

Chapter 23

As the people in the tumult, fo also the very cheefe of the Iewes in their Council shew themfelues obftinate, and wilful perfecutours of the truth in S. Pauls perfon. Whofe behaiour towards them is ful of conftancie, modeftie, and wifedom. 11. (Chrift alfo by a vifion encouraging him & foretelling that he shal to Rome.) 12. Yea they confpire with 40. men to kil him traiteroufly. 16. But the matter being detected, the Romane Tribune conueigheth him ftrongly to Cæfarea.

And Paul looking vpon the Council, faid: Men Brethren, I with al good confcience haue conuerfed before God, vntil this prefent day. ² And the high Prieft Ananias commanded them that ftood by him, to fmite him on the mouth. ³ Then Paul faid to him: ^a)God fhall ftrike thee, thou whited wal. And thou fitting iudgeft me according to the law, and contrarie to law doeft thou command me to be fmitten? ⁴ And they that ftood by, faid: Doeft thou reuile the high Prieft of God? ⁵ And Paul faid: [¶]I knew not, Brethren, that he is the high Prieft. For it is written: *The Prince of thy people thou shalt not mis-fpeake.* ⁶ And Paul knowing that the one part was of Sadducees, and the other of Pharifees, ^b)he cried out in the Council: Men Brethren, I am a Pharifee, the fonne of Pharifees: of the hope and refurrection of the dead I am iudged. ⁷ And when he had faid thefe things, there rofe diffenfion between the Pharifees and Sadducees; and the multitude was deuided. ⁸ For the [¶]Sadducees fay there is no refurrection, nor Angel, nor fpirit: but the Pharifees confeffe

Exo. 22, 28.

Phil. 3, 5.

Mt. 22, 23.

^a He faid not this through pertubation of mind, or of a paffion, but by way of prophecie, that this figuratiue high priefthood the trimmed like a whited wal, was to be deftroied; whereas now the true priefthood of Chrift was cõe. *Beda in hunc lo.*

^b Such prudent euafions from danger are lawful. Which S. Chryfoftome calleth (fpecially in this Apoftle) the wifdom of the ferpent; as otherwife in his teaching and preaching & patience he vfed the fimplitie of a doue.

both. ⁹ And there was made a great crie. And certaine of the Pharifees rifing vp, ftroue faying: We find no euil in this man. What if a fpirit hath fpoken to him, or an Angel? ¹⁰ And when there was rifen great diffenfion, the Tribune fearing left Paul fhould be torne in peeces by them, commanded the fouldiars to goe downe, and to take him out of the middes of them, and to bring him into the caftel. ¹¹ And the night following our Lord ftanding by him, faid: Be conftant; for as thou haft teftified of me in Hierufalem, fo ^a)muft thou teftifie at Rome alfo.

¹² And when the day was come, certaine of the Iewes gathered themfelues together, & ^vvowed themfelues, faying: that they would neither eate nor drinke til they killed Paul. ¹³ And they were more then fourtie men that had made this confpiracie: ¹⁴ who came to the cheefe Priests and the Ancients, and faid: By execration we haue vowed our felues, that we wil eate nothing, til we kil Paul. ¹⁵ Now therefore giue you knowledge to the Tribune with the Councel, that he bring him forth to you, as if you meant to know fome more certaintie touching him. But we, before he come neere, are ready for to kil him. ¹⁶ Which when Paules fifters fonne had heard, of their lying in wait, he came and entred into the caftel and told Paul. ¹⁷ And Paul calling to him one of the Centurions, faid: Bring this yong man to the Tribune, for he hath fome thing to tel him. ¹⁸ ^b)And he taking him, brought him to the Tribune, and faid: The prifoner Paul defired me to bring this yong man vnto thee, hauing fome thing to fay to thee. ¹⁹ And the Tribune taking him by the hand, went afide with him apart, and asked him: What is it that thou haft to tel me? ²⁰ And he faid: The Iewes

^a Though God who could not lie, had promifed Paul that he should goe to Rome; yet the Apoftle omitted not humane meanes to defend himfelf from his enemies & otherwife. Neither faid he as the Heretikes called Predeftinates, Let thē doe what they wil, they cā not hurt me, for I am predeftinate to goe to Rome. See his doings and fayings to faue himfelf, in *the chap. following*.

^b See the courtesie & equitie of Heathen officers toward their prifoners, to faue them from al iniurie & villanie.

haue agreed to defire thee, that to morow thou wilt bring forth Paul into the Councel, as though they meant to inquire some more certaintie touching him. ²¹ But doe not thou credit them; for there lie in wait for him more then fourtie men of them, which haue vowed neither to eate nor to drinke, til they kil him: and they are now ready, expecting thy promife. ²² The Tribune therfore dimiffed the yong man, commanding that he fhould fpeake to no man that he had notified thefe things vnto him. ²³ And calling two Centurions, he faid to them: Make ready two hundred fouldiars, to goe as farre as Cæfarea, and feuentie horfe-men, and lances two hundred, from the third houre of the night: ²⁴ and prepare beafts: that fetting Paul on, they might bring him fafe to Felix the Prefident. (²⁵ For he feared left perhaps the Iewes might take him away, and kil him, and himfelf afterward fhould fuftaine reproch, as though he would haue taken money) ²⁶ writing a letter containing thus much:

Claudius Lyfias to the moft excellent Prefident Felix, greeting. ²⁷ This man being apprehended of the Iewes, and ready to be killed of them, I comming in with the band deliuered him, vnderftanding that he is a Roman: ²⁸ and meaning to know the caufe that they obiected vnto him, I brought him downe into their Councel. ²⁹ Whom I found to be accused concerning queftions of their law: but hauing no crime worthie of death or of bands. ³⁰ And when it was told me of ambuſhments that they had prepared againft him, I fent him to thee, fignifying alfo to the accufers, to fpeake before thee. Farewel. ³¹ And the fouldiars according as it was commanded them, taking Paul, brought him by night to Antipatris. ³² And the next day fending away the horfe-men to goe with him, they returned to the caſtel. ³³ Who when they were come to Cæfarea, and had deliuered the letter to the Prefident, they did fet Paul alfo before him. ³⁴ And when he had read, and had asked of what prouince he was: and vnderftanding that of Cilicia: ³⁵ I wil heare thee, faid he, when thy accufers are come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herods palace.

ANNOTATIONS

Cypr. ep. 65. 69.
nu. 2.

5 I knew not.) Our Lord (saith S. Cyprian) in the Ghospel, when it was said to him: Answerest thou the high Priest so? teaching that the honour of Priesthood must be kept said nothing to the high Priest, but only purging his innocencie, said: If I haue spoken euil, beare witnes of euil; but if wel, why fmitest thou me? Also the Blessed Apostle when it was said to him: Doest thou assaile the high Priest so with il wordes? spake not any thing contumalioufly against the Priest, whereas he might haue put forth himself stoutly against them which had both crucified our Lord, and which had now also lost their God and Christ, Temple and Priesthood. But though in false & spoiled Priests, yet confidering the very bare shadow of the name of Priests, he said: I knew not, Brethren, that he was high Priest. By which wordes of the Apostle, either it may be thought he knew not indeed that he was in that function, because he had not been of long time in those partes; or els that he so said in respect of the abrogation of the high Priesthood of the Iewes, wherby he knew this man not to be truly any Priest: as also because at this time they came not orderly to it by succession of Aaron and Law of Moyfes, but by the Roman Emperours fauour as is said before: though (as it is lawful in such a case) the lesse to irritate them, he frameth his speech so as they might not take occasion of further accusation against him.

The honour of
Priesthood.

See Annot.
Io. c. 11, 51.

8 The Sadducees.) This was the worst Herefie among the Iewes, denying that there be any Angels, or spirits, the Resurrection also of the bodies: & consequently (as it may very wel be gathered by the booke of the Machabees) they denied praier for the dead. For to offer or pray for the dead, & to thinke rightly & religiously of the Resurrection, are made there sequels one of another. Of this sect of Sadducees was (as Eusebius writeth *li. 2. c. 12. Ec. Hist.*) this Ananias the high Priest, that caused Paul to be smitten. For their Priesthood had now no more the protection of God to preferue it in truth and right iudgement, the Christian Priesthood being then established.

The Sadducees
(as it seemeth) denied
praier for the
dead.

Mac. li. 2.
c. 12, 43.

12 Vowed themselves.) Such vowes, othes, or execrations as this, bind no man before God, yea they must in no wise be obserued. It is a great offence either to vow voluntarily, or to take any such thing vpon a man, for feare or by commandement. For example, if thou haue rashly by promise, or othe, appointed to be reuenged vpon any man, thou bindest not thy self thereby, neither must thou keepe thy promise. If thou be put to an othe to accuse Catholikes for seruing God as they ought to doe, or to vtter any innocent man to God's enemies and his, thou oughtest first to refuse such vnlawful othes: but if thou haue not constancie and courage so to doe, yet know thou that such othes bind not at all in conscience & Law of God, but may and must be broken vnder paine of damnation. For to make or take such vowes or othes is

Vnlawful othes &
vowes must not be
kept.

Mt. 14, 9. one finne, and to keep them, is another farre greater: as when Herode, to keep his othe, killed Iohn Baptift. And such vowes and othes to God as these, are vnlawful & muft be broken: and not the vowes of Chaftitie and Religion, as our new Minifters teach by their wordes and workes.