HE LYFE OF SAINT IVDE after Sainte Hierome.

I

Vdas the brother of James lefte behynde him a little epistle, whiche is of the seuen catholike epistles. And because be taketh witnesses in it out of the boke of Enoch which is Apocryphe that is to say, without authoritie, it is reiecte of many: howbeit it hathe ben taken worthye authoritie bothe for the auncientie and use of it, and is accompted among the holy scriptures.

THE ARGUMENT UPON the Epistle of Jude / by D. Erasmus of Roterdame.

E is vehemently displeased with many wordes agaynst them, that being blynded in theyr owne couetous appe∣tites were aduersaries to the Gospell: whiche thyng notwithstanding ought to seme no newe matter, inasmuch as they were predestinate to this ende, and it was spoken of before by the Apostles, that that kynde of men shall lust∣ingly crepe among the flocke of Christyanes. Agaynst these sorte, he so armeth them, that they may forecast bothe to restrayne them eyther with blamyng, or saue them by warnyng geuyn. Which thing if they possiblye can not doo, yet they prepare them selues ready∣ly agaynst the commyng of Christ.

Thus endeth the Argument.

THE PARAPHRASE OF Erasmus vpon the Epistle of Saint Jude thapostle.

The texte.

¶ Iudas the seruaunt of Iesus Chryste the brother of Iames. To them which are called and sanctified in God the father, and preserued in Iesu Christe: Mercy vnto you and peace and loue be multiplied. Beloued, when I gaue all diligence to wryte vnto you of the commen saluacyon, it was nedefull for me to write vnto you, to exhorte you that ye should continually laboure in the faith, which was once geuen vnto the saynetes. For there are certayn vngodly men craftely crept in, of whiche it was written afore tyme vn∣to suche iudgement. They turne the grace of our God vnto wantonues, and deuye God (whiche is the onely Lorde) and oure Lorde Iesus Christe. My mynde is therafore to put you in remembraunce, for as muche as ye once knowe thys, how that the Lorde (af∣ter that he had deiyuered the people out of Egypte) destroyed them which afterward beлеued nor. The angels also which kepte not theyr first estate, but lefte toeyr owne habita|cion, he hath reserued in euerlastynge chaynes vnder darckenes vnto the iudgement of the greate daye: even as Sodome and Gomor, and the cyties aboute them (which in lyke maner defiled them selues with fornycation, and folowed straunge sleshe) are set forthe for an ensample, and suffre the payne of eternall fyer. Lykewise, these beynge disceaues by dreames defyle the flesh, despyse rulars,
and speake euill of them that are in auctorytie. Yet Michael the archangell when
he stroue agaynst the deuyll, and disputed abowe the

body of Moses, burst not geue raylynge sentence, but sayde: the Lorde rebuke
the. But these speake euill of those thynges which they knowe not: and what
things they knowe naturally (as beasts which are without reason) in those
things they corruppte them selflues. Wo bee vnto them, for they haue folowed the
wayne of Cayn, and are vtterly geuen to the errour of Balam for lukers sake, and
perisshie in the treason of Chore. These are spottes whiche of youre kyndnes
feaste together; without feare, fedynge them selues. Cloudes they are without
water, caried about of wyndes, trees withoute frute at gathe\rynge tyme, twyse
deed, and plucked vp by the rotes. They are the ragnye waues of the sea,
fromynge out theyr owne shame. They are wandring steretes, to whome is
reserued the myst of darckenes for euer. Enoch the seventh from Adam
prophecyed before of suche, saying: Beholde, the Lorde shall come with
thousandes of sayntes, to geue judgement algaynst all menne, and to rebuke all
that are vn godly among them, of all theyr vn godly dedes, whiche they haue
vn godly commyttet, and of all their cruell speakynges, whiche vn godly sinners
haue spoken agaynt hym. These are mutmuters, complayners, walking after
theyr owne lustes, whose mouthes speake proud thynges. They haue men in
greate teuerence because of auauntage. But ye beloued, remembre the wordes
whiche were spo\ken before of the Apostles of our Lorde Iesus Christ, howe that
they tolde you that there should be begylers in the laste tyme, whiche shoulde
walke after theyr vn godly lustes. These are makers of sectes, fleshly, hauinge no
spirite. But ye dearely beloued, editie your selues in your moste holy faythe,
prayinge in the holy goste, and kepe your selues in the loue of God, lokynge for
the mercy of our Lord Iesus Christe vn to eternall lyfe. And haue compassion of
some seperatynge them: and other saue with feare, pullyng them out of the fyre
(and haue compassion on the other) and hare the fylthy vesture of the slesh.
Vnto hym that is able to kepe you fte from synne, and to presente you fautles
before the presence of hys glory with ioye (at the commyng of oure Lorde Iesu
Christe,) to God oure sauitor, (thorow Iesus Christe our Lorde) which onely is
wyse, be glory, maiestie, domynion, and power (before all worldes) nowe and
euer. Amen.

I

Judas Thadeus the seruaunt of Iesu Christe, the brother of Iames, write
this Epistle not to the Iewes onely nor to other newly converted, but to all men
in commune, whome the render mercye of God the father hathe of his owne
free will sanctified, and hathe also without the helpe of the lawe, made godly
of vn godly, and of Idolatours obedient folowers of true religion, whom also
the bounte\ous goodnes of God had preserued in Iesu Christ to this ende, that
they shoulde not auaunt with other into the donteon of euerlasting
damnacion, whom in like manner his free liberall goodnes hathe nowe called vnto the saluacion of the Gospell. Ther is nothing that I can wishe vnto you more fortunate, than that the goodnes of God would alwayes multiplie in you his giftes, mercie, peace, and charitie: Mercie, that you may absent your selues dayly more and more from the vices of your former olde life: Peace, that you may through godlynes of life nourish the concorde, which you haue with God: and Charitie, that you may through mutuall concorde be all of one mynde, and eche one bounteously good to other. Dearly beloued, forasmuche as the loue of the Gospell maketh all thinges commune, whether it bee good, that chaunce or whether it be badde, namely in those, matters that pertyne to eternall saluacion: I had so great a defier to write vnto you concernyng your saluacion, wherof I am no lesse carefull, than if it were myne owne, forsomuch as brotherly loue pricketh me forwarde therunto, so as I could not forbeare, but I must exhorte you in this Epistle, to stande harde against the false Aposties, for the defence of the sincere faythe, whiche was once deliuered of the holye Apostles. And not onely to labour in this, that you contynue stedfaste in youre faythe, but also to laye youre helping handes vnto other, that they bee not begyled of the deceauours. For it is not possible to thinke what a Iewell the treasour of faythe is, and it standeth vs in hande to watche so muche the more warely a\about vs, that it be not turned awaye from vs. For where as we deliuered the Gospelles docttyne vnto you purely and syncerely, euen as we receyued it of Christe, yet there haue a sorte of wiked ones thruste in them selues among in the meane season, vnder pretense of religion, and like woolues haue crepte in\to the lorde\s shepefold, settyng them selues out in a shewe of godlynes, where in dede they are very enemies of true godlines. And that thys gayre should not disturbe youre myndes as though it were a newe matter: it was thus decreed long a goe by the secret counsail of God, thus was it spoken before, that there shoulde ryse men which with theyr wiked myschieuousnes shoulde bothe exer\cise youre godlynes, and pull condemnation vpon them selues: they turne the free liberall gifte of our God (wherewith he hathe once frely pardoned vs our synnes, and set vs at free liberty from the sharpenes of the lawe,) in to an occai\sio of wantones, where as they ought rather to be prouoked through his beneficyall goodnes, bothe to maynteyne and furnyshe the Innocencie frely geuen them, with godly studious endeouours: and being enflamed with the charitie of the Gospel, to do with a good wyll the works of ryghteousnes more plenti\ously and more exactely, than Moses lawe had appoynted beeofore. But nowe these men abuse the libertye that is geuen them, vnto filthynes and licencious\nes to synne, and fall of theyr owne accord backe agayne in to theyr olde bonde seruitude, from the which Iesus Christ had redemed th\e with his owne bloud: & denye God, whom they once professed, where as he is the onely lord & maister of all thinges that are in heauen and in
earthe: and deny also our lorde Iesus Christ, which hathe made vs free to
him selfe with the price of his owne sacred bloude. It auaileth vs nothing to
bee redeemed, onles we contynue stedfaste to thende in those things,
wherunto we are called. I thinke it not necessary, that I should teache you,
seing you forgette nothing, but I only put you in remem|braunce lest the thing
that you knowe should slyppe out of mynde. It auailled the Hebrues in tymes
past nothynge at all, whom (being the figure of the tymes that nowe are) Iesus
trained out of the hard and miserable bondage of the Elgipcians, through the
reade sea in to libertie: but even the same, whome he mer|cifully presetued
when they cryed vnto him, he destroyed agayn after a worse sorte, whan they
distrusted and murmured againste God in the deserte. That, which the
bondage of Egipte was vnto them, the bondage of synnes was vnto vs: that
whiche Pharaos that straight and intolerable lorde was vnto them, the deuil was
thesame vnto vs, vnder whose tyranny for our owne synnes sake we were
intangled. They puttyng theyr truste in God, escaped safely through the
myddes of the waters in to libertye: and we in beleuing the Gospell, haue
through Baptisme escaped Satans enterest. But like as some of them made not
spede with all one fayth in to the lande of promise: and vnto them the
good|nes of God was not onely vnauyable, but also it turned in to the heape
of theyr damnacion: euen so vnto vs it auaylled nothing to haue once set
aparte our synnes, onles we also growe forwarde with constaunt myndes in to
better, and better, and preace to the enheritaunce of the life of heauen.
Moreouer I would haue you to remembre this also, that it profited not euery
the aungelles them selues to be so created, that they were companions of the
Godhead, but assone as they had chaunged that moste fortunate nature
through theyr owne

wickednes, and persisted not still in the condicion they were in, he threwe
them downe headlong out of heauen, and hauyng depreued them of the light
of hea|uen, he damned them in everlasting darkenes in hel. And there they are
reserued in cheynes that can not be loced, vnto the day of the last iudgement,
werin belyng condemned they shall be commaunded to everlasting paynes.
Nowe Sodome and Gomorre and the residue of the cities therunto adioynyng
(where as they florished in all pleynteous welthe of thynges) because they
abused the liberall bounteousnes of God vnto riot and outragious luste,
defilyng them sel|ues with wiked and abominable sortes of filthines, are
dispatched by the wrath of God, being consumed with fyre from heauen, to
thintente they myght bee an example vnto other that abuse the benefites of
Christ vnto the filthynes of life. For they shall not escape the like peyne, that
synne after like sorte. Doe not they sinne after like sorte, which being deluded
with slouening dreames of false pleasures, doe not only defile theyr owne
bodies, but also set naught by theyr rulers and those that are in autortyie:
and are not afrayed to rayle agaynst them, vnto whō for thautyties sake they
are in, they ought to do reverence? But Michael tharchangel, when he had disputaciō with the deuil cōcerning the body of Moses, was yet afrayed opēly to speake raylingly to the deuill though he were the moste filthy feende. But where he could not abyde his wicked talkyng, he moderately tempred his curse, after this wyse: The lorde (quod he) rebuke thee. Than if Michael were afrayed to speake cursedly to the deuill howe muche more intolerable a thynge do they, that are not afrayed to curse or speake euyl of men that are set in autortie and dignitie ouer them? But these mennes peruer∫itie is so great, that where they haue no cause, yet they speake euyl to the and nayle agaynst those thynges that they vnderstande not. On that other parte they are so sore cortupte with ryot and lecherous luste, that in those thynges, wherein brute beasts being quite without reason, lyue well and temperately, as in meate, drynke, and in carnall copulacion, in these matters they behaue them selues moste vnthriftyly. But woo bee vnto them that shall haue the commune rewarde to happen vpon them with those, whose wikednes they folowe the ex∫ample of. For they set not Iesus Christ before their eies to take example at, but Cayn that killed his owne brother, vnto whome the myschieuous sore of enuie perswaded fyrst of al to doe murther: and Balaam, who being corrupt with lu∫cre, went about to curse the people, whō God had blessed: & also Chore, who hajuyng stered a conspiracie, rose against Moses, and with his sworne conspirours was by an horrible example quyte dispatched. These are they, which where you liue purely and chastely and embrace Gospelike charitie, are as spottes disgra∫ceing your company: and where you fast, they geue them selues to ryotous ban∫kettinges one with an other. Nether are they restrayned for reverence or feare of any man from lycencious filthynes but without respecte rashly folowe that thing, that pleaseth theyr own appetites. And yet in these dedes doing, they professe them selues to be teachers of the gospell, and guye∫es to true vertue. But they are like vnto cloudes, whiche hang a loft, and where as they woulde apl∫peare to be disposed to rayne vpon the thyrsty grounde, yet they are drye, and haue no water to succour the grounde withall, but are rashlye caryed about here awaye and there awaye with theyr owne vayne lustes: beyng lyke vnto trees, whiche in the later ende of corne hatuest be fayre blossomed, and make a lyeng hope of fruite, whan they muste wyther by and by, not onely being all to∫gether vnfrutefull, but also twyes dead, in that they neyther haue life them sel∫ues vnto Gospellyke godlynes, and drawe other with them into destruction: nether is there any more hope of life in the, than trees plucked vp by the rotes, wherin is no hope that they shall spryng agayne: who inasmuche as they are vnquiet and geuen to sectes, they alwayes with some maner of newe vproare dysturbe the quietnes of the congregacyon, being like vnto the outrageous waues of the sea, that rushe them vp on hye, and for all that they doe nothyng, but caste abroade theyr owne rebukes and shames at other as much as in
them lieth: and are like unto starres, whiche when they pretende with shewe of light to be guydes of the waye, yet inasmuch as ther are raungers about, and folow not constauntly that whiche is streighte, but are led awaye by theyr owne affectes now hither now thyther, they carye those that bee symple and incircum|specte into shipwrake. These maner startes that set out them selues with a false feyned light in this world before men, shal not escape the judgement of God, althought he doe not nowe presently punysh them, but reserueth them to the eter|nall darkenes of hell. These men, albeit they are risen vp in our tymes, yet leste you should thinke that some new thyng were chaunced vnto you, Enoch, which was the seventh from Adam, prophecyed of them long agoe, and of their tor|mentes which they must in tyme commyng suffre. For he speaketh on this wise: Beholde the lorde commeth with an innumerable multitude of his saynctes, to practice iudgement agaynst all, and to reproue all those that are wiked, of all theyr dedes whiche they haue wikedly doone, and of all thinges that they haue stubbernely and fearcely spoken agaynst him: not only those that are naughty synfull lyuers, but also the wiked and contumelious persones agaynst God. For in dede they, seing they measure y* felicitie of this life by the pleasure of the body, beare impaciently, if they fortune to haue affliccion or discommoditie, neither are they afrayed to murmure agaynst God in theyr querilinges, that he made manne after suche sorte, that he should be but of shorte life, that he should be endaungered to diseases, wishing this life to be moste exceedingly long, and out of daungier of displeasures, because they haue no truste of the lyfe to come. And yet where they can perceaeve these so filtye and so vile matters in theyr myndes, yet theyr mouth boasteth of certayn greate high matters, and profes|seth a certayn wonderfull learned loue of wisedome, where as they not onely serve voluptuousnes most vilenst that may be, but also handmaking of gaynes, whiche thinge dooeth moste princip|lly defile the doctrine of Christe. For they speake not those thinges that the trueth of the Gospel teacheth, but the thinges that are pleasant and acceptable to them, whom they hope to get any vaun|tage by. Agaynst the poore they are tyrannes, but towards the rych they are very clawbackes. The malice of these men shall the lesse encombre you (dearly beloued) if ye remembre, that it was tolde before hande in tymes paste of the other of the Apostles of our lord Iesu Christe, namely of Paule and Pe|ter. For they tolde vs, that in the later tymes there shoulde rise vp mockers, that shoulde defyle the most pure doctrine of Christe with theyr wiked gredy|nes, not luying after the rule of the Gospell, but after theyr owne wiked and abominable affectes. And them a manne maye knowe by thys marke. Wher|as other that luyue after the spirite of Christe, and hauyng contemned earthy thinges set theyr studie vpon heauenly thynges, agree in one quiet concorde, these stiere vp dissencions, because they bee worldelinges, and geuyng them
selues in to the seruice of worldly affectes, and voyde of the spirite, they hunt after voluptuous pleasures, seke to reigne aloft, and scrape after lucre. And those that set theyr myndes vpon these matters, are notitte for Christen con∣corde. For they had rather disturbe the tranquilitie of the flocke, than to bee brought in to ordre. But as for you, deare brethren, that are spirituall, see you geue diligence, that you maye be more and more, as lyuing stones, heaped togethether in to the buylding of God, cleauing fast to the sure foundacion of your moste holy sacred faithe. Once you were perswaded, that the godly should not want theyr rewardes, how sore so euer they are aflycted here in this life, require not rewarde therfore in this worlde: and the wiked should not faile of theyr deserued tormentes, couet not to reuenge your selues. And therfore make earnest cry•ng for the helpe of God continually with pure and spirituall prayers, and preserue you euery one other with mutuall concorde, and mutuall charitie. For God heareth none but those that be of one harte. Nether put you any distrust, if you be turmoyled sondry wayes in this worlde for Christes sake• but loke for the mercie of God to be exhibited not in this life, but in the lyfe that neuer shall ende. In the meane season hauyng consideracion of the persones, geue you diligence, to saue al men, some gently and frendely in calling them agayn vnto bet∣ter purpose, and the other saue with feare, as if you caught them out of the fire: and hate not y* mē, but this carcas deiled with yearthy affectes, wherwith mans mynde is burthened and deiled, as it were a cote soyled in ilthe. And it is con∣uenient to amende other mens faultes so much the more gentlie, in that no man being consideraunt in this sely body can chose but bee vncleane. For that is not in the power of man lesthe any manne should boastingly chalenge prayse to him selfe, but all glorye, might, empire and power bee onely vnto God our sauiovr, through Iesus Christ our lord, not onely in this world, but before all worldes and in all ages to come for euery & euery. For in dede there is none but god alone that is hable to geue thyds vnto those that labour for it, that although being en∣uironed with the sely frayle body, the world calleth you on euery side away frō the purpose of godlynes, yet ye kepe your selues Innocent still to the ende, & that not onely mē can fynd nothing in your maners, to fynde faulte at, but also that you are ordayned such in the sight of Goddes Maiestie, that he is dis|pleased with nothyng in you, whiche seeth the moste inwarde passages of your myndes. And whan that shall come to passe, you shall reioyce and be glad in the commodying of our lorde Iesu Christ, whan o|ther shall make heauy cheare, whiche seme in the meane space to lyue swetly. And that thyds maye so be, prayer ought to bee made with all earnest desyres.

Thus endeth the Paraphrase vpon Iude.