The cursing of the fig-tree *had in fact taken place on the day before,* and the withering of it was *now noticed.* St. Mark separates the two accounts, which are here given together. We must remember that this miracle was *wholly typical and parabolical.* The fig-tree was THE JEWISH PEOPLE—full of the leaves of an useless profession, but without fruit :—and further, all hypocrites of every kind, in every age. It is true, as De Wette observes, that no trace of a parabolic meaning appears in the narrative (and yet strangely enough, he himself a few lines after, denying the truth of the miracle, accounts for the narrative by supposing it to have *arisen out of a parable* spoken by our Lord); but neither does there in that of the driving out the buyers and sellers from the temple, and in those of many other actions which we know to have been symbolic.

**19.] one fig tree,** i.e. a solitary fig-tree. It was the practice to plant fig-trees by the road-side, because it was thought that the dust, by absorbing the exuding sap, was conducive to the production of the fruit.

**21, 22.]** {21} This assurance has occurred before in ch. xvii. 20. That truest and *highest faith,* which implies a mind and will perfectly in unison with that of God, can, even in its least degree, have been in Him only who spoke these words. And by it, and its elevating power over the functions and laws of inferior natures we may reverently believe that His most notable miracles were wrought. It is observable, that such a state of mind entirely precludes the idea of an *arbitrary* exercise of power—none such can therefore be intended in our Lord’s assertion—but we must understand,—“if expedient.” Though we cannot reach this faith in its fulness, yet every approach to it (ver. 21) shall be endued with some of its wonderful power,—in obtaining requests from God. See the remarkable and important addition in Mark xi. 25, 26.

**23—32.]** Mark xi. 27—83. Luke xx. 1—8. OUR LORD’S AUTHORITY QUESTIONED. HIS REPLY. Now commences that series of parables, and discourses of our Lord with his enemies, in which He developes more completely than ever before his hostility to their hypocrisy and iniquity :—and so they are stirred up to compass His death.

**23. the chief priests and the elders of the people** St. Mark and St. Luke add *the scribes,* and so make up the members of the Sanhedrim. It was an *official message,* sent with a view to make our Saviour declare Himself to be a prophet sent from God—in which case the Sanhedrim had power to take cognizance of His proceedings, as of a professed Teacher. "Thus the Sanhedrim sent a deputation to John on his appearing as a Teacher, John i.19. The question was *the result of a combination to destroy Jesus,* Luke xix. 47, 48. They do not now ask, as in John ii. 18, *What sign shewest Thou*