

they are "not an essential duty." It is rather wonderful that this expositor of Scripture did not remember the *example* of Christ himself, in fasting forty days and forty nights, as a preparation for entering upon his ministry—and his connecting fasting with almsgiving and prayer,—nor his declaration to his Disciples that the working of miracles could come "only by fasting and prayer;" nor the fact that he excused his Disciples from fasting *so long as He*, "the Bridegroom was with them," because that *being a time of joy and gladness*, it would be an *improper season* for tokens of sorrow. But He clearly intimates, at the same time, that it would be their *duty* hereafter, for "the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then *they shall fast*." It is wonderful too that He did not remember the practice of the Apostles, as recorded in such passages as these: "As they ministered unto the Lord, and *fasted*,"—(Acts xiii. 2.) "and had prayed *with fasting*," (Acts xiv. 23.) "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that, by any means, when I had preached to others, I myself should be a *castaway*." (1 Cor. ix. 27.) Thus making the duty of fasting of more importance than preaching. "In watchings, in fastings," (2 Cor. vi. 5.) "In fastings often," (2 Cor. xi. 27.) nor the practice of the primitive Christians who were very constant and regular in the observance both of their *annual* and *weekly* fasts. "Their weekly fasts were Wednesdays and Fridays, because on the one Our Lord was betrayed, on the other crucified. The chief of their annual fasts was that of Lent, which they observed by way of preparation for their feast of Easter.