

CHAPTER 14

In this chapter begins the account which this evangelist gives of the death and sufferings of our Lord Jesus, which we are all concerned to be acquainted, not only with the history of, but with the mystery of. Here is,

I. The plot of the chief priests and scribes against Christ (v. 1, 2).

II. The anointing of Christ's head at a supper in Bethany, two days before his death (v. 3-9).

III. The contract Judas made with the chief priests, to betray him (v. 10, 11).

IV. Christ's eating the passover with his disciples, his instituting the Lord's supper, and his discourse with his disciples, at and after supper (v. 12-31).

V. Christ's agony in the garden (v. 32-42).

VI. The betraying of him by Judas, and the apprehending of him by the chief priests' agents (v. 43-52).

VII. His arraignment before the high priest, his conviction, and the indignities done him at that bar (v. 53-65).

VIII. Peter's denying him (v. 66-72). Most of which passages we had before, Matthew 26.

◀H▶ MARK 14:1-11

CHRIST ANOINTED AT BETHANY

We have here instances,

I. Of the *kindness of Christ's friends*, and the provision made of respect and honour for him. Some friends he had, even in and about Jerusalem, that loved him, and never thought they could do enough for him, among whom, though Israel be not gathered, he is, and will be, glorious.

1. Here was *one friend*, that was so kind as to *invite him to sup with him*; and he was so kind as to accept the invitation, v. 3. Though he had a prospect of his death approaching, yet he did not abandon himself to a melancholy retirement from all company, but conversed as freely with his friends as usual.

2. Here was *another friend*, that was so kind as to *anoint his head* with very precious ointment as he *sat at meat*. This was an extraordinary piece of respect paid him by a good woman that thought nothing too good to bestow upon Christ, and to do him honour. Now the scripture was fulfilled, *When the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof*, ^{<2112>}Song of Solomon 1:12. Let us *anoint* Christ as our *Beloved*, kiss him with a kiss of *affection*; and anoint him as our *Sovereign*, kiss him with a kiss of *allegiance*. Did he pour out his soul unto death for us, and shall we think any box of ointment too precious to pour out upon him? It is observable that she took care to pour it all out upon Christ's head; she *broke the box* (so we read it); but because it was an *alabaster box*, not easily broken, nor was it necessary that it should be broken, to get out the ointment, some read it, she *shook* the box, or *knocked it to the ground*, to loosen what was in it, that it might be got out the better; or, she *rubbed* and *scraped* out all that stuck to the sides of it. Christ must have been honoured with *all we* have, and we must not think to keep back any part of the price. Do we give him the *precious ointment* of our best affections? Let him have them *all*; love him *with all the heart*.

Now,

(1.) There were those that put a *worse construction* upon this than it *deserved*. They called it a *waste of the ointment*, v. 4. Because they could not have found their hearts to put themselves to such an expense for the honouring of Christ, they thought that she was *prodigal*, who did. Note, As the *vile person* ought to be called *liberal*, nor the *churl* said to be *bountiful* (^{<2335>}Isaiah 32:5); so the *liberal* and *bountiful* ought not to be called *wasteful*. They pretend it might have been *sold*, and *given to the poor*, v. 5. But as a *common piety* to the *corban* will not excuse from a *particular charity* to a poor parent (^{<4171>}Mark 7:11), so a common charity to the poor will not excuse from a particular act of piety to the Lord Jesus. What thy hand finds to do, that is good, *do it with thy might*.

(2.) Our Lord Jesus put a *better construction* upon it than, for aught that appears, was *designed*. Probably, she intended no more, than to show the

great honour she had for him, before all the company, and to complete his entertainment. But Christ makes it to be an act of *great faith*, as well as *great love* (v. 8); “*She is come aforehand, to anoint my body to the burying*, as if she foresaw that my resurrection would prevent her doing it afterward.” This funeral rite was a kind of presage of, or prelude to, his death approaching. See how Christ's heart was filled with the thoughts of his death, how every thing was construed with a reference to that, and how familiarly he spoke of it upon all occasions. It is usual for those who are *condemned to die*, to have their coffins prepared, and other provision made for their funerals, while they are yet alive; and *so* Christ accepted *this*. Christ's death and burial were the lowest steps of his humiliation, and therefore, though he cheerfully submitted to them, yet he would have some marks of honour to attend them, which might help to take off the *offence of the cross*, and be an intimation how *precious in the sight of the Lord the death of his saints is*. Christ never rode in triumph into Jerusalem, but when he came thither to suffer; nor had ever his head anointed, but for *his burial*.

(3.) He recommended this piece of heroic piety to the applause of the church in all ages; *Wherever this gospel shall be preached, it shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her*, v. 9. Note, The honour which attends well-doing, even in this world, is sufficient to balance the reproach and contempt that are cast upon it. *The memory of the just is blessed*, and they that had *trial of cruel mockings*, yet *obtained a good report*, ^{<3106>}Hebrews 11:6, 39. Thus was this good woman repaid for her box of ointment, *Nec oleum perdidit nec operam* — *She lost neither her oil nor her labour*. She got by it that good name which is *better than precious ointment*. Those that *honour Christ he will honour*.

II. Of the *malice of Christ's enemies*, and the preparation made by them to do him mischief.

1. The chief priests, his *open enemies*, consulted how they might *put him to death*, v. 1, 2. The feast of the *passover* was now at hand, and at *that* feast he must be crucified,

(1.) That his death and suffering might be the more public, and that all *Israel*, even those *of the dispersion*, who came from all parts to the feast, might be witnesses of it, and of the wonders that attended it.

(2.) That the Anti-type might answer to the type. Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us, and brought us out of the house of bondage, at the same time that the paschal lamb was sacrificed, and Israel's deliverance out of Egypt was *commemorated*.

Now see,

[1.] How *spiteful* Christ's enemies were; they did not think it enough to banish or imprison him, for they aimed not only to *silence* him, and *stop* his progress for the future, but to be revenged on him for all the good he had done.

[2.] How *subtle* they were; *Not on the feast-day*, when the people are together; they do not say, Lest they should be disturbed in their devotions, and diverted from them, but, *Lest there should be an uproar* (v. 2); lest they should rise, and rescue him, and *fall foul* upon those that *attempt* any thing against him. They who *desired* nothing more than the *praise* of men, dreaded nothing more than the rage and displeasure of men.

2. Judas, his *disguised enemy*, contracted with them for the betraying of him, v. 10, 11. He is said to be *one of the twelve* that were Christ's family, intimate with him, trained up for the service of the kingdom; and he *went to the chief priests*, to tender his service in this affair.

(1.) That which he proposed to them, was, to *betray Christ* to them, and to give them notice when and where they might find him, and seize him, without making an *uproar among the people*, which they were afraid of, if they should seize him when he appeared *in public*, in the midst of his admirers. Did he know then what help it was they wanted, and where they were run aground in their counsels? It is probable that he did not, for the debate was held in their close *cabal*. Did they know that he had a mind to serve them, and make court to him? No, they could not imagine that any of his intimates should be so base; but Satan, who was entered into Judas, knew what occasion they had for him, and could guide him to be *guide to them*, who were contriving to *take Jesus*. Note, The spirit that works in all the children of disobedience, knows how to bring them in to the assistance one of another in a wicked project, and then to harden them in it, with the fancy that Providence favours them.

(2.) That which he proposed to himself, was, to *get money* by the bargain; he had what he aimed at, when *they promised to give him money*.

Covetousness was Judas's master-lust, *his own iniquity*, and that betrayed him to the sin of betraying his Master; the devil suited his temptation to *that*, and so conquered him. It is not said, They promised him *preferment* (he was not ambitious of that), but, they promised him *money*. See what need we have to double our guard against the sin that *most easily besets us*. Perhaps it was Judas's covetousness that brought him at first to *follow Christ*, having a promise that he should be cash-keeper, or purser, to the society, and he loved in his heart to be fingering money; and now that there was money to be got on the other side, he was as ready to betray him as ever he had been to follow him. Note, Where the principle of men's profession of religion is carnal and worldly, and the serving of a secular interest, the very same principle, whenever the wind turns, will be the bitter root of a vile and scandalous apostasy.

(3.) Having secured the money, he set himself to make good his bargain; he sought *how he might conveniently betray him*, how he might *seasonably deliver him up*, so as to answer the intention of those who had hired him. See what need we have to be careful that we do not ensnare ourselves in sinful engagements. If at any time we be so ensnared in the words of our mouths, we are concerned to deliver ourselves by a speedy retreat, ~~and~~ Proverbs 6:1-5. It is a rule in our law, as well as in our religion, that an *obligation to do an evil thing is null and void*; it binds to repentance, not to performance. See how the way of sin is down-hill — when men are *in*, they must be *on*; and what *wicked* contrivances many have in their sinful pursuits, to compass their designs *conveniently*; but such conveniences will prove mischiefs in the end.

~~and~~ MARK 14:12-31

THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

In these verses we have,

I. Christ's eating the passover with his disciples, the night before he died, with the joys and comforts of which ordinance he prepared himself for his approaching sorrows, the full prospect of which did not indispose him for that solemnity. Note, No apprehension of trouble, come or coming, should put us by, or put us out of frame for, our attendance on holy ordinances, as we have opportunity for it.

1. Christ ate the passover at the *usual time* when the other Jews did, as Dr. Whitby had fully made out, and not, as Dr. Hammond would have it, the night before. It was on the first day of that feast, which (taking in all the eight days of the feast) was called, *The feast of unleavened bread*, even that day when they *killed the passover*, v. 12.

2. He directed his disciples how to find the place where he intended to eat the passover; and hereby gave such another proof of his infallible knowledge of things distant and future (which to us seem altogether *contingent*), as he had given when he sent them for the ass on which he rode in triumph (⁴¹¹⁶Mark 11:6); “*Go into the city* (for the *passover* must be *eaten* in Jerusalem), and *there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water* (a servant sent for water to clean the rooms in his master's house); *follow him, go in where he goes, enquire for his master, the good man of the house* (v. 14), and desire him to show you a room.” No doubt, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had rooms fitted up to be *let out*, for this occasion, to those that came out of the country to keep the passover, and one of those Christ made use of; not any friend's house, nor any house he had formerly frequented, for then he would have said, “Go to such a friend,” or, “You know where we used to be, go thither and prepare.” Probably he went where he was not known, that he might be *undisturbed* with his disciples. Perhaps he notified it by *a sign*, to conceal it from Judas, that he might not know till he came to the place; and by *such a sign* to intimate that he will dwell in the *clean heart*, that is, *washed* as with *pure water*. Where he designs to come, a pitcher of water must go before him; see ²⁰¹⁶Isaiah 1:16-18.

3. He ate the passover in an *upper room furnished, estromenon* — *laid with carpets* (so Dr. Hammond); it would seem to have been a very handsome *dining-room*. Christ was far from affecting any thing that looked stately in eating his common meals; on the contrary, he chose that which was homely, sat down on the grass: but, when he was to keep a sacred feast, in honour of that he would be at the expense of as good a room as he could get. God looks not at *outward pomp*, but he looks at the tokens and expressions of *inward reverence* for a divine institution, which, it is to be feared, those want, who, to save charges, deny themselves decencies in the worship of God.

4. He ate it *with the twelve*, who were his family, to teach those who have the charge of families, not only families of *children*, but families of

servants, or families of *scholars*, or *pupils*, to keep up religion among them, and worship God with them. If Christ came *with the twelve*, then Judas was with them, though he was at this time contriving to betray his Master; and it is plain by what follows (v. 20), that he was there: he did not absent himself, lest he could have been suspected; had his *seat* been *empty* at this feast, they would have said, as Saul of David, *He is not clean, surely he is not clean*, ~~ORIS~~ 1 Samuel 20:26. Hypocrites, though they know it is at their peril, yet crowd into special ordinances, to keep up their repute, and palliate their secret wickedness. Christ did not *exclude* him from the feast, though he *knew* his wickedness, for it was not as yet become public and scandalous. Christ, designing to put the *keys of the kingdom of heaven* into the hands of men, who can judge only according to outward appearance, would hereby both direct and encourage them in their admissions to his table, to be satisfied with a justifiable profession, because they cannot discern the *root of bitterness* till it *springs up*.

II. Christ's discourse with his disciples, as they were *eating* the passover. It is probable that they had discourse, according to the custom of the feast, of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the preservation of the first-born, and were as pleasant as they used to be together on this occasion, till Christ told them that which would mix *trembling* with their *joys*.

1. They were *pleasing* themselves with the society of *their Master*; but he tells them that they must now presently lose him; *The Son of man is betrayed*; and they knew, for he had often told them, what followed — If he be *betrayed*, the next news you will hear of him, is, that he is *crucified* and *slain*; God hath determined it concerning him, and he agrees to it; *The Son of man goes, as it is written of him*, v. 21. It was *written* in the counsels of God, and *written* in the prophecies of the Old Testament, not one jot or tittle of either of which can *fall to the ground*.

2. They were *pleasing* themselves with the society *one of another*, but Christ casts a damp upon the joy of that, by telling them, *One of you that eateth with me shall betray me*, v. 18. Christ said this, if it might be, to startle the conscience of Judas, and to awaken him to repent of his wickedness, and to draw back (for it was not too late) from the brink of the pit. But for aught that appears, he who was *most concerned* in the warning, was *least concerned* at it. All the rest were affected with it.

(1.) They began to be *sorrowful*. As the remembrance of our former falls into sin, so the fear of the like again, doth often much embitter the comfort of our spiritual feasts, and damp our joy. Here were the *bitter herbs*, with which this *passover-feast* was taken.

(2.) They began to be *suspicious* of themselves; they said *one by one, Is it I? And another said, Is it I?* They are to be commended for their *charity*, that they were more jealous of themselves than of *one another*. It is the law of charity, to *hope the best* (⁴¹³1 Corinthians 13:5-7), because we assuredly *know*, therefore we may justly *suspect*, more evil by ourselves than by our brethren. They are also to be commended for their acquiescence in what Christ said; they trusted more to *his words* than to *their own hearts*; and therefore do not say, “I am sure *it is not I*,” but, “*Lord, is it I?* see if there be such a *way of wickedness in us*, such a *root of bitterness*, and discover it to us, that we may pluck up that *root*, and stop up that *way*.”

Now, in answer to their enquiry, Christ saith that,

[1.] Which would make them easy; “It is not *you*, or *you*; it is this that now *dips with me in the dish*; the adversary and enemy is this wicked Judas.”

[2.] Which, one would think, should make Judas very *uneasy*. If he go on in his undertaking, it is upon the sword's point, for *woe to that many by whom the Son of man is betrayed*; he is undone, for every undone; his sin will soon *find him out*; and it were *better for him that he had never been born*, and had never had a being than such a miserable one as he must have. It is very probable that Judas encouraged himself in it with *this* thought, that his Master had often said he must be betrayed; “And if it must be done, surely God *will not find fault* with him that doth it, for who *hath resisted his will?*” As that objector argues, ⁴¹⁹Romans 9:19. But Christ tells him that this will be no shelter or excuse to him; *The Son of man indeed goes; as it is written of him*, as a lamb to the slaughter; but *woe to that man by whom he is betrayed*. God's decree to permit the sins of men, and bring glory to himself out of them, do neither necessitate their sins, nor determine to them, nor will they be any *excuse* of the sin, or *mitigation* of the punishment. Christ was delivered indeed by *the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God*; but, notwithstanding that, it is *with wicked hands that he is crucified and slain*, ⁴²³Acts 2:23.

III. The institution of the Lord's supper.

1. It was instituted in the close of a *supper*, when they were sufficiently fed with the *paschal lamb*, to show that in the Lord's supper there is no *bodily repast* intended; to preface it with such a thing, is to revive Moses again. But it is food for *the soul* only, and therefore a very little of that which is for the body, as much as will serve for a *sign*, is enough. It was at the close of the *passover-supper*, which by this was evangelized, and then superseded and set aside. Much of the doctrine and duty of the eucharist is illustrated to us by the law of the passover (Exodus 12); for the Old-Testament institutions, though they do not *bind us*, yet *instruct us*, by the help of a gospel-key to them. And these two ordinances lying here so near together, it may be good to compare them, and observe how much shorter and plainer the institution of the Lord's supper is, than that of the passover was. Christ's yoke is easy in comparison with that of the ceremonial law, and his ordinances are more spiritual.

2. It was instituted by the *example* of Christ himself; not with the ceremony and solemnity of a law, as the ordinance of baptism was, after Christ's resurrection (^{<4189>}Matthew 28:19), with, *Be it enacted by the authority aforesaid*, by a power given to Christ *in heaven and on earth* (v. 18); but by the practice of our Master himself, because intended for those who are already his disciples, and taken into covenant with him: but it has the obligation of the law, and was intended to remain in full force, power, and virtue, till his second coming.

3. It was instituted with *blessing* and *giving of thanks*; the gifts of common providence are to be so received (^{<5006>}1 Timothy 4:4, 5), much more than the gifts of special grace. He *blessed* (v. 22), and *gave thanks*, v. 23. At his other meals, he was wont to *bless*, and *give thanks* (^{<4164>}Mark 6:41; 8:7) so remarkably, that he was known by it, (^{<240>}Luke 24:30, 31. And he did the same at this meal.

4. It was instituted to be a *memorial* of his *death*; and therefore he *broke* the bread, to show how it pleased the Lord to *bruise him*; and he called the *wine*, which is the blood of the grape, the *blood of the New Testament*. The death Christ died was a *bloody death*, and frequent mention is made of the *blood*, the *precious* blood, as the price of our redemption; for the blood is *the life*, and made *atonement for the soul*, (^{<871>}Leviticus 17:11-14. The pouring out of the blood was the most sensible indication of the *pouring out of his soul*, (^{<250>}Isaiah 53:12. Blood has a *voice* (^{<000>}Genesis 4:10); and therefore blood is so often mentioned, because it was to *speak*,

^{<824>}Hebrews 12:24. It is called the *blood of the New Testament*; for the covenant of grace became a *testament*, and of force by the death of Christ, the testator, ^{<806>}Hebrews 9:16. It is said to be *shed for many*, to justify *many* (^{<251>}Isaiah 53:11), to bring *many* sons to glory, ^{<820>}Hebrews 2:10. It was sufficient for *many*, being of infinite value; it has been of use to *many*; we read of a great multitude which no man could number, that had all *washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb* (^{<679>}Revelation 7:9-14); and still it is a *fountain opened*. How comfortable is this to poor repenting sinners, that the blood of Christ is *shed for many!* And if for *many*, why not for *me*? If for sinners, sinners of the Gentiles, the chief of sinners, then *why not for me*?

5. It was instituted to be a *ratification* of the covenant made with us in him, and a sign of the conveyance of those benefits to us, which were purchased for us by his death; and therefore he broke the bread *to them* (v. 22), and said, *Take, eat* of it: he gave the cup *to them*, and ordered them to *drink of it*, v. 23. Apply the doctrine of Christ crucified to yourselves, and let it be *meat* and *drink* to your souls, strengthening, nourishing, and refreshing, to you, and the support and comfort of your spiritual life.

6. It was instituted with an eye to the happiness of heaven, and to be an earnest and fore-taste of that, and thereby to put our mouths out of taste for all the pleasures and delights of sense (v. 25); *I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine*, as it is a bodily refreshment. I have done with it. *No one, having tasted spiritual delights, straightway desires sensitive ones*, for he saith, The *spiritual* is better (^{<459>}Luke 5:39); but *every one* that hath tasted *spiritual* delights, straightway desires *eternal* ones, for he saith, Those are *better still*; and therefore let me *drink no more of the fruit of the vine*, it is dead and flat to those that have been made to *drink* of the *river* of God's pleasures; but, Lord, hasten the day, when I shall *drink* it new and fresh *in the kingdom of God*, where it shall be for ever new, and in perfection.

7. It was closed with a *hymn*, v. 26. Though Christ was in the midst of his enemies, yet he did not, for fear of them, omit this sweet duty of singing psalms. Paul and Silas sang, when the *prisoners heard them*. This was an *evangelical song*, and gospel times are often spoken of in the Old Testament, as times of rejoicing, and praise is expressed by *singing*. This was Christ's *swan-like* song, which he sung just before he entered upon his agony; probably, that which is usually sung, Psalm 113 to 118.

IV. Christ's discourse with his disciples, as they were returning to Bethany by moonlight. When they had *sung the hymn*, presently they *went out*. It was now near bedtime, but our Lord Jesus had his heart so much upon his suffering, that he would not *come into the tabernacle of his house, nor go up into his bed, nor give sleep to his eyes*, when that work was to be done, ^{<118B>}Psalm 132:3, 4. The Israelites were forbidden to go out of their houses the night that they ate the passover, for fear of the sword of the destroying angel, ^{<122>}Exodus 12:22, 23. But because Christ, the *great shepherd*, was to be *smitten*, he *went out* purposely to expose himself to the sword, as a champion; they *evaded* the destroyer, but Christ *conquered* him, and brought *destructions to a perpetual end*.

1. Christ here foretels that in his sufferings he should be *deserted* by all his disciples; “*You will all be offended because of me, this night*. I know you will (v. 27), and what I tell you now, is no other than what the scripture has told you before; *I will smite the shepherd, and then the sheep will be scattered*.” Christ knew this before, and yet welcomed them at his table; he sees the falls and miscarriages of his disciples, and yet doth not refuse them. Nor should we be discouraged from coming to the Lord's supper, by the fear of relapsing into sin afterward; but, the greater of our danger is, the more need we have to fortify ourselves by the diligent conscientious use of holy ordinances. Christ tells them that they would be *offended in him*, would begin to question whether he were the Messiah or no, when they saw him *overpowered* by his enemies. Hitherto, they had *continued with him in his temptations*; though they had sometimes offended him, yet they had not been *offended in him*, nor turned the back upon him; but now the storm would be so great, that they would all *slip their anchors*, and be in danger of *shipwreck*. Some trials are more particular (as ^{<120>}Revelation 2:10, *The devil shall cast some of you into prison*); but others are more general, an *hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world*, ^{<120>}Revelation 3:10. The *smiting* of the shepherd is often the *scattering* of the sheep: magistrates, ministers, masters of families, if these are, as they should be, *shepherds* to those under their charge, when any thing comes amiss to them, the whole flock suffers for it, and is endangered by it.

But Christ encourages them with a promise that they shall rally again, shall return both to their duty and to their comfort (v. 28); “*After I am risen, I will gather you in from all the places wither you are scattered*, ^{<120>}Ezekiel 34:12. I will *go before you into Galilee*, will see our friends, and enjoy one another there.”

2. He foretels that he should be *denied* particularly by Peter. When they *went out* to go to the mount of Olives, we may suppose that they dropped Judas (he stole away from them), whereupon the rest began to think *highly* of themselves, that they *stuck* to their Master, when Judas quitted him. But Christ tells them, that though they should be kept by his grace from Judas's apostasy, yet they would have no reason to boast of their constancy. Note, Though God keeps us from being as bad as the worst, yet we may well be ashamed to think that we are not better than we are.

(1.) Peter is confident that he should not *do so ill* as the rest of his disciples (v. 29); *Though all should be offended*, all his brethren here present, *yet will not I*. He supposes himself not only stronger than others, but so much stronger, as to be able to receive the shock of a temptation, and bear up against it, *all alone*; to *stand*, though nobody stood *by him*. It is bred in the bone with us, to *think well* of ourselves, and *trust to our own hearts*.

(2.) Christ tells him that he will *do worse* than any of them. They will all *desert* him, but he will *deny* him; not once, but *thrice*; and that presently; “*This day, even this night before the cock crow twice, thou wilt deny* that ever thou hadst any knowledge of me, or acquaintance with me, as one ashamed and afraid to own me.”

(3.) He stands to his promise; “*If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee*; I will adhere to thee, though it cost me my life:” and, no doubt, he thought as he said. Judas said nothing like this, when Christ told him he would betray him. He sinned by contrivance, Peter by surprise; he *devised the wickedness* (³⁸¹Micah 2:1), Peter was *overtaken in this fault*, ⁴⁸¹Galatians 6:1. It was ill done of Peter, to contradict his Master. If he had said, with fear and trembling, “Lord, give me grace to keep me from denying thee, lead me not into this temptation, deliver me from this evil,” it might have been prevented: but they were all thus confident; they who said, *Lord, is it I?* now said, *It shall never be me*. Being acquitted from their fear of betraying Christ, they were now secure. But he that thinks he stands, must learn to take heed lest he fall; and he that *girdeth on the harness*, not boast *as though he had put it off*.

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Christ is here entering upon his sufferings, and begins with those which were the sorest of all his sufferings, those in his *soul*. Here we have him in his *agony*; this melancholy story we had in Matthew; this *agony* in soul was the *wormwood and the gall* in the *affliction and misery*; and thereby it appeared that no sorrow was *forced upon him*, but that it was what he *freely* admitted.

I. He retired for prayer; *Sit ye here* (saith he to his disciples), while I go a little further, and *pray*. He had lately prayed *with them* (John 17); and now he appoints them to withdraw while he goes to his Father upon an errand peculiar to himself. Note, Our praying with our families will not excuse our neglect of secret worship. When Jacob entered into his agony, he first *sent over all that he had*, and was *left alone*, and then *there wrestled a man with him* (⁽¹³²⁾Genesis 32:23, 24), though he had been at prayer before (v. 9), it is likely, with his family.

II. Even into that retirement he took with him *Peter, and James, and John* (v. 33), three competent witnesses of this part of his humiliation; and though great spirits care not how few know any thing of their agonies, he was not ashamed that they should see. These three had boasted most of their ability and willingness to suffer with him; Peter here, in this chapter, and James and John (⁽¹¹⁹⁾Mark 10:39); and therefore Christ takes them to stand by, and see what a struggle he had with the *bloody baptism* and the *bitter cup*, to convince them that they knew not what they said. It is fit that they who are most confident, should be *first* tried, that they may be made sensible of their folly and weakness.

III. There he was in a tremendous agitation (v. 33); *He began to be sore amazed* — *ekthambeisthai*, a word not used in Matthew, but very significant; it bespeaks something like that *horror of great darkness*, which *fell upon Abraham* (⁽¹⁵²⁾Genesis 15:12), or, rather, something much worse, and more frightful. The *terrors of God set themselves in array against him*, and he allowed himself the actual and intense contemplation of them. Never was *sorrow* like unto *his* at that time; never any had such experience as he had from eternity of divine favours, and therefore never

any had, or could have, such a sense as he had of divine favours. Yet there was not the least disorder or irregularity in this commotion of his spirits; his affections rose not tumultuously, but under direction, and as they were called up, for he had no corrupt nature to mix with them, as we have. If water have a sediment at the bottom, though it may be clear while it stands still, yet, when shaken, it grows muddy; so it is with our affections: but pure water in a clean glass, though ever so much stirred, continues clear; and so it was with Christ. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it very probable that the devil did now appear to our Saviour in a visible shape, in his *own shape* and *proper colour*, to terrify and affright him, and to drive him from his hope in God (which he aimed at in persecuting Job, a type of Christ, to make him *curse God, and die*), and to deter him from the further prosecution of his undertaking; whatever hindered him from that, he looked upon as coming from Satan, ^{<462>}Matthew 16:23. When the devil had tempted him in the wilderness, it is said, He departed *from him for a season* (^{<461>}Luke 4:13), intending another grapple with him, and in another way; finding that he could not by his flatteries *allure* him into sin, he would try by his terrors to *affright* him into it, and so *make void* his design.

IV. He made a sad complaint of this agitation. He said, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful*.

1. He was *made sin for us*, and therefore was thus *sorrowful*; he fully knew the *malignity* of the *sins* he was to *suffer for*; and having the highest degree of love to God, who was *offended* by them, and of love to *man*, who was damaged and endangered by them, now that those were set in order before him, no marvel that *his soul* was *exceeding sorrowful*. Now was he made to *serve with our sins*, and was thus *wearied with our iniquities*.

2. He was *made a curse* for us; the curses of the law were transferred to him as our surety and representative, not as originally *bound with us*, but a *bail to the action*. And when his soul was thus exceeding sorrowful, he did, as it were, yield to them, and lie down under the load, until by his death he had satisfied for sin, and so for ever abolished the curse. He now *tasted death* (as he is said to do, ^{<460>}Hebrews 2:9), which is not an extenuating expression, as if he did *but* taste it; no, he *drank up* even the dregs of the cup; but it is rather *aggravating*; it did not go down by wholesale, but he *tasted* all the bitterness of it. This was that *fear* which

the apostle speaks of (~~scrie~~ Hebrews 5:7), a natural fear of pain and death, which it is natural to human nature to startle at.

Now the consideration of Christ's sufferings in *his soul*, and his *sorrows* for us, should be of use to us,

(1.) To *embitter our sins*. Can we ever entertain a *favourable* or so much as a *slight* thought of sin, when we see what impression sin (though but imputed) made upon the Lord Jesus? Shall that *sit light* upon our souls, which sat *so heavy* upon his? Was Christ in such an agony for our sins, and shall we never be in an agony about them? How should we look upon him whom we have *pressed*, whom we have *pierced*, and *mourn*, and be *in bitterness!* It becomes us to be *exceeding sorrowful* for sin, because Christ was so, and never to *make a mock* at it. If Christ thus suffered for sin, let us *arm ourselves with the same mind*.

(2.) To *sweeten our sorrows*; if our souls be at any time *exceeding sorrowful*, through the afflictions of this present time, let us remember that our Master was so before us, and the *disciple is not greater than his Lord*. Why should we affect to *drive away* sorrow, when Christ for our sakes courted it, and submitted to it, and thereby not only took out the *sting* of it, and made it *tolerable*, but put *virtue* into it, and made it *profitable* (for *by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better*), nay, and put *sweetness* into it, and made it comfortable. Blessed Paul was *sorrowful*, and yet *always rejoicing*. If we be *exceeding sorrowful*, it is but *unto death*; that will be the period of all our sorrows, if Christ be *ours*; when the *eyes are closed*, all tears are *wiped away* from them.

V. He ordered his disciples to keep with him, not because he needed their help, but because he would have them to *look upon him and receive instruction*; he said to them, *Tarry ye here and watch*. He had said to the other disciples nothing but, *Sit ye here* (v. 32); but these three he bids to *tarry and watch*, as expecting more from them than from the rest.

VI. He addressed himself to God by prayer (v. 35); He *fell on the ground, and prayed*. It was but a little before this, that in prayer he *lifted up his eyes* (~~scrie~~ John 17:1); but here, being in an agony, he *fell upon his face*, accommodating himself to his present humiliation, and teaching us thus to abase ourselves before God; it becomes us to *be low*, when we come into the presence of the *Most High*.

1. As *Man*, he deprecated his sufferings, that, *if it were possible, the hour might pass from him* (v. 35); “This *short*, but *sharp* affliction, that which I am now *this hour* to enter upon, let man's salvation be, *if possible*, accomplished without it.” We have his very words (v. 36), *Abba, Father*. The Syriac word is here retained, which Christ used, and which signifies *Father*, to intimate what an emphasis our Lord Jesus, in his *sorrows*, laid upon it, and would have us to lay. It is with an eye to this, that St. Paul retains this word, putting it into the mouths of all that have the *Spirit of adoption*; they are taught to cry, *Abba, Father*, ^{<B185>}Romans 8:15; ^{<B016>}Galatians 4:6. *Father, all things are possible to thee*. Note, Even that which we cannot expect to be done for us, we ought yet to believe that God is *able to do*: and when we submit to his will, and refer ourselves to his wisdom and mercy, it must be with a believing acknowledgment of his power, that *all things are possible to him*.

2. As *Mediator*, he *acquiesced* in the will of God concerning them; “*Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt*. I know the matter is settled, and cannot be altered, *I must suffer* and die, and I bid it welcome.”

VII. He roused his disciples, who were dropped asleep while he was at prayer, v. 37, 38. He comes to look after them, since they did not look after him; and he *finds them asleep*, so little affected were they with his sorrows, his complaints, and prayers. This carelessness of theirs was a presage of their further offence in deserting him; and it was an aggravation of it, that he had so lately commended them for *continuing with him in his temptations*, though they had not been without their faults. Was he so willing to make the best of them, and were they so indifferent in approving themselves to him? They had lately promised not to be *offended in him*; what! and yet mind him so little? He particularly upbraided Peter with his drowsiness; *Simon, sleepest thou? Kai sy teknon*; — “*What thou, my son? Thou that didst so positively promise thou wouldest not deny me, dost thou slight me thus? From thee I expected better things. Couldst thou not watch one hour?*” He did not require him to watch *all night* with him, only for *one hour*. It aggravates our faintness and short continuance in Christ's service, that he doth not over-task us, nor weary us with it, ^{<B023>}Isaiah 43:23. He puts upon us *no other burthen* than to *hold fast till he comes* (^{<B124>}Revelation 2:24, 25); and behold, *he comes quickly*, ^{<B111>}Revelation 3:11.

As those whom Christ *loves* he *rebukes* when they do amiss, so those whom he *rebukes* he counsels and comforts.

1. It was a very wise and faithful word of advice which Christ here gave to his disciples; *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation*, v. 38. It was bad to *sleep* when Christ was in his agony, but they were entering into further temptation, and if they did not stir up themselves, and fetch in grace and strength from God by prayer, they would *do worse*; and so they did, when they all forsook him, and fled.

2. It was a very kind and tender excuse that Christ made for them; “*The spirit truly is willing*; I know it is, it is *ready*, it is *forward*; you would willingly *keep awake*, but you cannot.” This may be taken as a reason for that exhortation, “*Watch and pray*; because, though *the spirit is willing*, I grant it is (you have sincerely resolved never to be *offended in me*), yet *the flesh is weak*, and if you do not *watch and pray*, and use the means of perseverance, you may be overcome, notwithstanding.” The consideration of the *weakness* and infirmity of *our flesh* should engage and quicken us to *prayer* and *watchfulness*, when we are entering into temptation.

VIII. He *repeated* his address to his Father (v. 39); *He went again, and prayed*, saying, *ton auton logon* — *the same word*, or matter, or business; he spoke to the same purport, and again *the third time*. This teaches us, that *men ought to pray, and not to faint*, <DN> Luke 18:1. Though the answers to our prayers do not come quickly, yet we must renew our requests, and *continue instant in prayer*; for *the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie*, <31> Habakkuk 2:3. Paul, when he was *buffeted by a messenger of Satan, besought the Lord thrice*, as Christ did here, before he obtained an answer of peace, <42> 2 Corinthians 12:7, 8. A little before this, when Christ, in the *trouble of his soul*, prayed, *Father, glorify thy name*, he had an immediate answer by a voice from heaven, *I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it yet again*; but now he must come a second and third time, for the visits of God's grace, in answer to prayer, come sooner or later, according to the pleasure of his will, that we may be kept depending.

IX. He *repeated* his visits to his disciples. Thus he gave a specimen of his continued care for his church on earth, even when it is *half asleep*, and not duly concerned for itself, while he ever lives making intercession with his Father *in heaven*. See how, as became a *Mediator*, he passes and repasses

between both. He came the *second time* to his disciples, and *found them asleep again*, v. 40. See how the infirmities of Christ's disciples *return* upon them, notwithstanding their resolutions, and *overpower* them, notwithstanding their resistance; and what clogs those bodies of ours are to our souls, which should make us long for that blessed state in which they shall be no more our encumbrance. This second time he spoke to them as before, but *they wist not what to answer him*; they were ashamed of their drowsiness, and had nothing to say in excuse for it. Or, They were so overpowered with it, that, like men between sleeping and waking, they knew not where they were, or what they said. But, the *third time*, they were bid to *sleep* if they would (v. 41); "*Sleep on now, and take your rest*. I have now no more occasion for your watching, you may sleep, if you will, for me." *It is enough*; we had not that word in Matthew. "You have had warning enough to keep awake, and would not take it; and now you shall see what little reason you have to be secure." *Apekei, I discharge you from any further attendance*; so some understand it; "Now *the hour is come*, in which I knew you would all forsake me, even take your course;" as he said to Judas, *What thou doest, do quickly*. The *Son of man* is now *betrayed into the hands of sinners*, the chief priests and elders; those *worst* of sinners, because they made a profession of sanctity. "Come, *rise up*, do not lie dozing there. *Let us go* and meet the enemy, for *lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand*, and I must not now think of making an escape." When we see trouble at the door, we are concerned to stir up ourselves to get ready for it.

⦿ MARK 14:43-52

THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS

We have here the *seizing* of our Lord Jesus by the officers of the chief priests. This was what his enemies had long aimed at, they had often sent to *take him*; but he had escaped out of their hands, because *his hour was not come*, nor could they now have taken him, had he not freely surrendered himself. He began first to suffer *in his soul*, but afterward suffered in his body, that he might satisfy for sin, which begins in the heart, but afterwards makes the members of the body *instruments of unrighteousness*.

I. Here is a band of rude miscreants employed to *take* our Lord Jesus and make him a prisoner; *a great multitude with swords and staves*. There is no wickedness so black, no villany so horrid, but there may be found among the children of men fit tools to be made use of, that will not scruple to be employed; so miserably depraved and vitiated is mankind. At the head of this rabble is Judas, *one of the twelve*, one of those that had been many years intimately conversant with our Lord Jesus, had prophesied in his name, and in his name cast out devils, and yet *betrayed* him. It is no new thing for a very fair and plausible profession to end in a shameful and fatal apostasy. *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer!*

II. Men of no less figure than the *chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders*, sent them, and set them on work, who pretended to expect the Messiah, and to be ready to welcome him; and yet, when he *is come*, and has given undeniable proofs that it is he that *should come*, because he doth not make court to them, nor countenance and support their pomp and grandeur, because he appears not as a temporal prince, but sets up a spiritual kingdom, and preaches repentance, reformation, and a holy life, and directs men's thoughts, and affections, and aims, to another world, they set themselves against him, and, without giving the credentials he produces an impartial examination, resolve to run him down.

III. Judas betrayed him *with a kiss*; abusing the freedom Christ used to allow his disciples of kissing his cheek at their return when they had been any time absent. He called him, *Master, Master, and kissed him*; he said, *Rabbi, Rabbi*, as if he had been now more respectful to him than ever. It is enough to put one for ever out of conceit with being called of men *Rabbi, Rabbi* (~~487~~ Matthew 23:7), since it was with this compliment that Christ was betrayed. He bid them take him, and *lead him away safely*. Some think that he spoke this *ironically*, knowing that they could not secure him unless he pleased, that this Samson could break their bonds asunder as threads of tow, and make his escape, and then he should get the money, and Christ the honour, and no harm done; and I should think so too, but that Satan was *entered into him*, so that the worst and most malicious intention of this action is not too black to be supposed. Nay, he had often heard his Master say, that, being *betrayed*, he should be *crucified*, and had no reason to think otherwise.

IV. They arrested him, and made him their prisoner (v. 46); *They laid their hands on him*, rude and violent hands, and *took him* into custody;

triumphing, it is likely, that they had done that which has been often before attempted in vain.

V. Peter laid about him in defence of his Master, and wounded one of the assailants, being for the present mindful of his promise, to venture his life with his Master. He was *one of them that stood by*, of them that *were with him* (so the word signifies), of *those three* disciples that were *with him* in the garden; he *drew a sword*, and aimed, it is likely, to cut off the head, but missed his blow, and only *cut off the ear*, of a servant of the high priest, v. 47. It is easier to *fight* for Christ, than to *die* for him; but Christ's good soldiers overcome, not by taking other people's lives, but by laying down their own, ^{<621>}Revelation 12:11.

VI. Christ argues with them that had seized him, and shows them the absurdity of their proceedings against him.

1. That they came out *against him*, as against a *thief*, whereas he was *innocent* of any crime; he *taught daily in the temple*, and if he had any wicked design, there it would some time or other have been discovered; nay, these officers of the *chief priests*, being *retainers* to the temple, may be supposed to have heard his sermons there (I was *with you* in the temple); and had he not taught them excellent doctrine, even his enemies themselves being judges? Were not *all the words of his mouth in righteousness*? Was there any thing *froward or perverse in them*? ^{<108>}Proverbs 8:8. By his fruits he was known to be a good tree; why then did they come out against him *as a thief*? **2.** That they came to take him thus *privately*, whereas he was neither *ashamed* nor *afraid* to appear *publicly* in the temple. He was none of those *evil-doers* that *hate the light*, neither come *to the light*, ^{<109>}John 3:20. If their masters had any thing to say to him, they might meet him any day in the temple, where he was ready to answer all challenges, all charges; and there they might do as they pleased with him, for the priests had the custody of the temple, and the command of the guards about it: but to come upon him thus at midnight, and in the place of his retirement, was base and cowardly. This was to do as David's enemy, that *sat in the lurking places of the villages, to murder the innocent*, ^{<100>}Psalms 10:8. But this was not all.

3. They came *with swords and staves*, as if he had been in arms against the government, and must have the *posse comitatus* raised to reduce him. There was no occasion for those weapons; but they made this ado,

(1.) To secure themselves from the rage of some; they came armed, because they *feared the people*; but thus *were they in great fear, where no fear was*, ¹⁵¹⁶ Psalm 53:5.

(2.) To expose him to the rage of others. By coming *with swords and staves to take him*, they represented him to the people (who are apt to take impressions this way) as a dangerous turbulent man, and so endeavored to incense them against him, and make them cry out, *Crucify him, crucify him*, having no other way to gain their point.

VII. He reconciled himself to all this injurious, ignominious treatment, by referring himself to the Old-Testament predictions of the Messiah. I am hardly used, *but I submit, for the scriptures must be fulfilled*, v. 49.

1. See here what a regard Christ had to the *scriptures*; he would bear any thing rather than that the least jot or tittle of the word of God should fall to the ground; and as he had an eye to them in his sufferings, so he has in his glory; for what is Christ doing in the government of the world, but *fulfilling the scriptures*? 2. See what use we are to make of the Old Testament; we must search for Christ, the true *treasure hid in that field*: as the history of the New Testament expounds the prophecies of Old, so the prophecies of the Old Testament illustrate the history of the New.

VIII. All Christ's disciples, hereupon, deserted him (v. 50); *They all forsook him, and fled*. They were very confident that they should adhere to him; but even good men know not what they will do, till they are tried. If it was such a comfort to him as he had lately intimated, that they had hitherto *continued with him* in his lesser trials (¹⁵²⁸ Luke 22:28), we may well imagine what a grief it was to him, that they deserted him now in the greatest, when they might have done him some service — when he was abused, to protect him, and when accused, to witness for him. Let not those that suffer for Christ, think it strange, if they be thus deserted, and if all the herd shun the wounded deer; they are not better than their Master, nor can expect to be better used either by their enemies or by their friends. When St. Paul was in peril, none *stood by him*, but *all men forsook him*, ¹⁵⁴⁶ 2 Timothy 4:16.

IX. The noise disturbed the neighbourhood, and some of the neighbours were brought into danger by the riot, 6:51, 52. This passage of story we have not in any other of the evangelists. Here is an account of a *certain young man*, who, as it should seem, was no disciple of Christ, nor, as

some have imagined, a servant of the house wherein Christ had eaten the passover, who *followed him* to see what would become of him (as the *sons of the prophets*, when they understood that Elijah was to be *taken up*, went to *view afar off*, ~~1000~~ 2 Kings 2:7), but some young man that lived near the garden, perhaps in the house to which the garden belonged. Now observe concerning him,

1. How he was *frightened out of his bed*, to be a *spectator* of Christ's sufferings. Such a *multitude*, so armed, and coming with so much fury, and in the dead of night, and in a quiet village, could not but produce a great stir; this alarmed our *young man*, who perhaps thought they was some tumult or rising in the city, some *uproar among the people*, and had the curiosity to go, and see what the matter was, and was in such haste to inform himself, that he could not stay to dress himself, but threw a sheet about him, as if he would appear like a walking ghost, in grave clothes, to frighten those who had frightened him, and ran among the thickest of them with this question, *What is to do here?* Being told, he had a mind to see the issue, having, no doubt, heard much of the fame of this Jesus; and therefore, when all his disciples had quitted him, he continued to *follow him*, desirous to *hear* what he would say, and *see* what he would do. Some think that his having no other garment than this *linen cloth* upon his naked body, intimates that he was one of those Jews who made a great profession of piety that their neighbours, in token of which, among other instances of austerity and mortification of the body, they used no clothes but one linen garment, which, though contrived to be modest enough, was thin and cold. But I rather think that this was not his constant wear.

2. See how he was *frightened into his bed* again, when he was in danger of being made a *sharer* in Christ's sufferings. His own disciples had run away from him; but this young man, having no concern for him, thought he might securely attend him, especially being so far from being armed, that he was not so much as clothed; but *the young men*, the Roman soldiers, who were called to assist, *laid hold of him*, for all was fish that came to their net. Perhaps they were now vexed at themselves, that they had suffered the disciples to *run away*, and they being got out of their reach they resolved to seize the first they could *lay their hands on*; though this young man was perhaps one of the *strictest sect* of the Jewish church, yet the Roman soldiers made no conscience of abusing him upon this occasion. Finding himself in danger, he *left the linen cloth* by which they had *caught hold of him*, and *fled away naked*. This passage is recorded to

show what a barbarous crew this was, that was sent to seize Christ, and what a narrow escape the disciples had of falling into their hands, out of which nothing could have kept them but their Master's care of them; *If ye seek me, let these go their way,* ^{<BIB>}John 18:8. It also intimates that there is *no hold* of those who are led by curiosity only, and not by faith and conscience, to follow Christ.

~~<H2>~~ MARK 14:53-65

CHRIST BROUGHT BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST

We have here Christ's arraignment, trial, conviction, and condemnation, in the *ecclesiastical* court, before the great sanhedrim, of which the *high priest* was president, or judge of the court; the same Caiaphas that had lately adjudged it expedient he should be put to death, guilty or not guilty (^{<BIB>}John 11:50), and who therefore might justly be excepted against as partial.

I. Christ is hurried away to his *house*, his *palace* it is called, such state did he live in. And there, though, in the dead of the night, *all the chief priests, and elders, and scribes*, that were in the secret, were *assembled*, ready to receive the prey; so sure were they of it.

II. *Peter followed* at a distance, such a degree of cowardice was his late courage dwindled into, v. 54. But when he came to the high priest's palace, he *sneakingly* went, and *sat with the servants*, that he might not be suspected to belong to Christ. The high priest's fire side was no proper place, nor his servants proper company, for Peter, but it was his *entrance into a temptation*.

III. Great diligence was used to procure, for love or money, false witnesses against Christ. They had seized him as a malefactor, and now they had him they had no indictment to prefer against him, no crime to lay to his charge, but they *sought for witnesses against him*; pumped some with ensnaring questions, offered bribes to others, if they *would accuse him*, and endeavored to frighten others, if they *would not*, v. 55, 56. The chief priests and elders were by the law entrusted with the prosecuting and punishing of *false witnesses* (^{<BIB>}Deuteronomy 19:16, 17); yet those were now ringleaders in a crime that tends to overthrow of all justice. It is time

to cry, *Help, Lord*, when the physicians of a land are its troublers, and those that should be the conservators of peace and equity, are the corrupters of both.

IV. He was at length charged with words spoken some years ago, which, as they were represented, seemed to threaten *the temple*, which they had made no better than an idol of (v. 57, 58); but the witnesses to this matter did not agree (v. 59), for one swore that he said, *I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days* (so it is in Matthew); the other swore that he said, *I will destroy this temple, that is made with hands, and within three days, I will build not it, but another made without hands*; now these two differ much from each other; *oude ise en he martyria* — *their testimony was not sufficient*, nor equal to the charge of a capital crime; so Dr. Hammond: they did not accuse him of that upon which a *sentence of death* might be founded, no not by the utmost stretch of their law.

V. He was urged to be his own accuser (v. 60); The *high priest stood up* in a heat, and said, *Answerest thou nothing?* This he said under pretence of justice and fair dealing, but really with a design to ensnare him, that they might *accuse him*, ^{<215>}Luke 11:53, 54; 20:20. We may well imagine with what an air of haughtiness and disdain this proud high priest brought our Lord Jesus to this question; “Come you, the prisoner at the bar, you hear what is sworn against you; what have you now to say for yourself?” Pleased to think that *he* seemed silent, who had so often silenced those that picked quarrels with him. Still Christ *answered nothing*, that he might set us an example,

1. Of *patience* under calumnies and false accusations; when we are *reviled*, let us not *revile again*, ^{<102>}1 Peter 2:23. And,

2. Of *prudence*, when a man shall be made an *offender for a word* (^{<220>}Isaiah 29:21), and our *defence* made our *offence*; it is an evil time indeed when the prudent shall *keep silence* (lest they make bad worse), *and commit their cause to him that judgeth righteously*. But,

VI. When he was asked *whether he was the Christ*, he confessed, and denied not, that *he was*, v. 61, 62. He asked, *Art thou the Son of the Blessed?* that is the *Son of God?* for, as Dr. Hammond observes, the Jews, when they named *God*, generally added, *blessed for ever*; and thence *the Blessed* is the title of *God*, a peculiar title, and applied to Christ, ^{<495>}Romans 9:5. And for the proof of his being the *Son of God*, he binds

them over to his second coming; “*Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power; that Son of man that now appears so mean and despicable, whom ye see and trample upon* (^{<251D>}Isaiah 53:2, 3), you shall shortly see and *tremble before.*” Now, one would think that such a word as this which our Lord Jesus seems to have spoken with a grandeur and majesty not agreeable to his present appearance (for through the thickest cloud of his humiliation some rays of glory were still darted forth), should have startled the court, and at least, in the opinion of some of them, should have amounted to a *demurrer*, or *arrest of judgment*, and that they should have stayed process till they had considered further of it; when Paul at the bar reasoned of the *judgment to come*, the judge *trembled*, and adjourned the trial, ^{<420S>}Acts 24:25. But these chief priests were so miserably blinded with malice and rage, that, like the horse rushing into the battle, they *mocked at fear, and were not affrighted*, neither *believed they that it was the sound of the trumpet*, ^{<381D>}Job 39:22, 24. And see ^{<185S>}Job 15:25, 26.

VII. The high priest, upon this confession of his, convicted him as a *blasphemer* (v. 63); He *rent his clothes* — *chitonas autou*. Some think the word signifies his pontifical vestments, which, for the greater state, he had put on, though in the night, upon this occasion. As before, in his enmity to Christ, he said he knew not what (^{<415S>}John 11:51, 52), so now he did he knew not what. If Saul's rending Samuel's mantle was made to signify the rending of the kingdom from him (^{<0157>}1 Samuel 15:27, 28), much more did Caiaphas's rending his own clothes signify the rending of the priesthood from him, as the rending of the veil, at Christ's death, signified the throwing of all open. Christ's clothes, even when he was crucified, were kept entire, and not rent: for when the Levitical priesthood was rent in pieces and done away, *This Man, because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood.*

VIII. They agreed that he was a blasphemer, and, as such, was guilty of a capital crime, v. 64. The question *seemed* to be put fairly, *What think ye?* But it was really *prejudged*, for the high priest had said, *Ye have heard the blasphemy*; he gave judgment first, who, as president of the court, ought to have voted last. So they *all condemned him to be guilty of death*; what friends he had in the great sanhedrim, did not appear, it is probable that they had not notice.

IX. They set themselves to abuse him, and, as the Philistines with Samson, to make sport with him, v. 65. It should seem that some of the

priests themselves that had condemned him, so far forgot the dignity, as well as duty, of their place, and the gravity which became them, that they helped their servants in playing the fool with a condemned prisoner. This they made their diversion, while they *waited for the morning*, to complete their villany. That *night of observations* (as the passover-night was called) they *made a merry night of*. If they did not think it below them to abuse Christ, shall we think any thing below us, by which we may do him honour?

MARK 14:66-72

PETER'S FALL

We have here the story of Peter's denying Christ.

1. It began in *keeping at a distance* from him. Peter had followed *afar off* (v. 54), and now was *beneath in the palace*, at the lower end of the hall. Those that are *shy* of Christ, are in a fair way to *deny* him, that are shy of attending on holy ordinances, shy of the communion of the faithful, and loth to be seen on the side of despised godliness.
2. It was occasioned by his associating with the high priest's servants, and sitting among them. They that think it dangerous to be in company with Christ's disciples, because thence they may be drawn in to *suffer for him*, will find it much more dangerous to be in company with his enemies, because there they may be drawn in to *sin against him*.
3. The temptation was, his being charged as a disciple of Christ; *Thou also wert with Jesus of Nazareth*, v. 67. *This is one of them* (v. 69), *for thou art a Galilean*, one may know that by thy speaking broad, v. 70. It doth not appear that he was *challenged* upon it, or in danger of being *prosecuted* as a criminal for it, but only *bantered* upon it, and in danger of being ridiculed as a fool for it. While the chief priests were abusing the Master, the servants were abusing the disciples. Sometimes the cause of Christ seems to fall so much on the losing side, that every body has a stone to throw at it, and even the *abjects gather themselves together against it*. When Job was on the dunghill, he was had in derision of those that were the *children of base men*, ^{30B}Job 30:8. Yet, all things considered, the temptation could not be called *formidable*; it was only a *maid* that casually

cast her eye upon him, and, for aught that appears, without design of giving him any trouble, said, *Thou art one of them*, to which he needed not to have made any reply, or might have said, “And if I be, I hope that is no treason.”

4. The sin was very great; he *denied Christ before men*, at a time when he ought to have confessed and owned him, and to have appeared in court a witness for him. Christ had often given notice to his disciples of his own sufferings; yet, when they came, they were to Peter as great a surprise and terror as if he had never heard of them before. He had often told them that they must *suffer* for him, must *take up their cross*, and follow him; and yet Peter is so terribly afraid of suffering, upon the very first alarm of it, that he will lie and swear, and do any thing, to avoid it. When Christ was admired and flocked after, he could readily own him; but now that he is deserted, and despised, and run down, he is ashamed of him, and will own no relation to him.

5. His repentance was very speedy. He repeated his denial thrice, and the third was worst of all, for then he *cursed* and *swore*, to confirm his denial; and that the third blow, which, one would think, should have *stunned him*, and knocked him down, *startled him*, and roused him up. Then the *cock crew* the second time, which put him in mind of his Master's words, the warning he had given him, with that particular circumstance of the *cock crowing twice*; by recollecting that, he was made sensible of his sin and the aggravations of it; and when he thought thereon, he wept. Some observe that this evangelist, who wrote, as some have thought, by St. Peter's direction, speaks as fully of Peter's sin as any of them, but more briefly of his *sorrow*, which Peter, in modesty, would not have to be magnified, and because he thought he could never sorrow enough for great a sin. His repentance here is thus expressed, *epibalov ekleie*, where something must be supplied. He *added to weep*, so some; making it a Hebraism; he wept, and the more he thought of it, the more he wept; he continued weeping; he *flung out*, and wept; *burst out* into tears; *threw himself down*, and wept; he *covered his face*, and wept, so some; cast his garment about his head, that he might not be seen to weep; he *cast his eyes* upon his Master, who turned, and looked upon him; so Dr. Hammond supplies it, and it is a probable conjecture. Or, as we understand it, *fixing his mind upon it*, he wept. It is not a transient thought of that which is humbling, that will suffice, but we must dwell upon it. Or, what if this word should mean his *laying a load* upon himself, throwing a confusion

into his own face? he did as the *publican* that smote his breast, in sorrow for sin; and this amounts to his weeping bitterly.