in the New Testament, is itſelf as great a miracle as human imagination can eaſily conceive.” We ſhall illuſtrate this poſition by the reſurrection of Jeſus, which we are to ſuppoſe the apoſtles resolving to publiſh as an unqueſtionable fact, whilſt they were conſcious that they themselves ſtole the body from the ſepulchre, and ſaw it in their cuſtody under the dominion of death. On ſuch an enterpriſe they could not enter without much deliberation; and we may conceive him, to whom the thought of propagating this fable firſt occurred, addreſſing his companions in ſome ſuch terms as the following :—

“ The Master whom we ſerved is now no more, and the magnificent hopes which we had formed with reſpect to him and to ourſelves are blaſted by his death. The time which he fixed for his reſurrection is paſſed ; and it is folly to cheriſh any expectation of that event, as we ſee his body which we ſtole a prey to corruption. We muſt therefore either ſeparate and return to our former profeſſions, the obscurity of which will ſcreen us from the diſgrace of having been deceived ; or, remaining united, take the generous resolution of ſupporting our glory, by saying to every body that our Maſter is riſen from the dead, and is the true Meſſiah expected by our nation, and foretold by the prophets. To return to our profeſſions would be cowardly and mean ; to propagate the ſtory of the reſurrection will be attended with infinite difficulty and danger ; but to despise danger and to conquer difficulties, is worthy of great souls ſuch as ours ; and therefore I take it for granted that this is the part which you have all reſolved to act.

“ To ſucceed in our glorious enterpriſe, it will be absolutely neceſſary to admit into our moſt ſecret counſels, not only the ſeventy diſciples whom our Lord ſent before him, in pairs, into every city and place which he viſited @@\*," but alſo that crowd of women@@\* who followed him from Galilee, were preſent at his crucifixion, and viſited his ſepulchre; for all theſe perſons are ſo intimately acquainted with every circumſtance of his life and death, that they have it in their power completely to deſeat our project in ſpite of our utmoſt art; and that power, it cannot be doubted, they will exert, unleſs admitted to ſhare with us the glory of deceiving the world. The taſk which they and we have to perform is no ordinary one ; for we muſt all speak the ſame things, and things which each of us knows to be falſe. Yet we muſt advance them with an air ſo intrepid as to remove ſuſpicion, and be able to bury in profound ſecrecy the resolutions which in concert we take to-day.

“ No truth can be ſo deeply impreſſed upon our minds as that our Maſter continues under the dominion of death ; and we all know that truth stands ſo ready at the door of the lips, that the greateſt liar among us has hitherto uttered a thouſand truths for one falſehood @@(h) ; but henceforth, on this moſt intereſting ſubject, we muſt never let a ſingle truth eſcape us either in our moſt unguarded moments or when put to the torture ; for all will be lost, if any one per­ſon in whom we may place confidence ſhall reveal to our enemies what ſhould be known to ourſelves alone. It is therefore neceſſary to foreſee all that is capable of extorting ſecrets from ſuch perſons as are not like us proof againſt every thing. We ſhall be expoſed to much bad treatment, to prisons, to ſevere examinations, to death itſelf, and even to the moſt cruel and lingering kinds of death, ſufficient to ſhake any but the moſt invincible reſolutions. All this ſhould be foreſeen, and muſt be deſpiſed by every perſon among us, man and woman !

“ But I muſt forewarn you, that under the greatest tortures we are not to hope for the ſmalleſt ſupport from the teſtimony of a good conscience and the proſpect of a future re­ward ; for the very cruelleſt of our ſufferings will ariſe from the remorſe of conſcience, unleſs we fortify ourſelves againſt it by the moſt determined reſolution. Others have indeed been wonderfully ſupported under violent and tedious ſufferings, by the internal perſuaſion that they ſuffered for truth and righteousness sake ; but as we are called upon to give new proofs of courage by ſuffering for what we know to be an impious falſehood, every reflection which tended to ſupport them will torment us, and tempt us, in the moſt forcible manner, to betray our cauſe. From him, for whom we are to suffer and be ſacrificed, we have nothing to ex­pect ; for ſince he could neither reſcue himself from the violence of his enemies, nor fulfil his promiſe of rising from the dead, it would be madneſs to ſuppoſe that he will de­liver us from our persecutors, or afford us the ſmalleſt conſolation when sinking under the cruelleſt tortures which ma­licious ingenuity can invent. He was a deceiver, and has deceived us. He promiſed, a few hours before he was taken, that he would rise from the dead and go before us into Galilee; but God has ordered things otherwiſe ; and as he is ſupreme Lord, we are not to found his judgments, or even to *think* too much of them.

“ You ſeem aſtoniſhed at this counſel ! It is new indeed, but neceſſary ; and neceſſary to ſuch a degree, that all our deſigns will prove abortive if we suffer the fear of God to get poſſeſſion of our minds, and make us timid and puſillanimous in the teſtimony which we are determined to give againſt him, by maintaining that he raised from the dead a man whom he has without doubt condemned as an uſurper of the glory which was not his due. Such aſſertions in favour of falſehood will no doubt coſt us something in the beginning ; but we muſt endeavour to make ourſelves as eaſy as we can, by imprinting ſtrongly on our minds how glo­rious and disintereſted it will be to ſuffer without hope ei­ther from God or man, and even with the certainty of be­ing puniſhed both by God and man, not only in this life, but eternally in the next, if there be another. For let me not attempt to conceal from you, that preſent and future miſery muſt be our inevitable portion ; and that we muſt therefore become inacceſſible to fear, even to ſuch fear as religion itſelf ought to inſpire, or return ignobly to our nets and boats ; there is absolutely no other alternative. He whom we lament has not only affirmed openly the charac­ter of the Meſſiah, but has dared even to call himſelf the Son of God ; and though we have ſeen him ready to be ſtoned for theſe pretenſions, and cannot doubt but that God was highly provoked at them, we muſt, in defiance of the divine vengeance, undertake to make them good, or at leaſt cauie him to be worſhipped as the Son of God ; whom to our own knowledge God has expreſsly diſavowed. This might frighten timid and vulgar souls ; but we muſt have none ſuch among us. All the men and women of our com­pany muſt be capable of braving Omnipotence, and of de­riving new vigour and reſolution from the proſpect of unin­terrupted miſery.

“ Let us now conſider how this great deſign is to be carried into execution ; for it would be the exceſs of folly to enter

@@@[m]\* St Luke x. 1-18.

@@@[m]\* St Matth. xxvii. 55, 56. St Luke xxxiii. 55, 56. xxiv. 1-12.

@@@(h) To the moſt illiterate fiſherman of Galilee this muſt have been known as a fact *; for* no man can ſpeak an intelli­gible ſentence without uttering a truth or a falſehood, and ſurely every man ſpeaks a thouſand ſentences for one in which he either utters or intends to utter a falſehood. How he muſt necessarily de ſo, we have shown in another place. See Metaphysics, n⁰ 135, &c.