the whole procedure against Christ; or returning in the morning after he had received his money, and had been with his friends; finding that his master was condemned to death by the sanhedrim, who were pushing hard to take away his life; that they had delivered him bound to the Roman governor; and that he, after an examination of him, had committed him to the soldiers to mock, and scourge, and crucify him; and seeing him leading to the place of execution,

repented himself: not for the sin, as committed against God and Christ; but as it brought a load of present guilt and horror upon his mind, and exposed him to everlasting punishment: it was not such a repentance by which he became wiser and better; but an excruciating, tormenting pain in his mind, by which he became worse; therefore a different word is here used than what commonly is for true repentance: it was not a godly sorrow for sin, or a sorrow for sin, as committed against God, which works repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but a worldly sorrow, which issues in death, as it did in him. It did not spring from the love of God, as evangelical repentance does, nor proceed in the fear of God, and his goodness; but was no other than a foretaste of that worm that dieth not, and of that fire which cannot be quenched: it was destitute of faith in Christ; he never did believe in him as the rest of the disciples did; (see ~~John~~ John 6:64,70,71), and that mourning which does not arise from looking to Jesus, or is not attended with faith in him, is never genuine. Judas's repentance was without hope of forgiveness, and was nothing else but horror and black despair, like that of Cain's, like the trembling of devils, and the anguish of damned souls. It looks as if Judas was not aware that it would issue in the death of Christ: he was pushed on by Satan, and his avarice, to hope, that he should get this money, and yet his master escape; which he imagined he might do, either through such a defence of himself, as was not to be gainsaid; or that he would find out ways and means of getting out of the hands of the Jews, as he had formerly done, and with which Judas was acquainted: but now, there being no hope of either, guilt and horror seize his mind, and gnaw his conscience; and he wishes he had never done the accursed action, which had entailed so much distress and misery upon him:

and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders: which was the sum he; had covenanted for, and they had agreed to give him, on condition of delivering Jesus into their hands, which he had done: and it appears from hence, that the money had been accordingly paid him, and he had received it. But he being filled with remorse of conscience for what he had done, feels no quietness in his mind; nor could he save of what he had desired, but is obliged to return it; not from an honest principle, as in the case of true repentance, but on account of a racking and torturing conscience.

Ver. 4. *Saying, I have sinned,* etc.] Here was a confession, and yet no true repentance; for he confessed, but not to the right persons; not to God, nor Christ, but to the chief priests and elders; nor over the head of the antitypical scape goat, not seeking to Christ for pardon and cleansing, nor did he confess and forsake sin, but went on adding sin to sin, and so found no mercy. The same confession was made by a like hardened wretch, Pharaoh, (~~Exod~~ Exodus 9:27). He proceeds and points out the evil he had committed:

in that I have betrayed innocent blood, or “righteous blood”; so the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel read, and some copies; that is, have betrayed an innocent and righteous person, and been the occasion of his blood being about to be shed, and of his dying wrongfully. So God, in his all-wise providence, ordered it, that a testimony should be bore to the innocence of Christ, from the mouth of this vile wretch that betrayed him; to cut off the argument from the Jews, that one of his own disciples knew him to be a wicked man, and as such delivered him into their hands: for though Judas might not believe in him as the Messiah, and the Son of God, at least had no true faith in him, as such; yet he knew, and believed in his own conscience, that he was a good man, and a righteous and innocent one: and what he here says is a testimony of Christ’s innocence, and what his conscience obliged him to; and shows the terrors that now encompassed him about; and might have been a warning to the Jews to have stopped all further proceedings against him; but instead of that,

they said, what is that to us? see thou to that: signifying, that if he had sinned, he must answer for it himself; it was no concern of theirs; nor should they form their sentiments of Christ according to his: they knew that he was a blasphemer, and deserving of death; and whatever opinion he

had of him, it had no weight with them, who should proceed against him as an evildoer, let him think or say what he would to the contrary; and suggest, that he knew otherwise than what he said: so the Syriac and Persic versions render it, “thou knowest”, and the Arabic, “thou knowest better”.

Ver. 5. *And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple*, etc.] Upon the ground, in that part of the temple where they were sitting; in their council chamber, **tyzgh tkçl**, “the paved chamber”, where the sanhedrim used to meet^{f1629}: for it seems they would not take the money of him; and he was determined not to carry it back with him, and therefore threw it down before them, left it,

and departed; from the sanhedrim: and went; out of the temple; not to God, nor to the throne of his grace, nor to his master, to ask pardon of him, but to some secret solitary place, to cherish his grief and black despair,

and hanged himself. The kind and manner of his death, as recorded by Luke in (⁴⁰¹⁸Acts 1:18) is, that “falling headlong, he burst asunder the midst, and all his bowels gushed out”; which account may be reconciled with this, by supposing the rope, with which he hanged himself, to break, when falling; it may be, from a very high place, upon a stone, or stump of a tree; when his belly burst, and his guts came out: or it may be rendered, as it is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, “he was strangled”; and that either by the devil, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks; who, having been in him for the space of two or three days, caught him up into the air, and threw him down headlong; and dashing him on the ground, he burst in the midst, and his bowels gushed out, and the devil made his exit that way: or by a disease called the squinancy, or quinsy, a suffocation brought upon him by excessive grief, deep melancholy, and utter despair; when being choked by it, he fell flat upon his face, and the rim of his belly burst, and his entrails came out. This disease the Jews call **arksa**, “Iscara”; and if it was what he was subject to from his infancy, his parents might call him Iscariot from hence; and might be designed in providence to be what should bring him to his wretched end: and what is said of this suffocating disorder, seems to agree very well with the death of Judas. They say^{f1630}, that

“it is a disease that begins in the bowels, and ends in the throat:”

they call death by it, **h[r htym**, “an evil death”^{f1631}; and say^{f1632}, that

“there are nine hundred and three kinds of deaths in the world, but that **arksa ʿl kbç hçq**, “the hardest of them all is Iscara”; which the Gloss calls “strangulament”, and says, is in the midst of the body:”

they also reckon it, **hnwçm htym**, “a violent death”^{f1633}; and say^{f1634}, that the spies which brought a bad report of the good land, died of it. Moreover, they affirm^{f1635}, that

“whoever tastes anything before he separates (i.e. lights up the lamp on the eve of the sabbath, to distinguish the night from the day), shall die by “Iscara”, or suffocation.”

Upon which the Gloss says, this is

“measure for measure: he that satisfies his throat, or appetite, shall be choked: as it is said^{f1636} he that is condemned to be strangled, either he shall be drowned in a river, or he shall die of a quinsy, this is “Iscara”.”

Ver. 6. *And the chief priests took the silver pieces*, etc.] Off of the ground, after Judas was gone, no other daring to meddle with them; for in any other it would have been deemed sacrilege; and they being the proper persons to take care and dispose of money brought into the temple: and if not, their covetous disposition would have moved them to take up the money:

and said, one to another, it is not lawful to put them into the treasury, or “Corban”; as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave the word untranslated: and which is the place where the offerings for the repair and service of the temple were put, and is the same into which Christ beheld the people casting their money, (^{<4124>}Mark 12:41). Josephus^{f1637} observes, that

“there was, with the Jews, an holy treasure, which is called “Corbonas”;

and this is the **ʿbrqh tkçl**, “the chamber of the Korban”, of which the Jews make mention^{f1638}: the reason the high priests give why it was not lawful to put this money into the treasury, or into any of the chests in the “Corban” chamber, was,

because it is the price of blood. Thus they strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel. It is highly probable, that they took this selfsame money out of the treasury to buy this blood with, and yet scruple to put it in, having bought it: and besides, they made no hesitation about seeking for, and shedding this innocent blood, and yet boggle at putting this money into the “Corban”, because it was the price of it; proceeding upon the same reason as the law in (^{<16238>}Deuteronomy 23:18) does, pretending much religion, and great veneration for holy pieces and things, when they made no conscience of committing the most flagitious crimes.

Ver. 7. *And they took counsel,* etc.] With one another, considered of the matter, and deliberated about it a while; and at last came to a resolution,

and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in: a field of no great value, or it could not have been bought so near Jerusalem for so small a sum as thirty pieces of silver. Grotius’s conjecture seems to be a good one, that it was a field the potter had dug up for his use, and had made the most of it; so that it was good for nothing, but for the purpose for which these men bought it, “to bury strangers in”: either such as were not of their own nation, as the Roman soldiers, many of which were among them, and who they did not suffer to be buried among them; or proselytes, or such as came from distant parts, at their three festivals, many of whom may be supposed to die at such times: now by this act of humanity in providing for the interment of strangers, they designed, and hoped to have covered their wickedness in bargaining with Judas to betray innocent blood, for this sure of money; but it was so ordered by divine providence, that this became a public and lasting memorial of their sin and infamy: for it follows,

Ver. 8. *Wherefore that field was called,* etc.] Not by the priests and elders, but by the common people, who knew by what money it was purchased,

the field of blood; or “Aceldama”, which so signifies, as in (^{<4419>}Acts 1:19), not called the field of the priests, the purchasers; nor the field of the strangers, for whom it was bought; but the field of blood, being purchased with that money, for which innocent blood was betrayed; and this name it bore

unto this day; in which Matthew wrote his Gospel, about eight years after, as is thought. Jerom ^{f1639} says, that in his time this field was shown on the south side of Mount Sion.

Ver. 9. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet,* etc.] Through the purchasing of the potter's field with the thirty pieces of silver, the price that Christ was valued at, a prophecy in the writings of the Old Testament had its accomplishment: but about this there is some difficulty. The evangelist here says it was spoken by Jeremy the prophet; whereas in his prophecy there is no mention of any such thing. There is indeed an account of his buying his uncle Hanameel's son's field, in (^{<3437>}Jeremiah 32:7-12), but not a word of a potter, or a potter's field, or of the price of it, thirty pieces of silver; and that as a price at which he, or any other person was valued; but the passage which is manifestly referred to, stands in (^{<3811>}Zechariah 11:12,13), where are these words, "and I said unto them, if ye think good, give [me] my price, and if not, forbear; so they weighed for my price thirty [pieces] of silver: and the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty [pieces] of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord": the removing of this difficulty, it might be observed, that the Syriac and Persic versions make no mention of any prophet's name, only read, "which was spoken by the prophet"; and so may as well be ascribed to Zechariah, as to Jeremy, and better: but it must be owned, that Jeremy is in all the Greek copies, in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel. Various things are said for the reconciling of this matter: some have thought that Zechariah had two names, and that besides Zechariah, he was called Jeremy; but of this there is no proof. Jerom^{f1640} affirms, that in an Hebrew volume, being an apocryphal work of Jeremy, which was shown him by one of the Nazarene sect, he read these words verbatim: so that though they do not stand in the writings of Jeremy, which are canonical Scripture, yet in an apocryphal book of his, and which may as well be referred to, as the book of Maccabees, the traditions of the Jews, the prophecies of Enoch, and the writings of the Heathen poets. Moreover, Mr. Mede^{f1641} has laboured, by various arguments, to prove, that the four last chapters of Zechariah were written by Jeremy, in which this passage stands; and if so, the reason is clear, for the citation in his name. But what seems best to solve this difficulty, is, that the order of the books of the Old Testament is not the same now, as it was formerly: the sacred writings were divided, by the Jews, into three parts: the first was called the law, which contains the five books of Moses; the second, the prophets, which contains the former and the latter prophets; the former prophets began at Joshua, and the latter at Jeremy; the third was called Cetubim, or the Hagiographa, the holy

writings, which began with the book of Psalms: now, as this whole third and last part is called the Psalms, (~~<2244>~~ Luke 24:44), because it began with that book; so all that part which contained the latter prophets, for the same reason, beginning at Jeremy, might be called by his name; hence a passage, standing in the prophecy of Zechariah, who was one of the latter prophets, might be justly cited, under the name of Jeremy. That such was the order of the books of the Old Testament, is evident from the following passage ^{f1642}

“it is a tradition of our Rabbins, that the order of the prophets is, Joshua and Judges, Samuel and the Kings, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve.”

Moreover, it is usual with them to say ^{f1643}, that the spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah; and it is very plain, that the latter prophets have many things from the former; and so might Zechariah have this originally from Jeremy, which now stands in his prophecy: all this would be satisfactory to a Jew: and it is to be observed, that the Jew ^{f1644}, who objects to everything he could in the evangelist, with any appearance on his side, and even objects to the application of this prophecy; yet finds no fault with him for putting Jeremy for Zechariah. That the prophecy in Zechariah belongs to the Messiah, and was fulfilled in Jesus, manifestly appears from the context, for as well as the text itself. The person spoken of is in (~~<3810>~~ Zechariah 11:4), called to “feed the flock of slaughter”, which being in a very poor condition, (~~<3810>~~ Zechariah 11:5,6), the state of the Jews, at the time of Christ’s coming, is hereby very aptly represented: he agrees to do it, (~~<3810>~~ Zechariah 11:7), and accordingly furnishes himself for it; but he is despised, abhorred, and rejected by the shepherds, the principal men in church and state; because he severely inveighed against their doctrines and practices, (~~<3810>~~ Zechariah 11:8), upon which he rejects them, and dissolves both their civil and church state; which can suit with no other times than the times of Jesus, (~~<3810>~~ Zechariah 11:9-11,14), and lest it should be thought that he used them with too much severity, he gives one single instance of their ingratitude to him, which shows how little they esteemed him; and that is, their valuing him at no greater a price than “thirty pieces of silver”, (~~<3812>~~ Zechariah 11:12,13), which were afterwards “cast unto the potter”. The Jews ^{f1645} themselves own, that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, though they interpret it of him in another manner.

“Says R. Chanun, the Israelites will have no need of the doctrine of the king Messiah in the time to come; as it is said, (~~<2310>~~ Isaiah

11:10), “to him shall the Gentiles seek”, and not the Israelites: if so, for what does the king Messiah come? and what does he come to do? to gather the captives of Israel, and to give them the thirty precepts, as it is said, (³⁸¹¹²Zechariah 11:12), “and I said unto them, if ye think good”, etc. Rab says, these are the thirty mighty men; and Jochanan says, these are the thirty commands.”

Should it be objected, that supposing the Messiah is intended, the money is said to be given into his hands, and not into the hands of him that was to betray him; “if ye think good, give [me] my price”, (³⁸¹¹²Zechariah 11:12): it may be replied, that the words *yrkç wbh*, should not be rendered, “give me my price”, but “give my price”; i.e. give what you think fit to value me at, into the hands of the betrayer; and accordingly they did: “so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver”, (³⁸¹¹²Zechariah 11:12); which is the very sum the chief priests agreed with Judas for, and which he received; (see ⁴¹³⁵Matthew 26:15), and if it should be objected to the citation of the evangelist, that it is considerably different from the word of the prophet, it being in the latter, “I took the thirty pieces of silver”; whereas in the former, the words are quoted thus,

saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value: it may be observed, that the word which Matthew uses may be rendered, “I took”, as it is in the Syriac version; and that the thirty pieces of silver were the goodly price, at which the Messiah was valued by the children of Israel, is manifest enough; and is an instance of egregious ingratitude, that this should be the price of the “innocent one”, as the Arabic Version renders the phrase, “of him that was valued”; of the “honoured one”, as the Ethiopic; of the “most precious one”, as the Syriac; he who in his person, and the perfections of his nature, is equal to his father, and his fellow; who has all the riches of grace and glory in him, as mediator; who is superior to angels, and fairer than the sons of men in human nature: is the chiefest among ten thousands, and more precious than rubies; and all the things that can be desired are not to be compared with him, and yet sold for a sum of money, the price of a slave, (⁴¹²³Exodus 21:32), and that by the children of Israel, to whom the Messiah was promised; who expected him, and desired his coming; and who sprung from among them, and was sent unto them, and yet they received him not, but undervalued him in this exceeding mean way. Wicked men have no value for Christ; they sell him and themselves for nought; but

gracious souls cannot value him enough, nor sufficiently express their esteem of him.

Ver. 10. *And gave them for the potter's field*, etc.] In the prophet it is, “and I cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord”, (³¹¹³Zechariah 11:13); whereas here it is, “they gave them”; but the word Matthew uses may be rendered, “I gave”, as it is by the Syriac; and as the last words require it should, “as the Lord commanded me”; otherwise there will be no coherence between them: and whereas the thirty pieces of silver are, in the prophet, said to be cast, or given “to the potter”, and here, “for the potter's field”, there is no contradiction: the plain sense is, that they were given to the potter, as a valuable consideration for his field: and whereas it is added, “in the house of the Lord”, which the evangelist does not cite the reason is, because this money was first cast down in the temple by Judas, and after being taken up by the priests, they covenanted with the potter for his field, and paid him for it with this money in the sanctuary. The evangelist, instead of this last clause, puts,

as the Lord commanded me; which have made some think, that there should: be a different reading; and that instead of **tyb**, “the house”, it should be read **tdk**, “according to the commandment”: but there is no need to suppose this: the evangelist is justified in the use of this phrase, by what is said in the prophet in the beginning of (³¹¹³Zechariah 11:13), “and the Lord said unto me”: and this is only a transposition and explanation, according to a rule the Jews have, **whçrdw arqmh srs**, “invert, or transpose the Scripture, and explain it”^{f1646}. Should it be said that the Messiah, and not the betrayer, nor the priests, is said to cast this money to the potter, or give it for the potter's field; it may be replied, that Jesus may be said to do that which Judas, and the chief priests did; because, by his almighty power and providence, he overruled those things for good, which in themselves were evil. Judas thought to have converted the money to his own use, and the priests would have been glad to have taken it again to themselves; but Christ obliged Judas to carry back the money to the priests, and cast it into the temple, and worked upon the minds of the priests, not to put it into the treasury, but to buy the potter's field with it, whereby the prophecy, in its literal sense, was fully accomplished.

Ver. 11. *And Jesus stood before the governor*, etc.] Pilate who sat; for so was the custom for the judge to sit, and those that were judged, to stand, especially whilst witness was bore against them^{f1647}.

“Says R. Bo, in the name of Rab Hona, the witnesses ought to stand whilst they bear witness. Says R. Jeremiah, in the name of R. Abhu, also $\hat{y}dmw[\text{ } twyhl \text{ } \hat{k}yrx \text{ } \hat{y}nwdynh$, “those that are judged ought to stand”, whilst they receive their witness.”

And again ^{f1648},

“how do they judge? the judges sit, $\hat{y}dmw[\text{ } \hat{y}nwdynhw$, and “they that are judged stand”.”

Think what a sight was here, the eternal Son of God in human nature, the Lord of life and glory, the Prince of the kings of the earth, standing before an Heathen governor! he before whom Pilate must stand, and even all men, small and great, another day; all must appear, and stand before the judgment seat of Christ; he himself stands at the bar of men! the reason of this was, because he stood in the legal place, and stead of his people: he became their substitute from everlasting, was made under the law in time, and was subject to its precept, and its penalty: and though he had no crimes of his own to answer for, he had the sins of his people on him; on account of which he stood before the governor, to receive the sentence of condemnation on himself; that so sin being condemned in his flesh, the whole righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them: he stood here, that they might stand before God, and at the throne of his grace with boldness and intrepidity; a new, and living way to it being opened for them, through his blood and sacrifice; and that they might stand before him, the judge of all the earth, with confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming.

And the governor asked him, saying, art thou the king of the Jews? for the Jews had suggested to Pilate, that Jesus had given out that he was Christ a king; and he being Caesar’s procurator, it became him strictly to inquire into this matter, lest there should be any encroachment made on his master’s dignity, authority, and dominions, and he himself should suffer blame; wherefore, he does not ask Jesus, whether he said he was the king of the Jews, or others said so of him, but whether he was their king: he knew he was not in fact; but his question was, whether he was so in right; or if he thought he was, what claim he made, and what he did to support it:

and Jesus said unto him; thou sayest; which is all one as if he had said, “I am”; (see ^{<4125>}Matthew 26:25,64), compared with (^{<4142>}Mark 14:62), and that this was the sense of his answer is clear from (^{<6136>}John 18:36,37), though, at the same time, he let him know that his kingdom was not of this

world; that he was not a temporal king, nor did he lay any claim to any earthly dominions; and therefore neither he, nor his master Caesar, had anything to fear from him: he was only a king in a spiritual sense, over the Israel of God; such as received him, as the Messiah, and believed in his name.

Ver. 12. *And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders,* etc.] As that he was a perverter of the people, a stirrer of sedition, discord, and rebellion among them; that he taught them not to give tribute to Caesar, and set up himself for a king; all which he had done not in one place only, but throughout all the land of Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem; (see ~~221~~ Luke 23:2,5),

he answered nothing; the things laid to his charge being notoriously false, and known to be so by all the people; and the evidence with which they were supported being so slender, the judge could never receive it; he therefore judged it unnecessary, and not worth a while to return an answer to them: besides, he knew they were bent upon his death, and that, should he set aside these charges, as he easily could, they would invent new ones, and so increase their sin, and their condemnation: but the chief reason of all, of his silence, was, he had the sins of his people to answer for, and the time of his dying for them was now come, and for which he was ready; and therefore would say nothing to remove these false charges, and retard his death.

Ver. 13. *Then saith Pilate unto him,* etc.] Observing he made no reply to the accusations of the chief priests and elders, and in order to draw something out of him,

hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? art thou deaf? or dost thou not take in what is alleged against thee? dost thou not consider the nature of these charges? how many, and of what kind the depositions are now made by persons of such rank and figure? art thou under no concern to make answer to them?

Ver. 14. *And he answered him to never a word,* etc.] He made no reply to anyone thing which Pilate suggested to him, though it seems to have been in a kind and friendly way, and with a view to his good:

insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly; that a man, who at other times had such fluency of speech, and readiness of expression, who both for matter and words, and also weight and authority, spake as never man

did: and who had so often silenced the Scribes and Pharisees, men of the greatest learning among the Jews, of which Pilate, doubtless, had knowledge, should say nothing in his own defence; and especially when the charges brought against him were of a capital nature, and touched his life, and yet were so easy to be refuted, and proved to be false ones: and what might increase his wonder, was, that he should take no notice of them, nor return an answer to them, considering by whom they were brought; not by the common people, but by the sanhedrim of the nation, and that before him the Roman governor, who had power to crucify or release him: and above all, he marvelled at the patience of Jesus, that he could hear such notorious falsities, and which so affected his character, and his life, and say nothing to them; and at the fortitude of his mind, at his being so regardless of his life, and fearless of death.

Ver. 15. *Now at [that] feast*, etc.] The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “at every feast”: which looks as if the authors of these versions thought the sense was, that the following custom was used at each feast in the year, at the feasts of pentecost, and tabernacles, and passover; whereas it was only at the feast of the passover; and which is meant by the feast here, as is clear from (~~John~~ John 18:39). It was but once a year that this was done; at every returning passover; and so the Persic version renders it, “every year on the day of the feast”; that is, of the passover, and which was frequently called by way of emphasis, *gj* , “the feast”:

the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. It was not a law, but a custom; it was not enjoined by the law of Moses; for they that sinned against that; died without mercy: nor is it agreeable to strict justice, that there should be such a release of criminals; nor was it a Jewish custom, as an emblem of their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage. I have not met with the least trace of any such custom of theirs at the time of the pass over in any of their writings; but it seems to be a Roman one: and from all the accounts of the evangelist, it appears to be peculiar to the Roman governor, who, either by the order of Caesar, or of himself, introduced such a custom to get the favour of the people; for it was to them the release was made, and the person, whom they pleased; and this being repeated annually for some time, was expected by them, and at last became necessary.

Ver. 16. *And they had then a notable prisoner*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin reads, “he had”; that is, Pilate, who had committed him to prison, and

under whose power he was: for the Jews had lost all authority of this kind, at least in capital cases. This prisoner is called a “notable” one; that is, a famous, or rather an infamous one: he was a thief, and a robber, and had been guilty of sedition; had made, or joined with others in an insurrection, and had committed murder in it; and so, on more accounts than one, was deserving of death: nor could it be otherwise expected by himself, or others, but that he should die: his name was

called Barabbas; that is, as the Syriac version reads it, **aba rb**, which signifies “the son of a father”: a father’s child that was spoiled and ruined, and a child of his father the devil. This was a name common among the Jews. Frequent mention is made of R. Abba^{f1649}, and Bar Abba is the son of Abba: hence we read of Abba Bar Abba^{f1650}, and of R. Samuel Bar Abba^{f1651} and of R. Simeon Bar Abba^{f1652}, and of R. Chijah Bar Abba^{f1653}. In Munster’s Hebrew Gospel it is read **hbr rb**, “Bar Rabbah, the son of a master”; and so Jerom says, that in the Gospel according to the Hebrews it is interpreted, “the son of their master”; but the former is the right name, and the true sense of the word. The Ethiopic version adds, “the prince”, or “chief of robbers, and all knew him”; and the Arabic, instead of a “prisoner”, reads, a “thief”, as he was.

Ver. 17. *Therefore when they were gathered together*, etc.] Meaning not the chief priests and elders; for these were together before, but the common people; and so the Persic version renders the words, when the people increased into a multitude: for it was to them the release of a prisoner was to be made, and so the proposal of one; and it was at their option, who should be the person; for it was “whom they would”, as in (⁴²⁷⁵Matthew 27:15), and where the Ethiopic version adds, “and should choose”.

Pilate said unto them, whom will ye that I should release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ? He puts it to them, whom they would choose to have released, Barabbas, the thief and robber, the seditious person and murderer, or Jesus, whom some called the Christ, the Messiah, the king of the Jews. Pilate on purpose proposed such an infamous person along with him, not doubting but they would have preferred him, whatever were their prejudices against him, before such a scandalous person as Barabbas; and whatever good will they might secretly have to put Jesus to death, and release Barabbas, yet he thought they could not, for shame, speak out their sense, and desire him, and not Jesus. His

view was not to reproach Christ, by joining him with so wicked a man, but in order to save him.

Ver. 18. *For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.*] He saw in their countenances, and by their charges against him, and by the whole of their conduct, that it was not out of any regard to Caesar, or to the peace and tranquillity of the civil government, or to strict justice; but from envy, at his popularity, at his fame and credit, the honour, glory, and applause he had among the people, on account of his doctrine, and miracles, that they had delivered him up into his hands; and therefore Pilate might the rather hope to succeed in this scheme of his to release him, by proposing him with so notorious a person to the populace, when the one, as he might reasonably judge, was abhorred by them, and the other had got great credit and esteem among a large number of them. The Persic version here adds the people's answer; "they answered, release Barabbas, but deliver Jesus to us".

Ver. 19. *When he was set down on the judgment seat,* etc.] That is, when Pilate the governor, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, was set down upon the bench, and while he was sitting there, and trying of Jesus:

his wife sent unto him: her name, according to the Ethiopians, was Abrokla^{f1654}; who might be a Jewess, as the wife of Felix was, (~~400~~ Acts 24:24), and a favourer of Jesus, or, at least, a religious person; and if, only a mere Heathen, yet had some notion of justice being to be done; and however, pressed by her dream, sent a messenger to her husband, as he was trying this cause:

saying, have thou nothing to do with that just man; meaning Jesus, whom she either knew to be so, or concluded from her dream that he was one: and her sense is, that her husband would have no hand in his condemnation and death, but rather do all he could to release and save him. She might know that he had gone some lengths already against him; that he had the night before granted a band of soldiers to the chief priests to apprehend him; and knew he rose early that morning, at the request of the same, to try him; and he was now before him, and she might be apprehensive that he was forward to condemn him to death, and therefore sends this cautionary message; alleging this for a reason,

for I have suffered many things this day, in a dream, because of him. The Arabic and Persic versions read, "this night". Pilate might rise that morning

before she was awake, and had an opportunity of telling her dream; or she might dream it after he was gone; in which she was sadly distressed about Jesus, and might have some hints given her of the miserable consequences of his death, not only to the Jewish nation, but to her husband and family; which gave her great uneasiness and disquietude. Some have thought, that this dream was from the devil, willing to hinder the death of Christ, and so man's redemption and salvation by it; but had he had any such intention, the most effectual method would have been to have persuaded the chief priests and elders off of it, and in attempting it; whereas, on the contrary, they were instigated by him to it: and whatever natural causes there might be of this dream, as the chief priests coming over night to desire a band of soldiers to take Jesus, and the discourse they might have with Pilate about him; which things might run in her mind in her sleep; yet, doubtless, this was of God, and with a design that a testimony should be bore to the innocency of Christ every way; as by Judas that betrayed him, by Pilate his judge, and by his wife.

Ver. 20. *But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude,* etc.]

Among whom the choice lay who should be released. This they did not by haranguing them, or making a public oration to them; but by sending their servants, or proper persons among them, telling them that Jesus had been examined before the sanhedrim that morning, and was found to be a blasphemer; and that the whole court had unanimously condemned him to death, and therefore it became them to act according to their decree: and besides, should this man be set free, they might suggest to them, since he has given out that he is the king Messiah, the Romans hearing of it, will be jealous of such a person, and come and take away both our place and nation, or deprive us of the privileges we have remaining: with such sort of arguments as these, it may be supposed they worked upon the common people. The Persic version reads, "commanded", instead of "persuaded",

that they should ask Barabbas to be released to them,

and destroy Jesus; for nothing short of that would satisfy them: they thirsted after his blood, and were bent upon his death: to release Barabbas, if Jesus was not destroyed, would not answer their end: they desired Barabbas's liberty for no other reason, but for the sake of the destruction of Jesus.

Ver. 21. *The governor answered and said unto them,* etc.] A second time, after some time had been allowed and taken up to consider of the matter,

and which the chief priests and elders improved among the people against Jesus.

Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? for as these two were proposed, one of them must be released; and it lay in the breast of the people to choose which they would:

they said, Barabbas; so that Christ was not only numbered among, and reckoned with transgressors, but he was accounted worse than the worst of them; a seditious person, a robber, and a murderer was preferred before him: (see ~~48B4~~ Acts 3:14).

Ver. 22. *Pilate saith unto them*, etc.] As one astonished at their choice: he could not have thought they would have asked the life of so vile a wretch, that had been guilty of such capital crimes, crimes to be abhorred by all men:

what shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? Surely you would not have me put him to death, and that for no other reason but this, because he is called either by himself or others, Christ, or the Messiah, or the king of the Jews!

they all say unto him, let him be crucified; which was a Roman punishment, inflicted on the meanest and worst of men; as wicked servants, thieves, robbers, and cut-throats^{f1655}; and so was not only a torturing and painful death, but a very shameful and ignominious one; yea, an accursed one: in this they all agreed, being instigated to it by the chief priests and elders.

Ver. 23. *And the governor said, why, what evil hath he done?* etc.] What reason can be given, why he should be crucified? what sin has he committed, that deserves such a death? From whence it is clear, that of all the things they had accused him, they had not, in Pilate's account, given proof of one single action, that was criminal, nor had he done any: he came into the world without sin, he did none in it; he knew no sin, nor could any be found in him, by Satan, nor his accusers, nor his judge:

but they cried out the more, saying, let him be crucified: the more they saw Pilate inclined to favour him, and pleaded for him, and attested his innocence; the more clamorous, outrageous, and urgent they were to have him crucified.

Ver. 24. *When Pilate saw he could prevail nothing*, etc.] That it was to no purpose to talk to them, and in favour of Jesus; he saw they were determined upon his crucifixion, and that nothing else would satisfy them:

but that rather a tumult was made; there was an uproar among the people, and he might fear the consequences of it, should he not grant their request; otherwise, as Philo the ^{f1656} Jew says of him, he was, *την φυσιν ακαμπτης και μετα του ανψαδου αμειλικτος*, “naturally inflexible, rigid, and self-willed”: but he knew the temper of these people, and had had experience of their resoluteness, when they were determined on any thing; as in the case of his introducing the golden shields into the holy city, of which the same author speaks: and was then obliged, though sore against his will, as now, to yield unto them:

He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude; either in conformity to a custom among the Jews, whereby they testified their innocence as to the commission of murder; (see ^{<B206>}Deuteronomy 21:6,7 ^{<B206>}Psalms 26:6), or to a Gentile one, used when murder was committed, for the lustration or expiation of it ^{f1657}:

saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; though this did not clear him from all guilt in this matter: he ought to have acted the part of an upright judge, and not have yielded to the unrighteous requests of the people; he ought not to have scourged an innocent man, and much less have condemned and delivered him to be crucified, as he did; though in this he bore a testimony to the innocence of Christ, and which is somewhat remarkable in him; who was, as Philo says ^{f1658}, notoriously guilty of receiving bribes, of injuries, rapine, and frequent murders of persons uncondemned:

see ye [to it]; you must be answerable for this action, and all the consequences of it. The Syriac version renders it, “you have known”; and the Persic version, “you know”: and the Arabic version, “you know better”; (see Gill on “^{<B204>}Matthew 27:4”).

Ver. 25. *Then answered all the people*, etc.] They were as unanimous in their imprecations upon themselves, as in desiring the crucifixion of Christ:

and said, his blood be on us, and on our children; not for the cleansing of them from sin, which virtue that blood has, but if there were any stain, blot, or pollution, through the shedding of it, they wished it might be on them and theirs: not for the forgiveness of sins, which that blood was shed for;

but on the contrary, if there was any sin and guilt in it, they desired it might be imputed to them: nor for their justification before God, and security from wrath to come, both which are by his blood; but all the reverse of this, that if there were any punishment, and condemnation, and death, due for the shedding of it, they imprecated it all upon themselves, and their posterity: so this phrase is used in (^{<0129>}Joshua 2:19 ^{<0016>}2 Samuel 1:16), and in other places, and in the Talmud ^{f1659}: and it is a notion of the Jews, that the guilt of innocent blood, and the blood of that innocent man's children, lie not only upon the persons immediately concerned, but upon their children to the end of the world: and so the judges used to address the witnesses upon a trial, after this manner ^{f1660};

“know ye, that capital causes, are not as pecuniary ones: in pecuniary causes, a man gives his money, and it atones for him; but in capital causes, **wb ^yywl t w[rz µdw wmd**, “his blood, and the blood of his seed, hang upon him”, to the end of the whole world: for lo! of Cain it is said, “the voice of the blood of thy brother cryeth”, etc. his blood, and the blood of his seed.”

And this imprecation of theirs, has been notoriously verified in them; for though this blood was shed for many of them, and Christ prayed for the forgiveness of them, and they had the Gospel, and the doctrine of remission of sins first preached among them, which was made the power of God unto salvation to some of them, even of those who were concerned in the crucifixion of Christ; yet, on the generality of them, his blood was in the sense they wished it; and for the shedding of it, wrath came upon them to the uttermost, in the entire destruction of their nation, city, and temple, and very remarkable it is, that great numbers of them were put to death by crucifixion; and very likely some of those very persons, that were so clamorous for the crucifying of Christ; and if not, at least their children; five hundred of the Jews and more, were sometimes crucified in a day, whilst Titus was besieging the city; till at length there wanted “room for crosses”, **και σταυροι τοις σωμασι** “and crosses for bodies”, as Josephus ^{f1661} says, who was an eyewitness of it: and to this day, this dreadful wish of the blood of Christ upon them, is to be seen in their miserable, abject, and captive state; and will be, until such time that they look to him whom they have pierced, and mourn.

Ver. 26. *Then released he Barabbas unto them,* etc.] The seditious person, robber, and murderer, for which crimes he was in prison. This man was an

sword of justice, as he stood in their place and stead, and stricken for their transgressions; and may furnish out several instructions: as that it is no wonder, if any of the followers of Christ have, do, or shall, meet with such like treatment from men; and that it becomes them to bear patiently the scourges of their heavenly Father, since these are in love; and that they need not fear being trodden down, or carried away by the overflowing scourge of God's wrath, since Christ has endured this in their room. This being done,

he delivered him to be crucified; either into the hands of the Jews, to their will and at their request; or into the hands of his soldiers, to execute the sentence he passed upon him; which was done in a judicial way, and according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

Ver. 27. *Then the soldiers of the governor*, etc.] Those that were about him, his attendants and guards,

took Jesus into the common hall; the "praetorium", or judgment hall, as it is sometimes called; the governor's palace, into which the Jews would not enter, lest they should defile themselves: Pilate therefore came out to them, and went into the pavement called Gabbatha, and sat upon a judgment seat there; (see ^{<61828>}John 18:28,29) (^{<61913>}John 19:13), where he passed sentence on Christ; which being done, the soldiers took him into the hall of judgment; which being both magnificent and large, was fit for the scene they intended to act there. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, they took him "in the house of judgment"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "out of the court of judicature"; both wrong.

And gathered unto him whole band [of soldiers]; the same that Judas had with him to take him, consisting of five hundred, and some say more: these their fellow soldiers, to whom Jesus was committed, got together to him, or "against him", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, make themselves sport and diversion with him. Think in what hands and company our dear Lord now was: now was he encompassed with dogs, and enclosed with the assembly of the wicked indeed; (see ^{<192216>}Psalms 22:16). The Persic version renders it, "multitudes of knaves being gathered together to him".

Ver. 28. *And they stripped him*, etc.] Of his clothes; at least of his upper garment: for one man to spit upon another, as these soldiers afterwards did on Christ, or to strip him of his garment, according to the Jewish canons,

were punishable with a fine of four hundred pence ^{f1665}, which amounted to twelve pounds and ten shillings of our money; but the soldiers were in no danger of being prosecuted, for stripping Christ. This is one part of the low estate Christ submitted to: his clothes on his back seem to be all he had in this world, and of these he is stripped:

and put on him a scarlet robe, or “a red coat”, as the Persic version renders it; very likely an old coat of one of their officers. The Evangelists Mark and John say it was “purple”, (^{<41517>}Mark 15:17 ^{<489E>}John 19:2), and so the Arabic version renders it here: whether there were two garments put upon him, the one a purple vest, and the other a scarlet robe over it; or whether scarlet was used instead of purple, is not certain; which was a colour wore by kings, and a sign of imperial dignity ^{f1666}; and therefore put upon Christ by way of mockery, upbraiding him with the character he bore, as king of the Jews. This was an emblem of his being clothed, as it were with our sins, which are as scarlet, and of his bloody sufferings in the human nature.

Ver. 29. *And when they had platted a crown of thorns*, etc.] What sort of thorn this crown was made of, whether of the bramble, or of the white thorn, is not very material ^{f1667}: the word used in the Syriac version, is rendered by interpreters, “white thorns”, and which were common in Judea: these, be they what they will, they made into the form of a crown, and

they put it upon his head; both to reproach him as a king, and to torture him as a man: however, it had its significance, and was an emblem of men, comparable to thorns; either of wicked men, and of his being encompassed with them at this time; or of good men, chosen out from among them, redeemed by him, and accounted as a royal diadem with him ^{f1668}: or it might represent the sins of his people, which, like thorns, pierced him, and like a crown of them surrounded him every side; or else the many troubles he was exercised with, and through which he did, as his members do, enter the kingdom: and especially, his being made a curse for us, thorns and briars being the curse which was inflicted on the earth, for the sin of man: in this Christ was the antitype of the ram, caught by his horns among the thickets, which “Abraham” sacrificed in the room of his son. This may teach us many useful lessons: we may see what a curse sin brought upon man, and upon the earth for man’s sake; and even upon the Messiah, in the stead of men: we may observe the difference between us and Christ: we are

a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in his hand; we are crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies, and have a crown of righteousness, life, and glory, laid up for us, and he was crowned with thorns; as also the difference between Christ in his state of humiliation wearing such a crown, and his state of exaltation, in which he is crowned with glory and honour. The Jews acknowledge this circumstance of the sufferings of Jesus, though they ascribe it to the elders of Jerusalem; who, they say^{f1669},

“took thorns and made a crown of them, and put it upon his head.”

Which are the very words of the evangelist:

and a reed in his right hand, or “cane”; and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel uses the word, חנך, “a cane”, such as men walk with; and this may be confirmed from the barbarous use they afterwards made of it, by smiting him on the head with it: a “reed” indeed may fitly express the weakness of his kingdom in the eye of the world: but any cane or common staff, or stick, put into his hands in the room of a sceptre, would also signify the meanness of his kingdom, which was not of this world, and came not with observation: they meant to reproach him with it, but they will find one time or another, that he, has another sceptre, even a sceptre of righteousness, a staff of strength, a rod of iron, with which he will rule and break in pieces, all the wicked of the earth. However, we may learn from hence, Christ does not disdain to hold a reed in his hand: nor will he break the bruised reed, or discourage, or crush the weakest believer.

And they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews: being thus clad in a scarlet, or purple robe, or both; and having a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed instead of a sceptre in his hand, they carry on the mockery still further, and bend the knee to him, as to a prince just come to his throne, and salute as such; and in a mock way, wish him long life and prosperity: thus deriding him in his kingly office, as all such do, who call him Lord, Lord, but disregard his commands.

Ver. 30. *And they spit upon him*, etc.] The Syriac and Persic versions add, “upon his face”, which he did not hide from spitting; (see ^{<2006>}Isaiah 1:6), and so what with sweat, by being hurried from place to place, and with blood trickling down from his temples, scratched with thorns, and with the spittle of these filthy soldiers, his visage was more marred than any man’s, and his form than the sons of men, (^{<2014>}Isaiah 52:14).

And took the reed, or “cane”, which was put into his right hand, *and smote him on the head*; whereby they drove the sharp points of the thorns into it, which must give him inexpressible pain and torture.

Ver. 31. *And after that they had mocked him*, etc.] Gone through the whole farce, and glutted themselves with derision of him, and with sport and diversion with him,

they took the robe off from him; it belonging to one of their company, *and put his own raiment on him*; partly that he might be known to be the selfsame person that was condemned and committed to them, which they now brought forth to crucify; and partly, that the four soldiers that were appointed to be the executioners, might have the perquisite of his clothes, which belonged unto them:

and led him away to crucify him; for a condemned person was always executed the same day: their canon is ^{f1670},

“after that his judgment, or sentence is finished, they do not tarry with him, but slay him, *wmwyb*, “that very day”.”

And their custom was this;

“he whose sentence for death is finished, they bring him out from the house of judgment; and one stands at the door of it, and linen clothes in his hand, and a horse at some distance from him; and a crier goes out before him, “saying”, such an one is going to be executed with such a death, because he has committed such a sin, in such a place, at such a time, such and such being witnesses; whoever knows him to be innocent, let him come, and speak in his favour: if one says, I have something to say in his favour: this waves with the linen clothes, and the other rides upon the horse, and runs and brings back him that is judged, to the sanhedrim; and if he is found innocent, they dismiss him: but if not, he returns, and goes to execution ^{f1671}.”

The Jews pretend ^{f1672}, that a crier went out before Jesus of Nazareth, forty days before his execution, and made such a proclamation, but found none that had any thing to say in his favour, and therefore hanged him on the evening of the passover. But this is false; Christ had no such length of time, or his friends any liberty granted them to speak for him. They led him out

of the common hall, through Jerusalem, and through one of the gates of it, without the city, in order to crucify him, to which he was condemned, when that prophecy was fulfilled in (²⁸³⁷Isaiah 53:7). “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth”: as he made no opposition or struggle, but quietly went along with them, where they led him; so he took every thing patiently from them, uttered not one complaint, or any murmuring and repining word, or any thing by way of reviling; but became meekly subject to them, and submitted himself to him that judgeth righteously.

Ver. 32. *And as they came out*, etc.] Of the city; for no execution was made, neither in the court of judicature, nor in the city, but at some distance; as it was at stoning, so at crucifixion ^{f1673}:

“when judgment was finished, they brought him out to be stoned; the place of stoning was without the sanhedrim, as it is said, (⁴⁹⁴⁴Leviticus 24:14), “bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp”.”

Upon which the gloss and Gemara say ^{f1674}, without the three camps; which were these, the court which was the camp of the Shekinah; or the divine presence; and the mountain of the house, the camp of the Levites; and the city, the camp of Israel; so that he that was executed, was had without the city. Maimonides ^{f1675} says,

“the place in which the sanhedrim executed, was without it, and at a distance from it, as it is said, (⁴⁹⁴⁴Leviticus 24:14), and it appears to me, that it was about six miles distant; for so far it was between the sanhedrim of Moses our master, which was before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the camp of Israel.”

So Jesus went without the camp, and suffered without the gate, as the antitype of the red heifer; (see ⁴⁴⁹⁸Numbers 19:3), compared with (³⁸³¹Hebrews 13:11-13), and the notes there.

They found a man of Cyrene: a place in Libya, and one of the five cities called Pentapolis: which were these, Berenice, Arsinoe, Ptolemais, Apollonia, and Cyrene ^{f1676}; Kir in (Amos 1:5 9:7) is rendered by the Targum, **ynryq**, “Cyrene”, as it is also by the Vulgate Latin. There were many Jews dwelt here, as appears from (⁴⁴²⁰Acts 2:10), as this man was a Jew, as his name shows; and besides, there was a synagogue of the

Cyrenian Jews at Jerusalem, (~~411B~~ Acts 6:9), so that though he was a native of Cyrene, he might now dwell there, and some of these were converted to the faith of Christ; for of those that were scattered abroad at the death of Stephen, some were men of Cyrene, (~~411B~~ Acts 11:19,20). And it is very likely, that this man was a favourer of Christ, which might be one reason why they laid hold on him, and obliged him to bear the cross of Christ; since he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, who were men of note among the first Christians:

Simon by name; of which name was one of the apostles, and a common name among the Jews, and signifies hearkening and obedient: and none are fit to bear, or will bear the cross of Christ, but such who hearken to his voice, and are obedient to him, being made willing in the day of his power:

him they compelled to bear his cross; which they did, not out of good will to Christ, but fearing lest through his faintness and weakness, he should, die before he got to the place of execution, and they be disappointed of their end, the crucifixion of him; or because they were in haste to have him executed, and he was not able to go so fast as they desired; for when they, first came out, the cross was laid upon Christ, and he bore it, as John relates; but he being weak and ready to faint under it, and not able to go the pace they would have him, and meeting with this man, they press him to bear it after him: which he might be unwilling to do, partly because it was scandalous and ignominious; and partly, because if a favourer of Jesus, he did not choose to be any ways accessory to his death: but he was obliged to it; and it may be observed from hence, that taking up the cross and following Christ, is disagreeable to flesh and blood: though the spirit may be willing, the flesh recoils; none care for it, or choose to bear it, unless constrained to it.

Ver. 33. *And when they were come to a place called Golgotha*, etc.] The true pronunciation is “Golgotha”, and so it is read in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel. It is a Syriac word, in which language letters are often left out: in the Syriac version of this place, the first “l” is left out, and the latter retained, and it is read “Gogoltha”: and so, in the Persic, “Gagulta”; and in the Arabic, “Gagalut”. The Ethiopic version reads it, “Golgotha”; and so, Dr. Lightfoot observes, it is read by the Samaritan interpreter of the first chapter of Numbers:

that is to say, a place of a skull: some say Adam’s skull was found here, and from thence the place had its name; this is an ancient tradition, but

without foundation ^{f1677}: it seems to be so called, because it was the place where malefactors were executed, and afterwards buried; whose bones and skulls in process of time might be dug up, and some of them might lie scattered about in this place: for, one that was executed as a malefactor ^{f1678},

“they did not bury him in the sepulchres of his ancestors; but there were two places of burial appointed by the sanhedrim; one for those that were stoned, and for those that were burnt; and another for those that were killed with the sword, and for those that were strangled; and when their flesh was consumed, they gathered the bones, and buried them in their place;”

i.e. in the sepulchres of their ancestors. This place was as infamous as our Tyburn, and to be crucified at “Golgotha”, was as ignominious as to be hanged at Tyburn; which shows what shame and disgrace our Lord was brought, and what he condescended to bear on our account.

Ver. 34. *They gave him vinegar to drink*, etc.] It was a custom with the Jews ^{f1679} when

“a man went out to be executed, to give him to drink a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine, that his understanding might be disturbed, as it is said, (³¹⁰⁶Proverbs 31:6). “Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts”; and the tradition is, that the honourable women in Jerusalem gave this freely; but if they did not, it was provided at the charge of the congregation.”

The design of it was to cheer their spirits, and intoxicate their heads, that they might not be sensible of their pain and misery. But such a cup was not allowed Christ at the public expense, nor were the honourable women so compassionate to him; or if it was sent him, the soldiers did not give it him, but another potion in the room of it; indeed Mark says, they gave him “wine mingled with myrrh”, (⁴¹⁵²³Mark 15:23); which was either a cordial provided by his friends, and given him, and is different from what the soldiers gave him here; or the sense is, that they gave him the cup, that was so called, but not the thing; but instead of it,

vinegar mingled with gall. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, instead of “vinegar”, read “wine”; and so does Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, and so it is read in Beza’s most ancient copy, and in another exemplar, and

in one of Stephens's; and which may be easily reconciled with the common reading, and that with Mark; for the wine they gave him was flat and sour, and no other or better than vinegar; and real vinegar may be so called, as this seems to be; and the rather, because vinegar was a part of the Roman soldiers' allowance, and so they had it ready at hand; (see Gill on "⁽⁶⁸²⁾John 19:29"). As also, because it was thought that vinegar was useful to prolong the life of a man ready to die; and therefore they might choose to give it to Christ, that he might live the longer in misery: so the Jews ^{f1680} write, that

“if a man swallows a wasp or hornet alive, he cannot live; but they must give him to drink a quarter, *zgmç al j d*, “of vinegar of Shamgaz”, (which the gloss says is strong vinegar,) and it is possible he may live a little while, until he hath given orders to his house.”

The Arabic version, instead of “gall”, reads “myrrh”; nor are we to suppose that this drink was mixed with the gall of a beast itself, but with something that was as bitter as “gall”; as wormwood, or myrrh, or any other bitter, to make it distasteful. This potion of vinegar with gall, was an aggravating circumstance in our Lord's sufferings, being given to him when he had a violent thirst upon him; and was an emblem of the bitter cup of God's wrath, he had already tasted of in the garden, and was about to drink up: the Jews had a notion of vinegar's being expressive of the chastisements of the Messiah; the words in (⁽⁸²⁴⁾Ruth 2:14), they say ^{f1681},

“speak of the king Messiah; “come thou hither”, draw nigh to the kingdom; “and eat of the bread”, this is the bread of the kingdom, “and dip thy morsel in the vinegar”, *^yrwsyhyh wl a*, “these are the chastisements”, as it is said in (⁽²³¹⁶⁾Isaiah 53:5), “he was wounded for our transgressions”.”

By this offer was fulfilled the prophecy in (⁽¹⁶²¹⁾Psalms 69:21), and which he did not altogether refuse; for it follows,

and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink: not because it was the vinegar of Gentiles, which was forbidden by the Jewish canons ^{f1681}, lest it should have been offered to idols; but because he would make use of no means either to prolong his life, or discompose his mind; and that it might appear he knew what he did, and that he was not afraid nor unwilling to die; though he thought fit to taste of it in a superficial way, to show he did

not despise nor resent their offer; and that he was really athirst, and ready to drink a more disagreeable potion than that.

Ver. 35. *And they crucified him*, etc.] That is, the soldiers: they laid the cross upon the ground, and stretched Christ upon it; they extended his two arms as far as they could, to the transverse part of it, and nailed his hands unto it: his two feet they fixed by each other on a basis, in the body of the cross, through which they also drove nails; and then raising it up, fixed it in the earth, and left him hanging on it till he expired. This death was not only painful and cruel, but exceedingly shameful and ignominious: it was what was inflicted on the meanest of persons, as servants, whose form Christ had taken; and upon the worst of men, as murderers, cut-throats, thieves, and the vilest of men ^{f1682} among whom Christ was now numbered:

and parted his garments, casting lots: for they stripped him of his clothes before they fixed him to the cross, and crucified him naked, as was the custom of the Romans ^{f1683}; as it was of the Jews to stone and hang persons naked: their canons run thus ^{f1684};

“when he is four cubits off of the place of stoning, they strip off his garments; a man they cover before, a woman both behind and before; the words of Judah: but the wise men say, a man is stoned naked, and a woman is not stoned naked: a man, they hang him with his face to the people; a woman, with her face to the tree. R. Eliezer, and the wise men say, a man is hanged, but a woman is not hanged.”

On which the Gemara ^{f1685} says,

“what is the sense of the Rabbins? the Scripture says, “thou shalt hang him”; him, and not her: and, says R. Eliezer, him, **wtwsk al b**, “without his clothes”.”

So our Lord was crucified; his clothes were a perquisite of the soldiers; there were four of them, as we learn from (~~3123~~ John 19:23), and they parted them into four parts, and then cast lots whose each part should be; or rather, they divided his garments into four parts, and each took his part; but his vesture, or coat, being seamless, and woven from top to bottom, they did not choose to tear it into pieces, but cast lots for it, who should have it:

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, by David, in (^{<4228>}Psalm 22:18),

they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. All this, Beza says, is not in any of the ancient copies; nor is it in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, but stands in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; (see Gill on "^{<4392>}John 19:24").

Ver. 36. *And sitting down, they watched him there.*] That is, the soldiers, after they had crucified Jesus, and parted his garments, sat down on the ground at the foot of the cross, and there watched him, lest his disciples should take him down; though there was no need to fear that, since they were few, and weak, and wanted courage, and were in the utmost dread and consternation themselves; or lest the people, who were very changeable with respect to Christ, one day saying Hosanna to the son of David, and another day crucify him, crucify him, should once more change their sentiments of him, and through pity to him rise and take him down; or rather, lest Jesus himself should, by his miraculous power, unloose himself, come down, and make his escape. It was usual with the Romans to set a soldier, or soldiers, to watch those that were crucified, not only before they expired, but after they were dead, lest they should be took down and buried; as appears from Petronius, Plutarch, and others ^{f1686}. This seems to be the watch Pilate refers to, (^{<4275>}Matthew 27:65), and over which there was a centurion, (^{<42754>}Matthew 27:54).

Ver. 37. *And set up over his head his accusation written*, etc.] The Evangelist John calls it a "title", (^{<4392>}John 19:19,20), and Luke, a "superscription", (^{<4238>}Luke 23:38), and Mark, the "superscription of his accusation", (^{<4156>}Mark 15:26): it was what contained the sum and substance of what he was accused, and for which he was condemned, and suffered. The Syriac and Persic versions here render it, "the cause of his death". It was written by Pilate in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, that all might read it; and by his orders it was put upon the cross, and over the head of Jesus by the soldiers. This title, or inscription, setting forth the person's crime, used to be carried before him, or put upon him, as he was led to execution ^{f1687}: but here it was set upon the cross, and perhaps nailed unto it; to which the apostle seems to allude in (^{<5024>}Colossians 2:14), the substance of it was,

this is Jesus the king of the Jews. This was what the chief priests accused him of to Pilate, and about which he questioned him, and for which they

desired he might be crucified; urging, that should he let him go, he could not be Caesar's friend. Hence Pilate wrote his accusation in this form, not so much in derision of Jesus; for by conversation with him he understood what sort of a king he was, as to the reproach of the Jews for crucifying him who was their king; being the person that was prophesied of in their books, as king of Zion, and whom they expected as such, though now they denied and rejected him.

Ver. 38. *Then were there two thieves crucified with him,* etc.] Which seems contrary to one of their canons, which runs thus; $\delta\lambda\alpha\ \mu\omega\upsilon\beta\ \mu\eta\eta\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha$, "they do not judge two in one day"^{f1688}, unless they were both in the same crime, and died the same death: but here were three persons, Jesus, and these two malefactors, condemned and executed in one, and the same day: these two thieves were led out with Jesus, to be put to death with him, according to (^{<4232>}Luke 23:32), and were crucified with him upon the same spot of ground; their death was the same, but not their crime:

one the right hand, and another on the left; and Jesus in the midst, as John relates, (^{<4918>}John 19:18), and hereby was fulfilled, as Mark observes, (^{<4153>}Mark 15:28), a prophecy in (^{<2632>}Isaiah 53:12). If this was so ordered by Pilate, it might be done in order to cover the sin, and take off the reproach of putting an innocent person to death, suggesting hereby he was one of them; though this seems rather to be done by the Jews, the soldiers agreeing to it, for the greater reproach of Jesus; intimating, that he was the worst of these malefactors, and a ringleader of such sort of persons: and whereas they had observed, he took it ill at their hands that they should come to apprehend him with swords and staves, as if he was a thief and a robber; to vex and distress him the more, they crucify him between two such persons: but the grand reason why it was so ordered, was, that though Christ was no transgressor, he was accounted one, and stood in the room and stead of sinners, and was numbered with them, and as such was treated by divine justice, and accordingly died for them.

Ver. 39. *And they that passed by,* etc.] In the road to or from Jerusalem; for, it seems, the crosses were placed by the wayside; or they who passed by the cross, the populace that came from Jerusalem, on purpose to see the sight,

reviled him, or "blasphemed him": they spoke all manner of evil of him, they could think of, to which he answered not a word; and which may

teach us patience under the revilings of men: this was foretold of him, (^{<486>}Psalm 89:51), “they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed”, or “Messiah”; and which Jarchi explains by *ypws*, “the ends of the king Messiah”; his last times, towards the close of his days; and cites that passage in the Misna ^{f1689},

“in the heels, or, as Buxtorf renders it, in the end of the days of the Messiah impudence shall be multiplied,”

as it now was exceedingly:

wagging their heads; in derision of him, and as exulting in his misery; (see ^{<2372>}Isaiah 37:22 ^{<2125>}Lamentations 2:15). This also was prophesied of him in (^{<4217>}Psalm 22:7).

Ver. 40. *And saying, thou that destroyest the temple*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, read, “the temple of God”; and add “ah!” here, as in (^{<4152>}Mark 15:29), and so Beza says it is read in a certain copy. They refer to the charge of the false witnesses against him, who misrepresenting his words in (^{<4129>}John 2:19), declared that he gave out that he was able to destroy the temple of Jerusalem, and rebuild it in three days time; wherefore it is added,

and buildest it in three days, save thyself. They reproach him with it, and suggest, that these were vain and empty boasts of his; for if he was able to do any thing of that kind, he need not hang upon the tree, but could easily save himself:

if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. The Jews themselves say ^{f1690} that the following words were said to Jesus on the cross,

“if thou be the Son of God, why dost thou not deliver thyself out of our hands?”

As Satan before them, they put an “if” upon the sonship of Christ: and seeing his followers believed in him as the Son of God, and he had owned himself to be so before the sanhedrim, they require a sign of it by his power, and to do that which they believed no mere man in his situation could do; which shows, that they had no other notion of the Son of God, but that he was a divine person: but his sonship was not to be declared by his coming down from the cross, which he could have easily effected, but by a much greater instance of power, even by his resurrection from the

dead; and no other but that sign was to be given to that wicked and perverse generation.

Ver. 41. *Likewise also the chief priests*, etc.] Who as they attended at his apprehension, and in their own council condemned him to death unanimously, and were very busy at his arraignment, examination, and trial before Pilate, and persuaded the people to be urgent for his crucifixion; they follow him to the cross to exult over him, and insult him, and to see that the execution was strictly performed: and forgetting their character, office, and education; and laying aside all humanity, decent, and good manners; instead of rebuking and restraining the populace from using him in an ill and unkind manner, they themselves stood

mocking him, with the Scribes and elders; who composed the whole sanhedrim of the nation. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and several copies, read, “and the Pharisees”: of which, no doubt, there were great numbers present, who had been indefatigable and implacable enemies of Christ every where, and to whom it must be a pleasing sight to see him hanging on the cross: these scoffed at him, gibed, and reproached him; and *said*, as follows;

Ver. 42. *He saved others, himself he cannot save*, etc.] This was not so much a concession of theirs, that he had done many saving works, as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, causing the blind to see, and the lame to walk, and raising the dead; but rather a suggestion, that these were only pretensions and illusions; that either they were not really done, or done by the help of the devil; since now he himself was in the utmost extremity, he could not save himself: but of this they might have been convinced by his striking many of them to the ground, that came to apprehend him in the garden, and of which these men were eyewitnesses; and he, as man, could easily have obtained of his Father more than twelve legions of angels that would have rescued him out of their hands: but so it must not be; he came not to save himself, but others, and to save them spiritually and eternally by dying himself.

If he be the king of Israel; that is, the Messiah, who was promised and expected as a king, as Zion’s king, or king of Israel; (see ⁴¹⁵²John 1:49), hence in (⁴¹⁵²Mark 15:32) it is Christ the king of Israel.

Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. The Persic version reads, “that the people may see, and believe in him”; and the

Syriac and Arabic versions, “that we may see, and believe in him”, as in (^{<4152>}Mark 15:32). But, alas! they had seen greater things already than this, and yet had not believed. He could easily have caused the nails to have given way, and unloosed himself, and come down, who had done such mighty works among them; and if he had, there is no reason to conclude they would have believed him to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah; for though after this, he did a much greater work, raised himself from the dead, of which they had the fullest evidence, yet they remained unbelieving.

Ver. 43. *He trusted in God*, etc.] That is, he pretended to claim an interest in him, to be high in his favour and esteem, and to have great faith and confidence in him:

let him deliver him now; directly, from the cross, and the death of it:

if he will have him; or if he is well pleased with him as his own Son, or delights in him as such, and will show him any favour and good will; (see ^{<4928>}Psalm 22:8), where are these very words, and which are predicted should be said by these men to Christ; and are a wonderful confirmation of the truth of that Psalm and prophecy belonging to him:

for he said, I am the Son of God; not only in his ministry, but he had said so in their grand council, before them all.

Ver. 44. *The thieves also*, etc.] One or other of them, not both; an Hebrew way of speaking, as Drusius ^{f1691} observed: so it is said of Jonah, (Jon 1:5), that he was “gone down into the sides of the ship”; not into both sides, but into one or other of them: so here the thieves, one or other of them, not naming which, railed at Jesus, for it was but one of them; (see ^{<4239>}Luke 23:39), unless it can be thought, as it is by some, that they both at first reviled him; but one being quickly convinced of his evil, ceased, and rebuked his fellow sufferer, confessed his, sin, bore a testimony to the innocence of Christ, and desired to be remembered by him in his kingdom. This was an aggravation of the sufferings of Christ, that he should be vilified by those,

which were crucified with him; who ought to have been, considering the condemnation they were in, and the future state they were just entering into, lamenting and confessing the sins they had been guilty of, instead of adding sin to sin, and so aggravating their condemnation. These, at least one of them,

cast the same into his teeth; as the populace, the chief priests, Scribes, elders, and Pharisees had done; twitted him with his pretensions of being the Son of God, the Messiah, and king of Israel; and urged, that if he was, why did not he save himself, and them also?

Ver. 45. *Now from the sixth hour*, etc.] Which was twelve o'clock at noon,

there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour; till three o'clock in the afternoon, the time the Jews call “between the two evenings”; and which they say ^{f1692} is “from the sixth hour, and onwards”. Luke says, the sun was darkened, (^{<235>}Luke 23:45). This darkness was a preternatural eclipse of the sun; for it was at the time when the moon was in the full, as appears from its being at the time of the passover; which was on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, the Jews beginning their months from the new moon: and moreover, it was over all the land, or earth, as the word may be rendered; and the Ethiopic version renders it, “the whole world was dark”; at least it reached to the whole Roman empire, or the greatest part of it; though some think only the land of Judea, or Palestine, is intended: but it is evident, that it is taken notice of, and recorded by Heathen historians and chronologers, as by Phlegon, and others, referred to by Eusebius ^{f1693}. The Roman archives are appealed unto for the truth of it by Tertullian ^{f1694}; and it is asserted by Suidas, that Dionysius the Areopagite, then an Heathen, saw it in Egypt; and said,

“either the, divine being suffers, or suffers with him that suffers, or the frame of the world is dissolving.”

Add to this the continuance of it, that it lasted three hours; whereas a natural eclipse of the sun is but of a short duration; (see ^{<318>}Amos 8:9). The Jews ^{f1695} have a notion, that in the times of the Messiah

“the sun shall be darkened, *amwy twgl pb*, “in the middle of the day”, (as this was,) as that day was darkened when the sanctuary was destroyed.”

Yea, they speak ^{f1696} of a darkness that shall continue a long time: their words are these:

“the king Messiah shall be made known in all the world, and all the kings shall be stirred up to join together to make war with him; and many of the profligate Jews shall be turned to them, and shall go with them, to make war against the king Messiah; so *aml [I k*

Æc̅j̅ ty, “all the world shall be darkened” fifteen days, and many of the people of Israel shall die in that darkness.”

This darkness that was over the earth at the time of Christ’s sufferings, was, no doubt, an addition to them; the sun, as it were, hiding its face, and refusing to afford its comforting light and heat to him; and yet might be in detestation of the heinousness of the sin the Jews were committing, and as expressive of the divine anger and resentment; for God’s purposes and decrees, and the end he had in view, did not excuse, nor extenuate their wickedness; as it shows also their wretched stupidity, not to be awakened and convinced by the amazing darkness, with other things attending it, which made no impression on them; though it did on the Roman centurion, who concluded Christ must be the Son of God. It was an emblem of the judicial blindness and darkness of the Jewish nation; and signified, that now was the hour and power of darkness, or the time for the prince of darkness, with his principalities and powers, to exert himself; and was a representation of that darkness that was now on the soul of Christ, expressed in the following verse; as well as of the eclipse of him, the sun of righteousness, of the glory of his person, both by his incarnation, and by his sufferings.

Ver. 46. *And about the ninth hour*, etc.] Or three o’clock in the afternoon, which was about the time of the slaying and offering of the daily sacrifice, which was an eminent type of Christ. The Jews say^{f1697}, that

“every day the daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered up at nine and a half:”

about which time also the passover was killed, which was another type of Christ; and as they say^{f1698}, “was offered first, and then the daily sacrifice.” Though the account they elsewhere^{f1699} give of these things, is this;

“the daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered up at nine and a half; (that is, on all the common days of the year;) on the evenings of the passover, it was slain at seven and a half, and offered at eight and a half, whether on a common day, or on a sabbath day: the passover eve, that happened to be on the sabbath eve, it was slain at six and a half, and offered at seven and a half, and the passover after it.”

At this time,

Jesus cried with a loud voice: as in great distress, having been silent during the three hours darkness, and patiently bearing all his soul sufferings, under a sense of divine wrath, and the hidings of his Father's countenance, and his conflicts with the powers of darkness; but now, in the anguish of his soul, he breaks out,

saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani: which words are partly Hebrew, and partly Chaldee; the three first are Hebrew, and the last Chaldee, substituted in the room of "Azabthani"; as it was, and still is, in the Chaldee paraphrase of the text in (¹⁹²⁰Psalm 22:1), from whence they are taken;

that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? He calls him his God, not as he was God, but as he was man; who, as such, was chosen by him to the grace of union to the Son of God; was made and formed by him; was anointed by him with the oil of gladness; was supported and upheld by him in the day of salvation; was raised by him from the dead, and highly exalted by him at his own right hand; and Christ, as man, prayed to him as his God, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him as such: and though now he hid his face from him, yet he expressed strong faith and confidence of his interest in him. When he is said to be "forsaken" of God; the meaning is not, that the hypostatical union was dissolved, which was not even by death itself; the fulness of the Godhead still dwelt bodily in him: nor was he separated from the love of God; he had the same interest in his Father's heart and favour, both as his Son, and as mediator, as ever: nor was the principle and habit of joy and comfort lost in his soul, as man, but he was now without a sense of the gracious presence of God, and was filled, as the surety of his people, with a sense of divine wrath, which their iniquities he now bore, deserved, and which was necessary for him to endure, in order to make full satisfaction for them; for one part of the punishment of sin is loss of the divine presence. Wherefore he made not this expostulation out of ignorance: he knew the reason of it, and that it was not out of personal disrespect to him, or for any sin of his own; or because he was not a righteous, but a wicked man, as the Jew ^{f1700} blasphemously objects to him from hence; but because he stood in the legal place, and stead of sinners: nor was it out of impatience, that he so expressed himself; for he was entirely resigned to the will of God, and content to drink the whole of the bitter cup: nor out of despair; for he at the same time strongly claims and asserts his interest in God, and repeats it; but to show, that he bore all the griefs of his people, and this among the rest, divine desertion; and to set forth the bitterness of his sorrows, that not

only the sun in the firmament hid its face from him, and he was forsaken by his friends and disciples, but even left by his God; and also to express the strength of his faith at such a time. The whole of it evinces the truth of Christ's human nature, that he was in all things made like unto his brethren; that he had an human soul, and endured sorrows and sufferings in it, of which this of desertion was not the least: the heinousness of sin may be learnt from hence, which not only drove the angels out of heaven, and Adam out of the garden, and separates, with respect to communion, between God and his children; but even caused him to hide his face from his own Son, whilst he was bearing, and suffering for, the sins of his people. The condescending grace of Christ is here to be seen, that he, who was the word, that was with God from everlasting, and his only begotten Son that lay in his bosom, that he should descend from heaven by the assumption of human nature, and be for a while forsaken by God, to bring us near unto him: nor should it be wondered at, that this is sometimes the case of the saints, who should, in imitation of Christ, trust in the Lord at such seasons, and stay themselves on their God, and which may be some support unto them, they may be assured of the sympathy of Christ, who having been in this same condition, cannot but have a fellow feeling with them. The Jews themselves own^{f1701}, that these words were said by Jesus when he was in their hands. They indeed apply the passage to Esther; and say^{f1702}, that

“she stood in the innermost court of the king's house; and when she came to the house of the images, the Shekinah departed from her, and she said, “Eli, Eli, lama Azabthani?” my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Though others apply the “Psalm” to David, and others to the people of Israel in captivity^{f1703}: but certain it is, that it belongs to the Messiah; and many things in it were fulfilled with respect to Jesus, most clearly show him to be the Messiah, and the person pointed at: the first words of it were spoken by him, as the Jews themselves allow, and the very expressions which his enemies used concerning him while suffering, together with their gestures, are there recorded; and the parting his garments, and casting lots on his vesture, done by the Roman soldiers, are there prophesied of; and indeed there are so many things in it which agree with him, and cannot with any other, that leave it without all doubt that he is the subject of it^{f1704}.

Ver. 47. *Some of them that stood there*, etc.] Near the cross, looking on, and mocking at him,

when they heard that; the words, “Eli, Eli”, spoken by Christ,

said, this man calleth for Elias. These could not be the Roman soldiers that said so, who had no notion of Elias; rather the Hellenistic Jews, who not so well understanding the Hebrew language, hearing the above words, and having some notion of the prophet Elias, fancied he was calling for him; though it seems most likely to be the Jews, who either through the nearness of the sound of the words, and mistake of them, and not near enough to hear and distinguish them, really thought he called for that prophet; or rather wilfully mistook him, with an intent to banter and ridicule him.

Ver. 48. *And straightway one of them ran and took a sponge*, etc.] Which was not far from the cross, where a vessel full of vinegar was set, (~~48B~~ John 19:29),

and filled it with vinegar; dipping it into it, it sucked it up. Some of these sponges had leathern handles to them. ^{f1705}

And put it on a reed; a stalk of hyssop; (see Gill on “~~48B~~ John 19:29”),

and gave him to drink; not to revive his spirits, or hasten his death, as some have thought, but in contempt of him, and to mock him, he having signified that he was athirst.

Ver. 49. *The rest said, let be*, etc.] The others, to whom he belonged, that fetched the sponge, said to him, let him alone, keep at a distance from him, give him nothing to drink:

let us see whether Elias will come to save him; whom the Jews looked upon to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and therefore suggest, that should he come to save him, they would believe he was the Messiah; and they had a mighty notion of Elias appearing to persons frequently ^{f1706}, and talking, and conversing with them; (see Gill on “~~407B~~ Matthew 17:3”), though they did not believe he would come, and appear to Christ; for they were persons of great note for piety and learning, to whom he appeared, as they pretend, whereas they had no such opinion of him. The Ethiopic version here adds, and one took a spear and pierced his side with it, and blood and water flowed out: but this circumstance is only recorded by the

Evangelist John, (~~6184~~ John 19:34), though Beza says the same is read here in two ancient copies.

Ver. 50. *Jesus, when he had cried again*, etc.] “A second time”, as the Persic version; for he had cried once before, and expressed the words he did, as in (~~41746~~ Matthew 27:46), what he now delivered were, “Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit”, (~~42346~~ Luke 23:46), and “it is finished”, (~~6180~~ John 19:30), which he said

with a loud voice; which showed the vehemency of his affection, his strong confidence in God, and his being fearless of death; as also he thus spoke, that he might be heard, and his words attended to, since they contained things of the greatest importance and consequence: moreover, being able to express himself in such a manner, this declared him to be more than a mere man; for after such agonies in the garden, and so much fatigue in being hurried from place to place, and such loss of blood by being buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the accursed tree, where, being stretched, he had hung for some hours; to speak with so loud a voice was more than human, and was a conviction to the centurion, that he was a divine person: for when he saw that he so cried out, and “gave up the ghost”, he said, “truly this man was the Son of God”, (~~41159~~ Mark 15:39), and likewise it shows, that he died freely and voluntarily, and not through force and necessity: it was not all that men had done, or could do to him, that could have forced his life from him: he died willingly, and when nature was in its full strength; and which is signified in the next phrase,

yielded up the ghost, or “dismissed the Spirit”, as the Syriac version truly renders it; he sent it away. It was not taken from him, he laid down his life of himself, as the Lord of it, and gave himself freely to be an offering and sacrifice in the room of his people; which is a proof of his great love, and amazing grace unto them.

Ver. 51. *And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain*, etc.] Just at the time that Christ spake with so loud a voice, and expired, and which was at the time of the offering up of the evening incense; and so must be seen by the priest that was then offering, and those that assisted him, for the incense altar was near the vail; and which must be a very astonishing sight unto them: the vail was of a very great thickness; it was made of fine twined linen, (~~42351~~ Exodus 26:31), and it is a rule with the Jews ^{f1707}, that

“where ever mention is made in the law of fine linen, or fine twined linen, it means a thread six times doubled:”

and whereas this was made of blue, and purple, and scarlet, Jarchi’s note on the place is, that

“every kind was doubled with each thread of six threads.”

His sense is more clearly expressed in his note on (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 26:1),

“lo! here are four sorts to every thread; one of linen, and three of wool, and every thread is six times doubled; behold four sorts when they are twisted together, make twenty four doubles to a thread.”

Yea, some of them make it to be forty eight doubles ^{f1708}. What a thick piece of tapestry must this be! and this makes the rending of it the more amazing; for no doubt but that the vail of the second temple was made after the manner of the first; and this was rent

from top to bottom; and which was no less than forty cubits in length, which was the height of the holy of holies in the second temple; and which made the rent the more astonishing. The account the Jews give of the vail, is this ^{f1709}:

“R. Simeon ben Gamaliel said, on account of R. Simeon, the son of the Sagan, the thickness of the vail is an hand’s breadth, and it is woven of seventy two threads, and every thread has twenty four threads in it: it is forty cubits long, and twenty broad, and is made of eighty two myriads; (which is either the number of the threads in it, or the sum of the golden pence it cost. Some copies read, is made by eighty two virgins ^{f1710};) two are made every year; and three hundred priests wash it.”

The Syriac version renders it, “the face of the gate of the temple”; by which may be meant, perhaps, the vail of the gate of Ulam, or of the porch ^{f1711}.

The Jews have a tradition ^{f1712} that

“forty years before the destruction of the temple, the gates of it opened of themselves. R. Jochanan ben Zaccai reprov’d them, saying, O temple! temple! wherefore dost thou fright thyself? I know thy end is to be destroyed; for so prophesied of thee Zechariah, the son of, Iddo, “open thy gates, O Lebanon”, etc. (~~Zechariah~~ Zechariah 11:1).”

But whether this may be referred to in the above version, or has any reference to the evangelic history, I will not say. Other writers, as Josephus^{f1713}, and Egesippus^{f1714}, speak of the eastern gate of the city, which was of brass, and as much as twenty men could shut, opening of its own accord, before the destruction of the temple; which perhaps the Jewish tradition rather regards. This rending of the vail was done, as some think, in token of mourning for, and testifying abhorrence at the crucifixion of Christ; the temple rending its garments, the vail, at the death of its Lord, proprietor, and type, as the high priest did his at supposed blasphemy; or to show that the Lord, who had taken up his residence in the most holy place between the cherubim, over the mercy seat, in thick darkness, was now about to remove, and leave the house desolate; or it signified the rending of Christ's flesh, the breaking of his body for us, which was typified by the vail; (see ~~s800~~ Hebrews 10:20), and may also denote both the fulfilment and abrogation of the ceremonial law, which had its end in the death of Christ; and likewise the more clear discoveries of the mysteries of grace under the Gospel, in which they are laid to open view, and are beheld with open face: to which may be added, that this pointed out, that the way to the holiest of all, to heaven, of which this was a figure, was now made manifest; and was plain and accessible, as it was, first to Christ, who entered by his own blood, as the forerunner; and also to his people, who likewise have boldness to enter by the same.

And the earth did quake: whether this earthquake reached only to the spot of ground where Christ was crucified, and on which the city and temple of Jerusalem stood; or whether it extended to other parts of the earth; since, in the reign of Tiberius Caesar, as Pliny^{f1715} relates, there was an earthquake, in which twelve cities in Asia fell, is not certain. However, it was an indication of the divine anger and resentment, and in detestation of the sin of crucifying Christ; (see ~~s800~~ Psalm 18:7), and was an emblem of the shaking and removing of the Jewish church state and ordinances, (~~s825~~ Hebrews 12:26,27).

And the rocks rent; which were near Mount Calvary, and about Jerusalem; and, as we are told, the clefts are to be seen to this day, and which appear to be supernatural. This was also a token of divine wrath and fury, (Na 1:5,6), and a rebuke of the stupidity and hardness of the Jews, who were unmoved when rocks were rent asunder, being harder than they; and an emblem of the future conversion of many through the powerful ministry of the word, and in consequence of Christ's death; when hearts, as hard as

rocks, were broke in pieces, stony hearts taken away, and hearts of flesh given; of which the three thousand being pricked to the heart under Peter's sermon, were an instance.

Ver. 52. *And the graves were opened*, etc.] Which were near the city of Jerusalem: this was a proof of Christ's power over death and the grave, by dying; when he through death, destroyed him that had the power of it, and abolished death itself; and became the plague of death and the destruction of the grave, taking into his hands the keys of hell and death:

and many bodies of saints which slept, arose: not that they arose at the time of Christ's death: the graves were opened then, when the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent; but the bodies of the saints did not arise, till after Christ was risen, as appears from the following verse; but because the other event now happened, they are both recorded here: these were saints, and such as slept in Jesus; and of whom he is the first fruits that now rose; and not all, but many of them, as pledges of the future resurrection, and for the confirmation of Christ's, and the accomplishment of a prophecy in (^{<2369>}Isaiah 26:19). And they rose in the same bodies in which they before lived, otherwise they could not be called their bodies, or known by those to whom they appeared: but who they were is not to be known; some have thought them to be the ancient patriarchs, as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. In the Septuagint on (^{<1827>}Job 42:17), Job is said to be one of them, and a tradition is there recorded, which runs thus:

“it is written, that he rose with whom the Lord rose.”

But it should seem rather, that they were some later saints, such as Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, John the Baptist himself, good old Simeon, Joseph the husband of Mary, and others, well known to persons now alive. Some think they were such, as had been martyrs in the cause of religion; and so the Persic version renders the words, “and the bodies of many saints who suffered martyrdom, rose out of the graves”.

Ver. 53. *And came out of the graves after his resurrection*, etc.] The resurrection of Christ; for he rose as the first fruits, as the first begotten of the dead, and the firstborn from the dead; for he was the first that was raised to an immortal life; for though others were raised before him, by himself, and in the times of the prophets, yet to a mortal life; but these saints came forth to the resurrection of life, and therefore it was necessary that Christ the first fruits, should rise first. The Arabic version indeed

reads, “after their own resurrection”; and the Ethiopic version, “after they were raised”; both wrong, and scarcely sense:

and went into the holy city; the city of Jerusalem, which though now a very wicked city, was so called, because of the temple, and the worship of God, and his residence in it: the burying places of the Jews were without the city ^{f1716}, and therefore these risen saints, are said to go into it:

and appeared unto many; of their friends and acquaintance, who had personally known them, and conversed with them in their lifetime. These saints, I apprehend, continued on earth until our Lord’s ascension, and then joining the retinue of angels, went triumphantly with him to heaven, as trophies of his victory over sin, Satan, death, and the grave.

Ver. 54. *Now, when the centurion*, etc.] That was over the band of soldiers, that mocked Christ in Pilate’s hall, and who was particularly over the guard of soldiers, set about the cross of Christ:

and they that were with him, watching Jesus: the soldiers that were with him, who were set to watch the cross of Christ, lest he should come down, or any should take him down from thence; (see Gill on “⁴¹⁷³ Matthew 27:36”).

Saw the earthquake, and those things that were done; as besides that, the darkening of the sun, the rending of the rocks, and particularly heard with what a loud voice Christ spoke, and then at once expired:

they feared greatly; not with a true godly fear, but with a fear of punishment; lest divine vengeance should light on them, for their concern in this matter:

saying, truly this was the Son of God; which they concluded, not from any mediatorial performances, which they were utter strangers to, but from effects of divine power; and which to them showed him to be a divine person, what he said he was, and the Jews charged him with blasphemy, on account of, and condemned him for, as these soldiers might have seen and heard.

Ver. 55. *And many women were there*, etc.] At the cross of Christ, at some little distance from it; but where was Peter, who had declared he would never be offended, though all men were; and would die with Christ, rather than deny him? and where were the rest of the disciples, who said the same

things? None were present excepting John, as can be learnt from the evangelists; but many women, those of the weaker sex, were there, which was a rebuke of the former vanity and confidence of the disciples, and of their present pusillanimity and cowardice:

beholding afar off; Christ upon the cross, in all his agonies, the chief priests and people mocking him, the darkness upon the earth, the quaking of it, and the rending of the rocks: they were witnesses of all this, being at some little distance, by reason of the crowd of people and soldiers about the cross; and they beheld with an eye of faith, their bleeding, dying Lord, as crucified for them, and as bearing and taking away their sins: a sight which at once stirred up their affection and love to Christ, their concern for him, and sorrow for sin; and yet joy and peace, in believing in him:

which followed Jesus from Galilee: where they had seen his miracles, heard his doctrines, and had been savingly converted by him; and therefore followed him wherever he went, though an hundred miles or more, and through many difficulties and discouragements: they attended him in his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and now at his cross; nor did they leave him when dead, and in his grave:

ministering unto him: not now, for he stood in no need of their assistance, nor could they give him any; but this respects what they had done heretofore, in their journey with him from Galilee to Jerusalem; when they ministered to him of their worldly substance, as a token of their affection for him; and which expresses the low estate and mean condition he was in, and is an instruction to his followers, how to behave towards the faithful preachers of his Gospel; (see ^{<ARB>}Luke 8:3).

Ver. 56. *Among which was Mary Magdalene*, etc.] Out of whom Christ had cast out seven devils; and who having received much from him, loved much, which she showed by her zealous and constant attachment to him. She was called Magdalene, either because she was an inhabitant of Magdala, (^{<MS>}Matthew 15:39), so we read ^{f1717} of R. Isaac, *hal dgm*, of “Magdala”, or “Magdalene”; and the rather, because that Magdala was famous, or rather infamous, for whoredom; for which reason the Jews ^{f1718} say, it was destroyed: or else she was so called, because she was *tl dg*, a “tonstrix”, or plaiter of women’s hair, as the word signifies ^{f1719}; and so we often read of Mary, *ayçın r [yç al dgm*, “the plaiter of women’s hair” ^{f1720}; by whom the Jews seem to design Mary, the mother of Jesus, whom

they confound with this Mary Magdalene. Jerom says ^{f1721}, her name signifies “towered”, or “fortified”, because of her care and diligence, and the ardour of her faith; and “Migdal”, in Hebrew, does signify a tower:

and Mary the mother of James and Josés: the same with the wife of Cleophas, and sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus: instead of Josés, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read Joseph: **ySwy** “Jose”, in Hebrew, is the same with “Joseph”, the last letter being cut off; the Arabic version reads Mary, the mother of James, and the mother of Josés, (~~<B25>~~John 19:25).

And the mother of Zebedee’s children: that is, of James and John; her name was Salome, (~~<150>~~Mark 15:40).

Ver. 57. *When the even was come*, etc.] The second evening, when it was just at sunset; at which time the Jewish sabbath began, and when the bodies of those that were crucified, must be taken down; and if not dead, their bones must be broken, and they dispatched, in order to be interred in the common burying place of malefactors:

there came a rich man Arimathea: not from thence now, for he lived at Jerusalem; but this was the place of his nativity, or former abode, and from whence he originally came; and is the same with Ramathaim Zophim, and Ramah, and was the birthplace of Samuel the prophet, (~~<B00>~~1 Samuel 1:1,19), and is by the Septuagint called Armathaim, in (~~<B00>~~1 Samuel 1:1,3,19 8:4 15:34 16:13 28:3). His character, as a rich man, is particularly mentioned, not merely to show that such men may be, and sometimes are, instances of the grace of God; much less in a way of boasting, that such a man was attached to Jesus; but rather to point out the reason, how he came to have such easy access to Pilate, and to succeed in his business with him; as well as to observe the accomplishment of a prophecy, in (~~<250>~~Isaiah 53:9),

named Joseph; the same name with one of the patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; between whom there was a resemblance, not only as good men, but in their observance of funeral rites and obsequies; the one in those of his father, the other in those of his dear Lord and Master. Some think ^{f1722} he is the same with Joseph ben Gorion, the brother of Nicodemus ben Gorion, often spoken of as a priest, and one of the richest of them in Jerusalem:

who also himself was Jesus' disciple; though he was only a secret one, as Nicodemus was: he had not as yet, or till now publicly professed him, for fear of the Jews, who had made a law, that whoever did, should be cast out of the synagogue; (see ~~4308~~ John 19:38).

Ver. 58. *He went to Pilate*, etc.] To his house where he lived, and went in, as Mark says, (~~4158~~ Mark 15:43), boldly; not being ashamed of Christ crucified, or afraid to own him, and show his respect to him as dead, though he knew he should incur the displeasure, reproach, and persecution of the Jews:

and begged the body of Jesus; which could not be taken down and interred, without the leave of the Roman governor; and which was generally granted to the friends of the deceased, when asked; otherwise they were buried in places ^{f1723} appointed for such persons; (see Gill on ~~4073~~ Matthew 27:33"). And this would have been the case of Christ, had not Joseph craved his body; and which he did, to prevent its being abused by the Jews, and interred in such an ignominious manner:

then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered; to Joseph, after he had understood by the centurion that Jesus was dead, which he at first could not tell how to believe, and marvelled at it, (~~4154~~ Mark 15:44,45). Joseph might the more easily obtain his request, as he was a person of character and riches; and because Pilate himself had a good opinion of Jesus, and of his innocence, as well as his wife was much in his favour: so that Joseph had no difficulty to obtain the body of Christ; but as soon as he asked, he had the favour granted, and orders were given to the centurion and his soldiers, to deliver it to him.

Ver. 59. *And when Joseph had taken the body*, etc.] Down from the cross, with the assistance of others, or from the hands of those who had orders to deliver it to him:

he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth: that is, he wound up the body in it round and round, as was the custom of the Jews; (see ~~4816~~ Acts 5:6) (~~4814~~ John 11:44). Nor was it usual to bury in any thing but linen: so it is said ^{f1724},

“let the wrappings, or grave clothes, be $\mu\upsilon\eta\beta\lambda\ \hat{\iota}\tau\epsilon\pi\ \iota\ \zeta$, “of white linen”; and let not the price of them be dear, for it is forbidden to bury in wrappings of silk, or brodered garments, even

to a prince of Israel: for this is pride and destruction, and the work of the Gentiles.”

This clean linen cloth, in which the dead body of Christ was wrapped, may be an emblem of his purity and innocence, who did no sin; nor did he die for any of his own, but for the sins of others; and also of his pure and spotless righteousness, which is compared to fine linen, clean and white, and which he now had wrought out, and brought in; (see ^{f6618} Revelation 19:8).

Ver. 60. *And laid it in his own new tomb*, etc.] Christ was laid not in his own, but in another’s tomb; for as in his lifetime he had not where to lay his head; so when he was dead, he had no sepulchre of his own to put his body in: and moreover, this shows that as he was born for others, and suffered and died not for himself, but them; so he was buried for them, as well as rose again for their justification: and it was a “new” tomb in which he was laid, in which none had been laid before; and was so ordered by providence, for the confirmation of the truth of his resurrection; for had another body been laid there, it might have been said that it was that, and not his that was raised. The Jews distinguish between a new grave, and an old grave ^{f1725}:

“a new grave may be measured, and sold, and divided; an old one may not be measured, nor sold, nor divided: there is a new grave, which is as an old one; and an old one, which is as a new one; an old grave, in which are ten dead bodies, which is not in the power of the owners, lo! this is as a new grave.”

Which he had hewn out in the rock; it was usual with the Jews to make their sepulchres in rocks:

“in the midst (of the court of the sepulchre, they say ^{f1726}) two caves are opened, one on one side, and the other on the other; R. Simeon says, four on the four sides; Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says, all are [I sh ypl , “according to the rock”];”

i.e. according to the nature of the rock, out of which the sepulchre is hewn; (see ^{f3226} Isaiah 22:16).

And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre; for the sepulchres were made with doors to go in and out at: hence we often read ^{f1727} of rbqh j tph, “the door of the sepulchre”; and this was not only the

custom of the Jews, but of other nations also ^{f1728}: the stone rolled to the door, was what the Jews call, *l l wg*, from its being rolled to, and from the door of the sepulchre; and which, they say ^{f1729}, was a large and broad stone, with which the mouth of the sepulchre was stopped above: and it was at the shutting up of the sepulchre with this stone, that mourning began ^{f1730}; and after it was shut with this sepulchral stone, it was not lawful to open it ^{f1731}: now this was done by Joseph, to preserve the body from any injury, either from beasts, or from the Jews:

and when he had so done, *he departed* to his own house; for the sabbath drew on, and there was no more time to do any thing more in this affair. The Syriac version reads these last clauses in the plural number; “they rolled a great stone, and they put it”, etc. and they went away; intimating, that Joseph did not do this himself; the stone was too great; but by others, or with their assistance. It may be observed, that all this was done on a feast day; on one of the days of the feast of the passover, when no servile work was to be done; and yet this was agreeably to the Jewish canons, which say ^{f1732},

“they do all things needful for the dead on a feast day; they shave his head, and wash his clothes, and make him a coffin; and if they have no boards, they bring timber and saw boards of it, silently within doors; and if the person is a man of note, they do it even in the street; but they do not cut wood out of the forest, to saw planks of it for the coffin; nor do they hew stones, to build a tomb with them.”

In this case, there was no need for the latter, because the sepulchre in which the body of Christ was laid, had been hewn out of a rock before; but the body was wrapped in a clean linen cloth, and wound up in it with myrrh and aloes to preserve it, and was interred; and so the women on this day, prepared spices and ointments, to anoint it with; though they rested on the sabbath day according to the commandment; but then as soon as that was over, though it was a feast day, they came to the sepulchre with their spices and ointments, (^{<2236>}Luke 23:56 24:1).

Ver. 61. *And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary*, etc.] The wife of Cleophas, and the mother of James and of Joses:

sitting over against the sepulchre; observing where the body of Christ was put, and how it was laid; for they intended to prepare spices and ointments

to anoint it with; and were mourning for the death of Christ: for sitting was a mourning posture, which now they were allowed, the body being taken down from the cross, and interred by leave of the governor; for, for one that died as a malefactor, they might not use the outward signs of mourning: the canon is this ^{f1733}; for such

“they do not mourn, but they grieve; and there is no grieving but in the heart:”

hence these women before stood, (~~41925~~ John 19:25), but now they sat.

Ver. 62. *Now the next day that followed the day of preparation,* etc.]

Which was the sabbath day; for the day of preparation was the day before the sabbath, (~~41152~~ Mark 15:42), in which they prepared every thing necessary for the sabbath, and therefore was so called: and as this introduces the account of the chief priests and Pharisees, making application to Pilate, to secure the sepulchre; and which by his leave they did, by sealing the stone, and setting a guard about the sepulchre; it shows what consciences these men had, who accused the disciples of Christ of a violation of the sabbath, for plucking a few ears of corn on that day; and sought to kill Jesus, because he healed a man on it, and bid him take up his bed and walk; and yet they themselves could leave their devotions, and first meet together and agree upon an address to Pilate, and then go in a body to his palace; and having obtained their request, march to Joseph’s garden, and make the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch, which were servile works, and, according to their laws and traditions, not to be done on the sabbath day; and yet they scrupled them not, notwithstanding their characters and profession, which follow:

the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate; these were the inveterate and implacable enemies of Christ; they took counsel how to put him to death; they employed Judas to betray him, and sent a band of soldiers with him to take him; they suborned false witnesses against him; they moved the people to prefer Barabbas to him; they got him condemned to death, and followed him to the cross, where they mocked him; and still, like the troubled sea, they were restless and uneasy; for though he was dead, they feared his resurrection; and though they could not prevent the thing, they consult to hinder the credit of it.

Ver. 63. *Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said,* etc.] Meaning Jesus; for no better name could they give him alive or dead, and they chose

to continue it; and the rather to use it before Pilate, who had a good opinion of his innocence; and to let him see, that they still retained the same sentiments of him: **tysm**, “a deceiver”, is with the Jews ^{f1734},

“a private person, that deceives a private person; saying to him there is a God in such a place, so it eats, and so it drinks; so it does well, and so it does ill.”

But which can never agree with Jesus, who was not a private person, but a public preacher; and who taught men, not privately, but openly, in the temple and in the synagogues; nor did he teach idolatry, or any thing contrary to the God of Israel, or to the unity of the divine being; or which savoured of, and encouraged the polytheism of the Gentiles. The Ethiopic version renders these words thus; “Sir, remember”, etc. as if Christ had said this to Pilate in their hearing, and therefore put him in mind of it.

While he was yet alive; so that they owned that he was dead; and therefore could not object this to the truth of his resurrection, that he was taken down from the cross alive, and did not die:

after three days I will rise again: now, though he said to his to his disciples privately, (^{<16c1>}Matthew 16:21 17:23), yet not clearly and expressly to the Scribes and Pharisees; wherefore they must either have it from Judas, and lied in saying they remembered it: or they gathered it either from what he said concerning the sign of the prophet Jonas, (^{<1020>}Matthew 12:40), or rather from his words in (^{<1019>}John 2:19), and if so, they acted a most wicked part, in admitting a charge against him, as having a design upon their temple, to destroy it, and then rebuild it in three days; when they knew those words were spoken by him concerning his death, and resurrection from the dead: they remembered this, when the disciples did not: bad men have sometimes good memories, and good men bad ones; so that memory is no sign of grace.

Ver. 64. *Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure*, etc.] By this also they own, that he was buried; and they knew in what, and whose sepulchre he was laid, and where it was; and request of Pilate, that as he had given leave to Joseph to take the body and inter it, that he would also give orders that the sepulchre might be watched, that no body might come near it, and remove the body, and that

until the third day: not from the time they made this request, but from the time of Christ's death; for no longer did they desire the sepulchre to be guarded; for if he did not rise, and no pretensions could be made to it in that time, they then very likely intended to expose his dead body, and triumph over him as an impostor; and after that time, they cared not what became of it, and were in no concern about watching the sepulchre; but till then they judged it necessary and desired it,

lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away: but of this there was no danger; they were too fearful and timorous to do such an action, had they been ever so much inclined to it; they all forsook him and fled immediately upon his apprehension; nor durst any of them appear at the time of his crucifixion, but John; and were now shut up for fear of the Jews; and besides, they had forgot what Christ said to them about his resurrection, though these men remembered it, and even disbelieved it when it was told them: the phrase "by night", is not in two copies of Beza's, nor in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but is in other copies, and in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions:

and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead; to the common people, that were illiterate, credulous, and easily imposed on: as for themselves, who were the learned, the wise and knowing, they were in no danger of being carried away with such a deception; but the populace, for whom they pretend a great concern, were:

so the last error shall be worse than the first; either their own error and mistake, should the sepulchre be neglected, and an opportunity given for such a report; this would be of more fatal consequence than their first mistake, in suffering him and his followers to go on so long: or rather, the error of the people, in believing that Jesus was the Messiah; which would be greatly strengthened and received by greater numbers, should it be given out, and there was any proof of it, that he was risen from the dead: nor were they mistaken in this, for the number of the disciples and followers of Christ greatly increased after his resurrection; to an hundred and twenty, which was their number upon Christ's resurrection, three thousand were added at one time; being converted under one sermon, and that the first preached after Christ was risen.

Ver. 65. *Pilate said unto them, ye have a watch*, etc.] Meaning either the watch of the temple, said to be placed in the tower of Antonia, for the

service of it: hence mention is made of the captain of the temple, (^{<400>}Acts 4:1), but it is not likely they would remove the temple guards, to watch a sepulchre night and day: or rather, therefore, the soldiers that had had the care of the crucifixion of Christ, and watched him on the cross, are designed: the words may be read imperatively, “have yea watch”, or “take a watch”, as the Ethiopic version renders it, and which seems best; for if they had a watch already, what occasion had they to have applied to Pilate for one? but having none, he gives them leave to take one, or such a number of soldiers as were sufficient:

go your way; as fast as you can, take the watch as soon as you please, make no stay, but satisfy yourselves in this point:

make [it] as sure as you can; or, as you know how to do it, and what will be proper and necessary.

Ver. 66. *So they went*, etc.] From Pilate’s palace, to the garden of Joseph, and to the sepulchre there; which whether more than a sabbath day’s journey, or two thousand cubits, may be inquired; and if so, then they broke one of their own traditions, which allowed a person to go no further on a sabbath day; (see Gill on “^{<401>}Acts 1:12”).

And made the sepulchre sure; in the following manner,

sealing the stone; that was rolled to the door of it, it may be with some public seal, with Pilate’s, or with the sanhedrim’s; as the stone at the mouth of the lions’ den, in which Daniel was put, was sealed with the king’s signet, and with the signet of his lords, (^{<206>}Daniel 6:17), that there might be no change of the sentence upon him, and by which it appeared, that his deliverance was by no human assistance: so the stone at Christ’s sepulchre was sealed, that it could not be removed without breaking it; which would show, whether any fraudulent methods were taken to remove the body:

and setting a watch; a guard of soldiers, to observe and prevent any person coming near it; or “with the watch”: they made sure the sepulchre with the watch; or sealed the stone, the watch being present; all which was overruled by the providence of God, for the greater confirmation of the truth of Christ’s resurrection: by the methods taken, it clearly appears, there could be no fraud in the case; the body was laid in a tomb, where no corpse had ever been before; in a tomb hewed out of a rock, to which there was no access, but at the door; where a great stone was rolled; and this had a seal upon it, and a guard of soldiers about it; and hereby there were more

witnesses of Christ's resurrection, than otherwise would have been; as the soldiers, though they were afterwards bribed to tell another story; and even the chief priests and Pharisees were convicted that he was risen, or they would never have taken such a method with the soldiers, as they did.